

Chapter 5

The Meaning People Give to Music

Music is the shorthand of emotion. Emotions which let themselves be described in words with such difficulty, are directly conveyed to man in music, and in that is its power and significance.

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) (Exley, 1992:11)

Introduction

The data are presented in chapters 5, 6, and 7. The analysis is organised following the coding descriptions and themes as outlined in **Table 4.6**. The data presentation is divided into major sections based on the selective coding that emerged from the data. These codes revolve around the key concepts of *self* and *functions* to which all the other analysis relates. For example, the concepts of spirituality, connection, and identity are related to the core concept of *self*, which is primary to the experience of music in the lives of older people.

The data reveal that music for many older people is a deeply personal experience. The perception and meaning of music for the informants has two major dimensions. Music is not only perceived and experienced by older people in certain ways, but also serves various functions that contribute to personal well-being. In this regard, the data are presented firstly in terms of *self*, and secondly, in terms of *functions* and how people use music in their lives. Sokolowski (2000: 6) describes *self* as:

...the responsible agent of truth. It is identified within memories and anticipations, as well as intersubjective experience, and it carries out the cognitive acts by which higher, intellectual objects such as states of affairs and groups are presented. The *self* is the one who takes responsibility for the claims that it makes.

Holland (1995: 432) further defines *self* as:

...the sum of all the divergent forces, energies, and qualities that live within you and make you who you are – a unique individual. The self is the balanced harmonious, symmetrical unity at the centre of one's being, which each of us senses within.

In Chapters 5 and 6, the data specifically describe how music had personal meaning for the informants and how this meaning is directly related to their concepts of identity, self-expression and knowing, spirituality and personal well-being. Chapter 5 directly investigates how music is central to the informant's construction and knowledge of *self*. The chapter highlights six personal accounts of selected informants to provide an insight into the diversity, difference and similarities of the experience of music in the lives of these informants.

Chapter 6 provides an account of how music has come to have meaning and importance in the lives of the informants and how music significantly contributed to the informants' concept of well-being. The chapter investigates how music was introduced into people's lives, the role of music in the lives of older people, how music contributes to well-being, and the experience of music with one's sense of spirituality.

Chapter 7 describes how informants use music in a functional way to maintain and sustain their quality of life. These functions include the use of music to contribute to well-being, connection, stimulus, challenge, and spiritual fulfilment.

The data are discussed in the following three chapters using verbatim quotes from the informants who participated in the study. The quotes describe the phenomenon of the experience of music for these older people and bring to light the voices of the informants, their descriptions and the diverse meanings of the experience of music.

Music and the concept of self

As outlined in Chapter 3, the concept of *self* is a central focus of the experience of music in the lives of older people. Each person interviewed had a unique story to tell of his or her experience of music. The story often told of how the informants interpreted the experience of music in terms of identifying and describing their *self*. This included their understanding of private and public identity, and their sense of spirituality, well-being and health. Other aspects of *self* and music include:

- how the informants were introduced to music,
- who the key person was that introduced them to music,
- how their love of music grew during their developing years, and
- how music, for many informants, is an integral part of their personality in terms of how they relate to others and to the world around them.

Music, identity and the developing *self*

For many of the informants, music is a medium by which they have been able to develop an identity, and an understanding of *self*. This is largely because music appeals to their intellectual, emotional and spiritual *selves*. For all of the informants, music plays a central role in their life because it is through music that they have come to understand and identify their own concept of *self*. As Bob said:

...through music the intellectual and emotional being come together as a whole.

The concept of music and *self* has many facets. These include:

- identity,
- ways of knowing, expressing and feeling,
- spirituality, and
- music as a contributor to people's well-being and quality of life.

The following quotations give the reader insights into the depth of meaning that the experience of music holds for some older people. Music is more than momentary distraction in their lives. For these informants, music is a symbolic representation of who they are, and how they would like to be perceived by others. Through the medium of music the individual is able to meld the psyche, intellect and emotional *self* as one. Bob expresses this when he states that music is more than an amusing pastime to be engaged on a superficial level. For him, music is a way of bringing together his physical and spiritual being. Thus, music for Bob is an expression of his emotional and intellectual being.

Music is just not something that you go for two hours and you wander off and you do something else. It's meant to be more than just that. It's meant to be the whole bringing together of the whole physical and spiritual being of a person.

Eileen also sees music part of her being. Music for Eileen, like Bob, is a way of expressing her *self*. Music provides a tangible way for Eileen to express and explore her own creativity. It is also a way for her to communicate feelings and emotions to other people. Music can provide a retreat where Eileen is in touch with *self* through the internal hearing of music. She notes:

It's all sort of part of my being I think, and that if I weren't able either to express it through music, through singing or playing or even just hearing it in my head, because music that I hear, I don't mean hallucinations, but being able to sing something to myself in my head, even if I'm actually doing something quite different, you know is a part of it.

However, for Julie, music is an expression of her personality and a way of communicating to other people as to how she would like to be perceived. Music is also a symbol and expression of inward and outward beauty in her life and can express what is difficult to convey in words.

I use music to explain me because that's been so much a part of my life I suppose. I need it to be beautiful. I don't need it to be anything that's angry or disturbing, I think it's also beautiful because I'm considered an old world person by some of my friends and family.

While many of the informants enjoy music as an intellectual experience, it also has many psychological implications. This is because music often provides a medium for people to express and understand their emotions and feelings. It can also facilitate a way of expressing and experiencing a person's sense of spirituality. For Elizabeth, music accesses this psychological dimension in her life by allowing her to express her *self* to others. At the same time, it provides an internal way of connecting her spiritual, intellectual and emotional *self*. She explains:

I think it was part of how I saw myself and therefore it was part of my own identity, because I didn't see it only as I mentioned earlier in ballet and then moving into collecting records and that sort of stuff, it was a deeper sort of relationship. And I think partly why it was part of my identity or I perceived it as such.

When asked how they would feel or cope if for some reason they were denied music in their life, the informants gave a variety of negative responses. These included the following types of responses:

- a huge void,
- a sense of loss,
- a feeling of bereavement much like the loss of a life long friend,
- a loss of identity and personal well-being. and
- the experience of 'a particular form of hell'.

Several informants thought that such a loss could be personally devastating and detrimental to their well-being. Phil stated that music was as much a part of his life as it was for his wife, and that the loss of music in their life would be like experiencing bereavement. This is because it is something that he and his wife have enjoyed sharing as part of their relationship for many years.

It's important because it's part of our life, it's part of my life and it's also part of my wife's life, which is very fortunate because it's nice to have that in common. We've listened together over many, many years and if that was suddenly take away from us, I think we would be feeling very bereft.

Bob sees music as something that is more than a pleasurable experience in his life. For him, music is a way of experiencing and measuring well-being in his life. He explains:

Music is more than just listening to notes, and I think if music wasn't there, there would be a great gulf in my life. So music instead of being just a pleasurable thing I enjoyed as a youth has now become I think a great appendage to my own concept of life.

For Bev, music is an extension of herself and how she views life. She feels that life would become depressing if there was no music in her life. Bev enjoys listening to music and playing the piano. She also plays recorder in an ensemble with other music enthusiasts.

I think I would feel quite bereft. It would be rather depressive because it is a um... I can't think of the word... it's an extension, it's a section of how one views life. If I were to lose music which I really passionately love music, well of course there would be feelings of grief and bereavement and it would be like part of one's self being taken away.

Whereas for Peter, music provides a sense of stability and security in his life, much like having friends in one's life. For Peter, the loss of music would be like having part of his mind shut down and non-functioning.

I would miss music very much if I were deprived of it I could exist without it I guess but I would miss it very much indeed because. Well I suppose that to hear music known and unknown, particularly known music is like conjuring up old friends really, some of whom we might find disagreeable at times but its very much a part of ones mentality and I think to be deprived of it is in a sense to a part of one's mind blocked off.

Maureen spoke of how she was denied music in her adult life. She described this as being 'damaging and hurtful'. She considered herself to have a good singing voice and had always wanted to study singing. At one stage she was promised singing lessons, but was later denied them. She was also refused permission to listen to music. The result of this action, Maureen states:

...was to take away the confidence that I had, that I was just beginning to have. It give me an almighty inferiority complex about everything... except singing. It was the one thing I knew I could do.

For many informants, the experience of music in their lives was a way of gaining a degree of self-esteem when they were younger. For some, it was a way of finding solitude from the pressures of school and peers. For others, it was a way of expressing their emotional and creative *self*. Music is an enjoyable occupation that can also facilitate basic needs such as personal satisfaction, peer respect, and development of self-confidence. For Frank, music provided a way of being recognised for his skills in music and thus gained respect from others. For Eileen, music provided a way of gaining peer respect and recognition for the skill of being able to play by ear and improvise. Whereas for Julie, music was used as a vehicle for impressing other people, both within the family and at school.

And so music was always a main interest, and it was something by which I was able to be recognised as, you know, get some sort of recognition as having some sort of value as a person both at school and later on as well. (Frank)

Because I could play by ear, I can remember one morning for example, the person who was supposed to play the piano for the school assembly in the morning hadn't turned up and there was no music book for anything. But I found that I could play a hymn just by ear, and that gave me tremendous sort of kudos, but also a feeling oh! I can do that! (Eileen)

... it was something that you showed off with or you didn't show off with. You know. Your parents said play this piece for Grandma and you knew that you'd get lots of praise afterwards because it was within the family so its the first thing. Through school years, secondary school years I became the accompanist for the choir so there again was something that I could get praise for and enjoy. I'm an only child so it was also an addition to my life. (Julie)

It is interesting to note the number of informants who stated that music provided an outlet for their creative interests for when they were at school. Many stated

that they had no interest or aptitude for competition sports which were considered a central part of mainstream Australian culture and education at the time. For Dennis, music was a way of escaping the pressure of peers to excel at sport, and gaining respect for his abilities in music. In June's case, music lessons negated her having to do sport which she disliked. However, for Eileen much like Dennis, music provided a sense of self-esteem that was usually only possible for girls her age to achieve through sport. This idea is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7 where the data show that music can function as a way for many people to gain 'kudos', self esteem and greater confidence in themselves through music.

I got onto that sporting bit and it was an escape in a sense that that was what I was terribly good at and that was what I found respecting in my peers.

(Dennis)

All my High School years, I did singing lessons instead of going to sport. I hated sport. Oh well, I've never been an athletic sort of person, and always been a musical person with my family, and the only time that we could fit in my piano and singing lesson was a Wednesday afternoon and it suited me fine because I couldn't have cared less about going to sport. So I had my music lessons. (June)

Music helped provide a sense of self worth which sport didn't do. The school was very sport oriented too. You know the heroines were those who were in the first Lacrosse 15. (Eileen)

Music, self and being male

Several males described the Australian culture of the time as not always being conducive to cultural pursuits during their formative years. In their view, the pursuit of sport was valued by society and considered to be a measure of masculinity. Any male with an interest and appreciation of fine music was viewed as elitist and non-masculine. Such a pursuit was considered only for the

educated and the wealthy. The exception to this was the popular music of the day that was played on radio or at dances. Bob explains:

It was a music for the educated. It was also considered to be sissy. Now I didn't mean that didn't necessarily mean effeminate. It just meant it was not what the young men did, because the young men went to football, the young men talked about men things rather than what they call the prettiness of music, and it was that sort of sissy thing.

For males who had an interest in music, the way to be accepted was to be good also at sport. In the case of Dennis, music was not considered a suitable occupation because of the stigma it carried. His father would not condone music as a chosen career and it was only after his mother's intervention that he was allowed to study music.

I think its part of the Australian macho image, you know men were expected because of our- bit like America I suppose, very much a pioneering country and the Australian male was expected to get out there and kick footballs around have that tough sort of laconic, laid back image was expected of the male and if you showed interest in the more intellectual pursuits I think you were pretty much derided. If you didn't play football, or handball cricket. I can play cricket reasonably well but I was no good at football but if you didn't play, didn't excel at those particularly rugged sports you were sort of pushed into the background. (James)

...my father pretended he didn't like music because it wasn't fashionable for men to like the arts in those days. So he sort of pretended he didn't like it and he didn't really approve, certainly with little boys. He didn't mind little girls learning it but my sisters were okay, but little boys were not allowed. Well, we're frowned upon slightly. He had that typical Australian middle class male attitude that it was something a little unmanly about being interested in the Arts, although they might have been nice if you didn't think about them too much, you certainly disguised the fact. He certainly didn't talk about it and you certainly didn't send your sons to have lessons unless you could help it,

unless there was a mother there to stand up and say he's going to do it.

(Dennis)

Interestingly, European culture placed a different value to music, as highlighted by Frank. He tells of ordinary people queuing for concert tickets and discussing chamber music as one might expect of people in Australia queuing for a sporting fixture. Frank's hypothesis is that Europeans in general tend to be more open and interested in music. This is because there is not the same level of stigma imposed on European men for being associated with or interested in fine music.

...But what struck me was the people in the queue. They were people like the ones here who would que for the footy. They were ordinary cleaners and whatever, and they would be saying 'who sang this last week'. Just like you'd talk here about who played in the footy and whatever. That's a cultural difference. I mean, Vienna may be, it is extraordinary, it's very conservative, but music tremendously important.

For some males in the study, music not only provided a catharsis for their emotions, but can give them a legitimate reason to respond emotionally. For others, music affects their emotions where they often are moved to tears because of the beauty or the memory that it stimulates. It is interesting to note that the discussion of music and emotions for many of the males interviewed was considered a difficult topic, yet this was not the case with any of the women interviewed. For example, Neil when asked about the connection of music with emotion and personal feelings stated:

I'm not sure what you mean. Its just there (music), I don't think like that.

(Neil)

However, for Ian, music is a form of solace in times of sadness and depression and a facilitator for expressing his emotions. Music in times of sadness can provide a

feeling of hope and comfort. For Frank, music has the effect of eliciting emotional responses whether he is listening to a concert performance, recorded music or watching a film.

I remember playing that for about 2 hours in absolute tears every time this wonderful, powerful music came through, the association was that I felt as though my life was ended and that was the end of it all – but here's this wonderful music and gee it makes me sad and makes me feel I can cry. (Ian)

...I'm very, I tend to be rather emotional. I might say almost sentimental person. I go to a film and I cry, and whatever, you know. And music certainly has the power to move me quite deeply, and I don't shy away from it. I take every opportunity to do it. (Frank)

The search for identity through music

Music is an integral part of the informants' existence and being. It plays an important role in defining their identity, and how they relate to the world. Music becomes part of their thinking and outlook on life and is an extension of *self*. Thus, the experience and meaning of music is often a reflection of people's philosophical ways of thinking and living. For example, for Elizabeth, music is a unique part of her identity. As a result, Elizabeth believes that music reflects for her a lifestyle choice. The influence of music can be found in the way she thinks and interacts with other people. Elizabeth explains:

Music is an integral part of my existence and my being and has always been so, and for that reason, it is very important. Because I see music as part of one's soul. If one loves music, it becomes part, not just of total lifestyle, but I think also of the way you think. And as a result of thinking, that does lead into action. And some people might be listening to records in the old days, or listening to tapes, or listening to CD's now, or going to concerts, or it might just simply be something that's a little bit more nebulous but is still part of reality and that is you feel and think about it. And if it gets to that level, yes it is an integral part of one's being.

The idea of music influencing one's lifestyle is also evident when Robert speaks about the way music has influenced how he thinks. For him, music is incorporated into his daily activities that may not be directly related to music making. He illustrates this point by using the example of the building of a garden path that requires a flowing design found in the shape of a musical phrase.

I suppose it's helped define me, but I've steered away from being ... although I'm full on teaching and sometimes performing now, I explore other avenues of study, other interests. I do physical things like making wooden paths at our house on... Island, those sort of physical things, but my musical training and knowledge of performance over the years, it comes into your life in other ways. The structure of paths, for instance, has to have flow.

Music provides ways of expressing people's emotions and feelings. It can also facilitate people understanding of their emotions. For many informants, engaging in music activities either by listening or making music complements their moods and feelings. As a result, these particular informants choose specific music to listen to and they use music in a conscious and deliberate way. The choice of music usually depends upon the mood or state of mind of the individual at the time. For example, people might choose music to help them to relax, be stimulated, accompany sadness, melancholy or emotional grief, or to provide a sense of beauty and aesthetics. Graham, for instance, often chooses specific music to accompany his state of melancholy.

I would choose appropriately wallowing music. If I want to wallow in self pity, (which is something I don't do too often), but I wouldn't of course choose Handel. Oh I'd choose something like the 16th Variation, and I'd go over and over and over it.

Whereas Margot chooses music that will provides her with a sense of beauty.

Music is obviously important for your own sense of well-being and sense of self I suppose because you express yourself in music. It's the beauty of it. It's just... one is always driven to better things, higher things, more beautiful things.

For others, music can help provide a catharsis through which they are able to express grief. By listening to music that carries particular personal associations, several people spoke about the power that music has to move them to tears. For the three informants quoted here, music can trigger emotional responses that often are suppressed. For example, Glenda who was able to release her emotions when listening to Mahler some weeks after her husband had died.

Oh yes, I can remember travelling back in the car with Carole from Canberra and we put a CD on and I cannot now remember what it was but I was driving and it could have been Mahler or something. I had to stop the car. I was in a floods of tears.

For Julie, music can trigger an emotional response purely because of its association with perfection and beauty.

I want beauty and I want planned reason behind it that doesn't take over doesn't become just cerebral it takes over from the beauty of the sound, I want music to still be, well something that makes me cry, I don't want to cry but I use that as a point.

Whereas for Elizabeth, music is closely associated with her lost son and her shared love of music with him. Music for Elizabeth is also a conscious way of working through grief.

He wasn't a kid when he died. So that I find that listening to that sort of thing was really important to me in the grieving process. And it still is. It's still very, very significant to me. I mean it can turn me on like a tap if I hear some

things that I mightn't even think about and then I turn the radio on and I associate it with my son and that to me is a fantastic expression of release of pent-up emotions because that's certainly 19 months ago therefore I'm still wading my way consciously through that process. So music is incredibly important.

The experience of music in the lives of some informants was considered to be more than entertainment. One of music's many dimensions is to help people explore the many facets of feelings that can range from ecstatic joy through to sadness and depression. Again, music evokes an emotional response from people that is largely because of the perceived beauty of the music on the part of the listener.

Music is often experienced as a language for expressing and communicating emotions and feelings. For many informants, music helps them express the inexpressible, largely because music can go beyond words and linguistics. Thus, music can be an extension of people's *self* in terms of communicating thoughts, feelings and emotions. Pat expressed a similar sentiment about the connection of music and emotion in her life when she said that music for her universalises emotion. Music goes beyond words and helps her to articulate inner feelings and emotions. Music provides her with an alternative way of thinking which she believes is close to a spiritual or metaphysical experience.

...music universalises emotion perhaps in a way which language can't because in language we have the values of the linguistic forms and we also have the barriers of different languages. No I don't associate music with episodes I associate it with sort of a language that I experience from time to time when it happens...well it lifts you, as I said before it takes you beyond the linguistic phase into a sort of a world that is expressing something and you take something very common I suppose, not common but very well known in that

sense and like the Mozart clarinet concertos has a very real effect and the quintet has a tremendous effect on me and it sort of takes you out into a new sphere of thinking and ideation I suppose. I think that's what I'm talking about when I talk about another language that's a part of you evocation of ideas and that goes into a spiritual realm, it's not physical is it? It's gotta be spiritual doesn't it, or metaphysical, I don't know.

For Margot, music provides a way of communicating thoughts, feelings and emotions that can be directly understood by another person who is perceptive to this phenomenon of understanding. Margot is also able to both draw out the emotional message from the music as well as use music to express her own emotions. Thus, for Margot, music becomes another form of communication and quasi language.

If I played something for you that really means something to me, you'd know then, because it's expressing things that you don't talk about normally I suppose. I don't know. It's important because it speaks to you – it tells you what's in it if you listen and you can be in communion with other people if they understand as well.

In the case of June, music is a way of expressing her love for her husband through the lyrics and music of a particular song. The song is used to communicate the feeling and emotion that is often difficult to express in everyday life through words. Again, music can be used as a communication of expression, feelings and emotions without having to speak the words. Through the combination of the lyrics and the beauty of the music, the song succinctly can be used to express the love that June feels for her husband. When they hear the music played it is an immediate reminder of the love that they share.

The most important thing, most important piece of music is a Joe Cocker piece that he sings and to me, it's so special to Keith, he says "You are so beautiful to

me". And I wouldn't know a piece of pop music. But that one is special. I heard it one day in the car and it was almost Keith's birthday and I thought I've got to buy that. Who is that person singing? And I had to go and find out who was singing it, and when I asked and I didn't know Joe Cocker. It was just incredible. But yes, that's the most important piece of music. Because to me. It tells Keith how special he is to me.

Music provides ways of knowing and experiencing life and the world that are not always centred about pleasure and indulgence. For many of the informants, the experience of music puts them in touch with aspects of life that encompass the painful and less pleasurable, as well as the more joyous. Music can connect people with humanity in ways that include the historical, spiritual, and philosophical ideals of others. This is expressed when Peter says:

I certainly don't see music as one of the pleasures of life like pleasant food, some people do I know I see it a something which explores both the painful and the pleasant of life and can bring to the surface all sorts of things that I would normally perhaps prefer not to think about at all. It takes us to the edge of the known I suppose it takes us, we're faced with an abyss in lots of respect ...I think one is transported to the edge of awareness so that one is facing the unknown, what is something beyond, it's like looking out into space I suppose and realising that one can't comprehend it.

The experience of music

The experience of music for the informants ranged from mild interest to a passionate need. For example, some people prefer music to be a background accompaniment to complement daily living, and experience it as a pleasant activity that momentarily holds their interest. For others, it is an intense need that requires concentration and dedicated listening and/or involvement in performing. For many informants, music fulfils psychological, spiritual, and intellectual needs. These concepts are discussed at length in Chapter 7. However, at this stage these

ideas are discussed and described in terms of how informants spoke about the experience of music in terms of *self*.

Husserl in his writings on phenomenology spoke about researchers needing to experience individual cases of 'white' so that they can adequately know and understand the essence of 'whiteness' (Shand, 1994:241). Only then can people come to know the object that is white. As a result, to illustrate the diversity and similarities of the experience of music for older people, six individual profiles are presented. While each informant in the study has a unique story to tell about music in his or her life, it is impossible to present all the voices of the informants as individual profiles, nor quote verbatim every idea raised with regard to the meaning and perception of the experience of music.

In this chapter the researcher selects six informant profiles based on a gender balance of three females and three males to provide personal insights into the meaning, importance and experience of music. **Table 5.1** shows the diversity of the individual profiles with regards to musical training. For example, *Bunty* has no training in music, *Elizabeth* and *Bob* have had limited musical training, *James* has no training but a strong interest in musicology, *Maureen* is an amateur musician, and *Donald* was trained in music and had a career as a professional musician.

Table 5.1: The diversity of musical backgrounds for the informants profiled

| 1 Non Musician | 2 Non Musician | 3 Non / Musician | 4 Amateur Musician | 5 Professional Musician |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| No training | Limited training | Limited training | Limited training | Extensive training |
| <i>Bunty</i> | <i>Elizabeth</i> <i>Bob</i> | <i>James</i> | <i>Maureen</i> | <i>Donald</i> |

Profile 1 Bob 67 years, retired (non-musician)

Bob like many of the other informants interviewed for this study is very passionate about music. He is retired from full time employment, but spends much of his time as a volunteer community radio broadcaster preparing and presenting music programs. Bob states that his love of music was built over the years through knowledge developed by his own interest and without the ability to read music.

For Bob, music is an intellectual pursuit that also puts him in touch with composers and times past. By listening to music and knowing about the life and times of composers he is able to connect with the historical and cultural events of the day. Music for Bob is a way of connecting with other people and sharing of knowledge, and this he does largely through his radio program and community 3UA classes. He says:

My studies of music have realised that music in a sense mimicked the social events of the day. They also were an indicator of the lifestyle of the day, the concept of the classical period being a period in which one knew ones place which is very much typified in the Sonata principle, the idea, the romantic being the reformation of the individual is very much evidenced in the music of Beethoven, Wagner and many other composers of the middle part of the 19th century. So I was able to over a period of time, realise that music was more than just a collection of harmonious notes put together to make life easy. It also represented a psychology, a principle, in a sense, a way of life...Music indicates the breadth and depth of one's human aspiration. So to me, it offered more than just mere words or mere visual pleasure.

Music reflects how Bob feels at times and he uses music as an accompaniment to his experience of emotions and feelings. Conversely, he also uses music as a way of lifting his spirits and accompanying the activity that he may be engaged in at

the time, whether it be working at the computer or walking down the street. Listening to music can also compliment how Bob thinks and thus influences and stimulates his thoughts and ideas. Therefore, for Bob, music is invigorating and energising. He specifically selects music that he feels is uplifting and robust to give him a boost of energy. Music is about feelings, pleasure, emotions, and finding beauty in life. It is the listening and thinking about music that provides Bob with a joy of living and a tangible experience of beauty in his life. Bob explains:

Music often times besides the intellectual pursuit, can be an extension of how I feel. Reflective music, interesting if I happen to be... if I'm doing something on the computer and I have to type out some ideas, I like music in the background. I usually like music that's fairly robust, vigorous, because it seems to excite what I call the words that must flow out of my thoughts because when I do anything, my hands are the extension of my mind. To that extent, music in a sense compliments the thought processes and the physical processes of putting down in writing my own thoughts. So music does have that emotional effect, ...and just getting immense pleasure just out of listening I think to beautiful music. It does add that one extra dimension to life. Because without music, I would find it extremely hard to be excited about a lot of things. Music does help to give that spurt and that energy to all of my undertakings.

Beauty is I think like a sculptured work, like a Mozart piano concerto. So beauty to me is what I call the sheer intellectual thoughts that I get from the music itself. The sheer beauty in music can be actually quite joyous to sit and listen to, for example a work of Bach.

In Bob's life, music has a direct association with spirituality. Music from Bob's perspective is spiritual because it has the qualities of not having a body, yet has an effect on his life both psychologically and physically. Music provides ways of reflecting and meditating, and also experiencing the world. Bob experiences a sense of spirituality when he listens to music because of the association of beauty

and music. Music for Bob can provide an extra dimension to living because it has the capacity to take him out of the mundane realities of life and allow him to think and escape into a world of the spiritual. He explains:

Music is spiritual. It's something of the thought. If it is said that we come from a divine being, and that divine being is spiritual, in other words, not having a body, then music itself can have the same spiritual uplifting. To listen to a beautiful Bach work, to even listen to say some of the marvellous music that Wagner wrote, there is a spirituality, a sort of... there's something unreal or unearthly about the feeling that you get when you listen to that particular music. Yes I get a lot of spiritual thought. You can also be invigorated to think: look all that beautiful music!... it adds that little bit more to your own spiritual existence as human being.

In my own quiet time I can sit down there and think about the reality of life or the reality of eternity, and also be influenced and be assisted as it were, if I have music in the background. Music can add that extra dimension because we live in a world of reality and I think at times we need music to lift us out of the mundaneness of reality to realise of course there is a spiritual life beyond what is the mere physical and the mere visible. We need to be able to have something that will add that extra edge as it were, that extra sharpness to the soul that one particularly has, and music can add that from time to time.

Bob uses music in a therapeutic way by choosing music that compliments his mood, and whatever he may be thinking through at the time. Music can facilitate movement because it carries Bob in terms of energy and momentum, and therefore can either accompany his mood or can change it if he so desires. For Bob, music does not necessarily have to be audible, but can also be accessed and heard internally because he can recall it from memory. An example of this inner hearing is when Bob is walking in the street and he can hear and listen to music via memory and inner hearing without any audio sound. The following extract

gives a detail description of the specific types of music that Bob would choose to compliment his moods and feeling.

...if I'm feeling what I call a very vibrant mood, well I think nothing better than to put on a rollicking, middle movement I think it is, of Shostakovich's Eight Symphony with the effect from the Timpani to get the feeling, to get the stirring, to perhaps put on some of the music of Wagner which also has the same effect, to listen intellectually to what he's saying, to put on say some of the music of Beethoven, and to sit down there and just to revel in the way he wrote it. Oh no, all those things add because depending on what mood I'm in, that's the music that I have on, so I think I said earlier, if I'm at the computer typing out something and it's something that's exciting me, I'll therefore put on the exciting music. Say for instance, the Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony or particularly I think the middle movement of his Eighth Symphony in which you have these massive crescendos. If it's more of an emotional thing, I'll probably put on The Prelude from Wagner's 'Das Rheingold' which has that sort of rising chords and you just hear this beautiful music coming over you and it sort of just adds this extra dimension, you feel like getting the keys to the typewriter banging your fingers through it, you feel like in a sense the same way Beethoven must have felt when he was trying to hear the music, you're trying as it were, immerse your fingers and immerse your thoughts, so in a sense you would go straight into the whole symphony. That's the sort of feeling I get.

Music not only heals and contributes to Bob's well-being but contributes to his health. An example of music effecting Bob's health was during his recovery from open heart surgery. Bob believed that music helped reduce the recovery period. He felt the same influence of music applied when he is suffering from minor ailments, such as flu or feeling generally run down, and listening to music or singing can have a positive effect on his health. As a result, music is very important in his life and is constantly there, whether it is in the foreground when he is intently listening to it, or the background when he is working.

Music to me is fairly well a reflection of how I feel. Oh yes, you can get a great smile, it really does make you feel better. And to me, you can take all the tablets you like under the sun, you can go and see all the Psychiatrists, all the doctors and you can think and read, but music pulls you out. Music is that extra extension, that's that extra part of the ladder that one hasn't looked earlier. It's the other side of the hill which one can see if one likes to stand tall. I know music must be either an extension of yourself or compliment how you feel, and I've had a couple of illnesses, particularly bypass surgery and what was one of the first things they gave me when I came out because I was inclined to be a bit edgy.... music came because all of a sudden I realised that that could give me a lot more that would help me in my recovery. And ever since then and before then, I have music on all the time. I like to have it on, and then when it gets to the exciting part, turn it up and conduct the orchestra, I probably sing atrociously out of tune but feel so much better for it, particularly if I'm a bit down, I've got the flu or something like that. Oh no, music can give you so much pleasure. It adds so much to your life. It's the best way to keep healthy.

When asked what the effect might be on his life if he was denied access to music, Bob was very adamant that not having music would be a great loss. The richness of his life would be greatly diminished. He poetically captured this concept in an analogy of greeting the dawn of a new day, but never being able to see the sun. Engagement in music is a fluid concept as the excitement of hearing a work repeatedly never becomes tiresome because each performance and interpretation is different. For this reason music conveys a sense of the known and unknown, and with each performance the potential of excitement, which is unlike a book, painting or sculpture. This is one of the many attractions of music for Bob.

... as I keep saying to people: tomorrow is just a dawn away. Yes, you would greet every dawn but it wouldn't be quite the same. It would be like greeting every dawn but never seeing the sun, uh, you would exist, but the richness of your life would be very much diminished. Music adds that extra aspect to life that ennobles life. The ennobling aspect would not be there. Of course you

could get that through sculpture, you can certainly get that through writings, there's many other forms of art, but music has that extra bit of thought becoming reality, and reality being appreciated for what it is that the other forms of art do not give. A book will never change, the words will always be there. To be or not to be will always be there, but the way you interpret a Beethoven Symphony is never the same, everyone has a difference way of looking at it. The notes are still the same. It's the interpretation. If music wasn't there, I would feel there would be a great gap in my life because I would not have that extra aspect of life to be able to appreciate the joy and the sheer intellectual pleasure that music can give to one's society. It also adds to one's conversation. It's more than just listening to notes and I think if music wasn't there, there would be a great gulf in my life.

Bob does not play a musical instrument. Instead, Bob has invested much time in the intellectual aspects of music by studying and developing a working knowledge of musicology and sociology of the times within which it was composed. This includes aspects such as history of the music and the lives and times of composers. His personal study and knowledge of music has provided him with great pleasure in his life, which offsets his own inability to be able to interpret and reproduce the score on a musical instrument. Because of this, Bob's experience of music feels a little remote to him as he does not have the practical skills to access music directly. Rather he experiences it at the emotional and intellectual levels. This is captured in his own words when he says:

...there's a lot of great musicians who to some extent, belittle the great gift that God gave to them, because musicians have one thing that I haven't got - they can interpret music in a personal way that I never can. Mine is always remote. Mine is always a thought process within my own body, it does not go away from my body because I don't have the ability to be able to sing at the level they can or to be able to play an instrument at the level that they can, because I cannot do it. So everything with me has to be within myself and to go out. They have the wonderful ability to be able to extend the same things

that I've got but into their hands and to be able to give something to people that I can't do. Everything with me must be purely emotional or intellectual. I do not have the physical capacity to be able to extend the emotional nor the intellectual. That is a sad thing in my life. It's something I regret, but you can't have everything. At least I've got something which I'm able to give, not only to myself as a human being, not only to those around, but just to people generally.

Bob's profile gives us a unique and personal description of the level and breath of the meaning of music in his life. Music is more than an attractive accompaniment to his life or entertainment. Music provides intellectual stimulation and a way of knowing and being in the world. Through music, Bob is able to connect with the present and also with the past.

Profile 2 Elizabeth 68 years, semi-retired (non musician)

Elizabeth is passionate about music in her life. Music plays an important role in her psychological and physiological being. She is semi-retired and spends much of her time doing volunteer administrative work for a semi-professional orchestra. When asked how important music is to her, Elizabeth's response was 'music is an integral part of my existence and my being and has always been so, and for that reason, it is very important'. She explains this importance from the perspective that music influences how she thinks and how she lives her life. This is illustrated by her comment:

...because I see music as part of one's soul. If one loves music, it becomes part, not just of total lifestyle, but I think also of the way you think.

For Elizabeth, music is importance in terms of her spirituality and experiencing what she calls a 'full life'. She states:

...music is not at the centre of my spirituality, but it's very close to It.

Music is the common connection she has with friends. It is often music that draws her to other people. Elizabeth explains:

...the spiritual effect music has, certainly on me and I think on a lot of people, is that one tends to play it, one tends to go where there's music that you enjoy listening to. And because of that association, you also tend to associate with networks of people who think likewise. Of course it's the sheer excitement and joy of it too because if it moves you, it creates an enormous amount of pleasure which is certainly more than hedonistic pleasure, it's a very fine appreciation of the world of sound.

When asked how she uses music in her life, Elizabeth's response includes the appreciation of beauty, culture, meditation, and for daily invigoration of life. It is an all encompassing response and reveals the depth and intensity of need and function that music has for her.

I suppose because it's a passion, and the link is very deep within me of music and me, the two combined, and it means that I use it as an appreciation of beauty. I use it as an appreciation of broader cultural aspects of society. I use it for rhythm, for joy, for happiness. I use it sometimes too as a prelude to meditation or contemplation and I feel music within me when I am in a state of calm and happiness and stuff like that. And I use it too like I think a lot of spiritual people tend to do as a sort of tool for spiritual development.

The concept of sharing music with others is important to Elizabeth. Music is a way of connecting with other people who think 'on the same intellectual plane' as herself, and also a way of sharing emotions, joy and pleasure. She will consciously ask people when she first meets them about their interests in music to gauge whether she feels that there is an emotional, spiritual or intellectual

connection. Elizabeth feels that sharing music with others intensifies the experience.

... the social aspect of music is very important to me and I think that's because a thing of joy should be shared and therefore the pleasure does seem to become intensified when a group of people hear a performance or a CD or whatever, because they can share that feeling and in talking about it afterwards, there is a feeling of fellowship which is something music offers...it's part of our nature to share joy and share emotions.

I'm an extrovert and I'm an optimist and I'm not religious but I am spiritual. I love people and people are important to me. So that's why it is so important for my well-being to share the joy of music with other people.

In Elizabeth's life the experience of music has many facets. These include the following:

- operating at a level that language communication is not capable,
- providing subtle nuances of understanding and expression in terms of emotions,
- affecting her psychological and physical well-being,
- experiencing the emotional, intellectual and spiritual facets of life, and
- is directly related to her concept of 'soul' (she also describes this as the 'twinkle' within a person).

Music not only affects Elizabeth, but is used by her to influence how she feels and relates to other people. She states this is evident in her movement, feeling and communication with others. Elizabeth finds it is difficult to separate her life from the influence of music. She says:

It's very difficult to catch the subtleties in a conversation. That also has because I'm sure there are lots of other things you wish to talk about, but the

effect of sound basically on the human man and on the human brain does trigger off emotions and I think... I mean we know that scientifically anyway, that's a proven fact, so that in my particular case a certain chord or a certain small area, a small passage of some kind of music will give me joy or satisfaction or "oh yes, I like that. That's pleasure", or if it's modern stuff "Gee I like that. It's beaut", so that part's important. But basically the fact of certain chords or a soaring sense I suppose, does add a breadth to one's perception of the nature of man, the nature of the universe and the nature of eternity. It does have that magical power which is very hard to express in words. And I sometimes I find it in my own mind or in my own movement, my physical movement to... it's hard to separate the movement from a note or a chord. They're almost inseparable.

Oh. Well I wouldn't go into all the psychological aspects of it except in the broad understanding of most people there is a material part of life, which is very solidly based. There is an emotional part of life, a mental part of life which is the analytical thinking process part. And the spiritual part is very, very hard to define because it comes into left brain, right brain sort of stuff and the spiritual aspect of life is connected very much with one's faith in the belief systems, which usually is... well that's either developed instinctually if you look back at the Freudian stuff, or it's something which is just there. And if it's just there, it's the intuitive part of a person. So the intuitive part of a person's make-up is related I believe very strongly to the soul. So that the development between what you could call spirituality and soul growth or what is the soul, what part of the person is that, has a very broad connotation. It's I believe every person has that, obviously we ritualise that in Church ceremonies, for the part it continuously other religions ritualise it in very, very many other ways. It's becoming more widely accepted that the spirit within a person, that twinkle within them, that flame, which is always there doesn't now pass through one generation to another. I suppose the spiritual part of a person is that unique part of a person which connects them with universal energy.

When Elizabeth was asked to describe how the loss of music might affect her life, she was categorical about the fact that it would create a void. Such a loss, she

believed, would leave her feeling bereft and depressed. It would be like losing part of her *self*. Music is so much a part of Elizabeth's life that she described it as a long journey that has both defined her identity and been part of her expression of *self* to others.

I think I would feel quite bereft. It would be rather depressive because it is a um... I can't think of the word... it's an extension, it's a section of how one views life. Say that if something which you love, and I really passionately love music, if that's taken from one, well of course there would be feelings of grief and bereavement and it would be like part of one's self being taken away. I think if it was prolonged it would cause me to feel very depressed because it has always...because it's been a life-long journey with music. So it would be like losing a close relative as far as I'd be concerned.

Music has a therapeutic role for Elizabeth. She uses music to give her a lift and overcome pain and grief. Elizabeth's son died at the age of 30 years and music was something that they often shared together. Particular choices of music, therefore, had very strong associations with him. Music was an important way of working through grief and also finding solace in her loss. Elizabeth described music as being part of her psyche in terms of the 'inner child crying out' for comfort as would a child for its mother in times of despair. This is demonstrated by her following comments:

I'm a pretty healthy lady, but if I'm sick or I've busted my toe or done something where there's like a sense of deep pain or a chronic pain, my reaction usually is to use music because I'm into self healing techniques and prayer. But to use a favourite sort of chord or to use some majestic sort of combination of musical notes that inspires me, and that does induce well feeling. So of course in effect, it's self applied music therapy...it cheers me up if I'm sad or feeling unwell.

Perhaps one very simple example is certainly not on a scale of fine music, just the sheer effect of sound, if I'm feeling miserable or say if I'm a bit lonely or

something, or the child within is crying out for comfort and psyche, I have noticed that a couple of the early songs my mother sang to me will just come back to me like a lullaby type of music.

Music can turn me on like a tap if I hear some things that I mightn't even think about and then I turn the radio on and I associate it with my son and that to me is a fantastic expression of release of pent-up emotions because that's certainly 19 months ago therefore I'm still wading my way consciously through that process.

In conclusion, music for Elizabeth is therapeutic, spiritual and a central part of her expression of self. It connects her with other people and is a way of forming and maintaining friendships.

Profile 3 Maureen 68 years, retired (non-musician)

Maureen's story was unique because she was denied music for much of her adult life that she considered as 'hurtful and detrimental'. The denial of music was because Maureen entered a convent in her early teenage years where music was considered a luxury and a personal indulgence. As a result, music was reserved for liturgical purposes and special community celebrations.

In summarising the meaning and importance of music, Maureen said:

You don't hear music in a vacuum do you? You hear it um, in wherever you are in your life. It's just all encompassing. It's like life. I just love music and it is something in my whole being, that if I didn't have it, I would be less of a person.

Maureen could not imagine life without music. She described it as being a 'life giver' and considered herself 'dead without the music'. She further said:

... if I'd been cut off from the music and hadn't been able to sing in the Choir, I don't know what I would have done. I just don't know what I would have done.

Maureen came from a musical family and music was a connecting aspect of family life. Although the family were not trained musicians, they did listen to the radio, and this was where Maureen learnt all the known popular songs of the day.

Maureen says:

... there's so much beauty in what I hear and I just have such an affinity with the music so that it um, it makes each day lovely. I mean it's just...I can't think of a day without music. I just think how terrible it would be to be deaf and never to be able to hear music again. So it sort of lifts my spirit. I mean often it's just in the background, but it's always there, I'm always conscious of it so that I'll just stop what I'm doing if there's something I particularly like or some beautiful particularly lovely thing, and I'll just stop and listen to it... it is life giving in I think just for it's beauty. And also for me, it's prayer. It really is because I think it's one of the great manifestations of God's wonder, the wonder of music, the beauty of music. I mean you know, if you talk about God is beauty, God is wonder, God is this, God is that, well so is music to me. So it's a great manifestation of that.

Maureen had always considered herself to have a good singing voice and she enjoyed singing whenever possible. It was her dream to have her voice trained and to study music. This unfortunately did not happen for her.

Music was important in Maureen's life because it is central to her being, joy and sense of spirituality. Music is a way of expressing emotions and feelings. It is also a private and public way of expressing her sense of spirituality. Music expresses her private spirituality in terms of personal expression and the individual experience of spirituality. The public expression of spirituality is through worship, and includes liturgy and communal prayer, which are an important part

of her 'overt life of worship and prayer'. Music provided Maureen with a tangible sense of beauty and transcendence that she believed is a direct gift from God. The experience of music in her life is at times in the background and accompanies other activities. At other times, it was all encompassing and could be a deep and moving experience. Maureen explains:

...mostly in the background, but how many times I stop what I'm doing, overcome by the sheer beyond words beauty of what I'm hearing...a voice, a melody, a harmony, an instrument. As well as being an experience of beauty, these gifts are for me a real experience of transcendence, of revelation of part of the mystery that I call God.

Maureen used music to connect and compliment her feelings and emotions. Music expresses how she may be feeling at any time and this is reflected in her choice of listening, the choice of songs and the way she sings them. Maureen described her love of music as 'always having a song in my head' at any given time of the day. It was important for her to use the lyrics of songs and to find the right words to express her emotions. In this way Maureen gave meaning to her feelings and emotions. It was also a way of connecting with others in a tangible way that may otherwise not have been possible.

I used to say then that if anybody stopped me at any moment of the day and said to me: 'What song are you singing?'. I'd have been able to tell them because there was always a song in my mind. A song in my mind. Always.

I have always expressed my emotions through singing. If I was miserable, you know, if I was upset about something, I would sing or choose the song, sometimes it would be the words, sometimes it would be just the tune, the expression. But I've always expressed myself through singing, just to myself, just to you know, around the place, not on show. So in that way, it's been an emotional sort of outlet for me.

Music was the one unmoving thing in my life and I know that I used to um, I sang out in my bad times. I know that I sang out my grief and frustration and hurt and everything, I know, it didn't matter what I was singing, I know it was coming from the heart. And if I was miserable, if I was hurt or upset or down in the dumps or feeling a bit depressed, it would be there in my voice, and I would sing. That was the way I would get it out. So it meant a lot. I'm not the sort of person who lets a lot of people into how I'm really feeling. So that's how I express those feelings, by singing because I wouldn't have been able to tell anybody the depth of the feeling. I probably couldn't have found words for it, but I wouldn't have told them either. But I would sing.

Music provided choice in Maureen's life. She used music as a self-therapy and specifically chose music to listen and sing that would fulfil her need to feel uplifted in spirit, mind and body. For instance, this need could be based upon the need for an emotional lift, music that complimented a reading activity, or music that would facilitate meditation and prayer. Maureen explains:

If I'm going to be working around the place and I need to get myself going, I would turn on, I'll put on the songs of the 1940's and sing along with them to get me going. I will sometimes have soft music in the background if I'm reading, I mean I have music in the background if I'm reading, but if I'm doing some spiritual reading, reflective reading, um yeah, I will put on something without words because I'm useless if it's got words. So I would put on maybe one of the violin concertos that I love or something like that. Um, but it's never...yeah, it reflects my mood. I think my choice of the music reflects my mood, so if I'm in a non-mood, you know, neither up nor down, or just ordinary. Then I'll have a look and see what I feel like.

Music had many associations for Maureen. Many of these are of her family, childhood, and loved ones. These associations are sometimes of feelings and emotions, and at other times about people, places and events. These included: her brother's wedding, mother's funeral and childhood days at school. Particular

music holds special significance for Maureen and can emotionally move her. These thoughts are accessed by choice, or resurface at times by way of unexpected listening. For example, when listening to a radio programme.

So there are associations like that. Yeah, there'd be times when music would sort of bring me to the point of tears or it would move me very deeply because, well just sometimes because of its beauty, just it's own beauty and sometimes because of an association with uh...Like this morning I heard, was it this morning? Yeah. This morning I heard Pavarotti singing 'You are my hearts delight' and um, well there were two things: one was a guy who used to come to the school and teach us singing and he'd say to the kids 'We will now sing: You are my hearts delight to ooooh' and away they'd go. But the other things was, it was one of the songs that was chosen for my brother's wedding, you know I wasn't present at his wedding...he was pretty special to me. And so there are associations like that, and I guess if they take me back to sad times, I wouldn't say they make me feel sad, but they have an emotional component in it.

Music brought a sense of beauty into Maureen's world. Listening to music is an activity that directly relates to her emotions, identity and soul. Her description of the experience of music is that it 'touches my inner depths...and doesn't just stay on the surface'. It is for this reason that Maureen's spirituality is directly affected by listening to beautiful music that must include 'wonderful harmonies and melodies'. The metaphor Maureen used to describe music was that it 'feeds her spirituality'. In the following statement, Maureen defines the association between music and spirituality and how she experiences this in her life. To truly experience music, she stated that one must have an innate feeling of spirituality because one does not just process music intellectually, but also requires listening with one's heart.

So it would be hard for me to separate out spirituality from the spirituality of my situation. But I think that someone who really listens deeply to music and appreciates it, has a spirituality, whether they know it or not. I mean it is. It's a spiritual experience to listen to music. You can't...I mean if you really love music, you can't listen to it with just your ears. You're listening with your heart. And it's the same as faith you know, you can live your life keeping rules and never have any relationship with God, or you can have faith which is a relationship with God which you might not keep any of the rules, but it's from the heart... And I think music is like that. It is of the spirit. It comes, it emerges from someone's spirit.

In conclusion, the following extract from correspondence to the researcher from Maureen provides a concise description of the depth and meaning of the experience of music in Maureen's life.

It would not be exaggerating to say music means everything to me. It has accompanied my life from my earliest days. It has made sad days more bearable and happy days glow with a special light. It has woven bonds and comforted me at their unravelling, it has brought laughter to me and my friends; it can move me to tears with it's beauty.

Profile 4 Donald 89 years, semi-retired (professional musician/teacher)

Donald is a semi-retired professional musician who has held many senior teaching, administrative and artistic positions during his life. Donald described his early love and knowledge of music as a result of then following:

I was born with it. It was fed to me by my mother as far back as I can remember.

Donald's entire life has been devoted to music both personally and professionally. He grew up in a family with a mother who was a music teacher, composer, pianist and church organist. He grew up in an environment where music making was

always present and he knew from the age of eight years that he wanted to be a professional musician. For Donald, such a career choice is more than just a profession. It is part of his identity and his sense of soul. Music has, therefore, been a lifelong obsession that he continues to enjoy and share with others.

It is something, what I would say if there's such an expression, bound to the soul and that if you love music, if you love what you're doing, and I love what I've done, I wouldn't have done anything else.

He continues to teach a few hours a week and feels this is a way of staying in touch with younger people. Teaching music provides him with pleasure and satisfaction.

Young people come here all the time you know...I have these young people come here and they are entirely different to what it was when I was their age. It's so wonderful. There's no time, there's no time to be bored.

Donald enjoys excellent health and he believes this to be a result of 'inner peace and contentment' with his life. Music has a direct impact on Donald's health and well-being because it provides him with joy, pleasure and a purpose in life. Through music Donald experiences emotional contentment and derives a physical energy that stimulates both his mind and body. He explains this as follows:

I have a life of contentment, of course there are ups and downs, but basically it is contentment because you're doing what you love doing and what you love doing it feeds back in you and gives you so much energy and so much mental and emotional stimulation, you know. And I think that effects the metabolism of the body. It has to.

When I'm making music, or listening to music, I have a rather wonderful feeling of inner happiness. Inner happiness is something from outside that you absorb and it gives you, through your senses, aural or...and emotional, it does

something to the chemistry of the body which gives you a feeling of peace and happiness.

Music and literature are Donald's two great loves in life. It is these two loves that he described as providing him with 'a sense of inner happiness'. He is an avid reader and has a large collection of recorded music that he listens to every day. He considered his life to be contented and fulfilled. This is largely because his philosophy of living is to live life to the full with the result that he has no time to become bored.

There's no need to be bored. There's so much wonderful, so many wonderful things in life you can do and then more. Music, reading, teaching, people, concerts.

Music connects Donald with memories of people, places and events in his life. He recalled concerts and remembered the programs that he has attended during his life. Music was a way of structuring his day and he specifically chose music to listen to throughout the day. Donald explained his contentment in life as follows:

I have this inner feeling of great satisfaction in a way, that's not the word I'm looking for really, um but contentment in myself because in my past I've had all these different musical experiences which build up over the years, and now I'm a retired man of 89 nearly and I have all these things in my mind and my head you know, and in my soul, my heart.

Music is essential in my life and there hasn't been any other since it's been my life. You see music, books, poetry, that's my life, now that is my life. This is why I sit here all the time and except when I've got people coming, but I'm so often alone, and that's how I spend my life. And I'm never alone because I have the interests, you know.

Music structures my day and my life. When I get up in the morning I want to listen to music, and I prefer, I think, to listen to Mozart or perhaps Bach.

Donald chose music that he believed would compliment his thoughts and emotions. The music he chooses is specifically related to memory associations of people, places and events, as well as emotional feelings of the past. The music chosen is also used to help recall memory of times past. This Donald describes as follows:

When I am in the mood for it, well, I put on...I go through there and I sort out what I think I want to hear and I bring it out here, just where you are there, and I just put it on and listen. Well, it's not about what you don't want to be thinking about, it's what you do want to be thinking about.

Donald believed that music contributes to his sense of health and well-being because he uses music to help overcome stress, and that by being a singer, he knows how to breathe well. It is for this same reason that he claims many musicians live longer than most people.

I believe this, that a lot of people die of stress and stress-related conditions. If you have music going on in your mind all the time, you have no stress...You notice that anybody connected with music usually lives a long, longish life. You see now um... the conductors, all those great conductors. They were all well into their 80's before they died. Now there are two things about music, but conducting I think they sweat a lot too and I think that helps, you must sweat to get all the poisons out of your body. And I think singers live a long time because they learn to breathe properly - that's the good singers. There's an old saying: He who breathes well, sings well, or the other way around um, but music it is you feel from inside.

Music has always contributed significantly to Donald's sense of well-being and quality of life. This is largely because of the impact that it has on his senses, and that it has been a major part of his life, love and career.

I think music has an impact on your quality of life, it is something which has so much, it has such a strong influence on you, especially on your senses, on your emotions, and that's how it's been all my life, music has been not only my love, but its been a great influence in my life'.

Music influenced and effected Donald's emotions and had the capacity to deflect pain and depression that was not always easily remedied by medication.

I think music can be, can be a very emotional...listening to music can be a very emotional experience, and not all music, but certain types of music, I can get quite emotional over. Depending on your emotional state at the time. If your emotional state at the time is one of, as I said before, happiness, then you can become emotional, really emotional, but if you're not happy and you're feeling a bit down, well, it takes quite a lot to bring you up again, and you don't get the same emotional effect...When people are down, if they're ill, or in pain or something, I think that the only thing, apart from a few pills, that will help them is music.

Although Donald has been a professional musician for all of his career, much of the joy of music in his life is associated with life long learning. Music provided a stimulus through listening and enjoying a known work, and also discovering and learning about new works.

Well, you listen to music to...you listen to Mozart and even after playing something a dozen times you'll pick up something you haven't heard before in it, something new, you know?...It's stimulating and it's life long education, it's a continuation of the learning process. And, of course, it's a study where you can live to be 1000 and you could still learn something about it.

In conclusion, music was an important part of Donald's identity, joy of life and connection with people, places and events in his life. Music provided intellectual stimulus in Donald's life and is a total way of life.

Profile 5 **Bunty** 74 years, retired (non-musician)

Bunty describes herself as a non-musical person in the sense that she never had the aptitude to play a musical instrument. However, she did grow up in a family where both her mother and brother played the piano, and lived in a household where there was a love of classical music.

Since her retirement, Bunty has developed a greater appreciation for 'finer' music. This she claimed is because she now has more time to enjoy and appreciate it. She like many other informants prior to retiring had both family and work responsibilities that left little time to indulge in activities like listening to music. She also sees music as something that has become more important as she gets older.

It's like a food, you know! It's essential. Essential food...I do have a greater need for it, yes. I think so, definitely. And I'm not the only one. I've got an old friend who's 93 or something and she says that's the only thing that keeps her going really.

Music served many different functions in Bunty's life. One of the most important roles of music is as a self applied therapy. By listening to music she was able to maintain an 'equilibrium' in her life and was less prone to feel 'down' or depressed. Music both calms her and provides joy and pleasure in her daily life. Music has the capacity to revive her when she is feeling down or a little tired and until recently has also provided a connection with friends and the outside world. This Bunty explained in the following extracts:

... it wasn't until I was much older I think. It's got more important as I say, as I got older. Once I retired I found that I've got time to listen. You see, I had five boys to bring up and so I really didn't have much time during that period of my life...I feel I need to listen to it. It calms me down. It gives me great

joy...we used to go to the concerts here, all those lovely concerts they used to have. And certainly not since I had a stroke about three years ago, I haven't been able to go, Even though we were worn out, we still went to those concerts and enjoyed them. They revived us... it's just bliss. Um, I sort of float along with it and feel good. Uh... it's sort of liberating in a way you know, it makes you forget everything else. And if I'm stressed and worried, I find music helps me a lot.

Bunty's therapeutic use of music in her life is typical of many of the informants. Listening to music was a need that contributed directly to her well-being and health. She stated that this need is largely because music distracted her from her poor health. It can change her mood and give her an emotional lift. It is for this reason that Bunty listened to music most of the day. At night she preferred to listen to FM radio rather than watching television. She explained:

Well of course my mood feels better, you know. I been a bit depressed since I had that stroke and it lifts my spirits and so on. I get a real intense joy from it. It's something that I like...It allows me to relax and just forget all the problems around me and to enjoy what I'm hearing.

Bunty consciously takes life a little more gently these days after suffering a stroke three years ago. The stroke has made her more aware of her ageing in terms of decreased agility, mobility, and decreasing memory. As a consequence, Bunty is also more aware of her own mortality, which causes her to feel down and depressed at times. However, it is music that will lift her out of depression and provide a sense of hope.

When you sort of feel as you're getting older and likely to die, those sort of things. That music has a sort of part of that. It helps you cope with it. You float in it to heaven with it...It (music) sort of makes you think about death and that somehow makes you feel in a heavenly place when you hear this lovely tune and you hope it's like that afterwards.

That is important, especially as you get older. And facing up to the disabilities as you get older. But of course, age does other things to you, your memory goes and things like that makes it harder. I find it difficult now, sometimes I think I know that piece and then I can't remember what it was. I can't identify it or I can usually identify it.

Through music Bunty has met close friends who she can connect with on intellectual, spiritual and emotional levels. Music is important in terms of sharing emotions and joy with others.

We can sort of grab each other or smile at each other when something particularly beautiful is being played. And that's a joy.

Bunty, unlike many other informants, does not see herself as a religious person. However, she described the experience of music as giving her a transcendental experience. She explained:

Well, I'm not a religious person, but I get a sort of high from it like some religious people do I think. It sends me into another world, a joyful world.

Music facilitated a time management function in Bunty's life and helped her to order her days. Music kept her mind cognitively stimulated and provided her with many happy memories.

I don't get bored. I couldn't. I've always got a book to read or music that I'm dying to listen to...Well I think it keeps ones brain active too. And that's all important as you get older and your memory goes. It helps your memory and things, which is one of the dreadful things that affects old age. You can't remember anything, where you left anything and all that. But I think listening to music stimulates that sort of thing. It keeps your brain alive. I have lovely memories, and that's very important to me.

For Bunty the thought of no longer being able to listen to music in her life was considered devastating. She believed such a loss would rob her of a sense of hope and leave her with a void in life.

*I would be devastated, truly, yes...I wouldn't have much to look forward to.
It would be definitely an emptiness, a great loss.*

Thus, for Bunty, music has a direct effect on her well-being, health and purpose. By engaging in music activities, she felt her life had greater meaning and purpose. Music is a therapy in her life and helped her to achieve a calm and serene lifestyle.

Profile 6 James 68 years, retired (non-musician)

James has always been passionate about music throughout his life. After retiring as a judge from the bench, he has found a new career and lease of life in community radio programming and presenting. He described his love of music as originating from his school days. This was because he was introduced to opera and classical music by fellow students who enjoyed singing. This led James to surrounding himself with music all his life.

...in my class were a couple of boys of Italian extraction. At lunchtime I would hear them whistling or humming or singing little snatches of things and I'd say " what's that" and they'd say ' Oh that's La Donna est mobile' or 'oh its from an opera'. So I became interested and I thought oh this is a lovely sort of music, and then I think in my final year of school.

Music is an intellectual pursuit for James and over the years he has spent much time learning about music history, composers and musical works. Listening to music is something that he enjoys and sustains his sense of quality of life.

I can't live without music really. I'm very much a home person, but whenever I have been away for any length of time, say about 5 days, after the 3rd day I

haven't heard any music, I get withdrawal symptoms...I must have music. I've been like that all my life...I realised later that I virtually surrounded myself with music from an early age. So its a bit of a dominant part of my life.

During his career he would use music as therapy to unwind at the end of long day and stressful days. To relax, James would specifically choose music at the end of the day that he knew would help him to relax. The soothing tones of the music helped distract him and provided an intellectual engagement that he found satisfying. James explains:

I found music very relaxing, very calming, after a hard day on the bench. And I'd come home have dinner and it's very soothing to listen to a beautiful symphony or a lovely string quartet or a piano quartet...if I wanted to put myself in a very bright frame of mind I'd put on a Haydn symphony. I think that's wonderful therapy....if you really feel uptight about something, I think music is very therapeutic. There's an intellectual exercise in listening to music in a serious fashion, not just as background music but in a serious fashion, is itself therapeutic.

Since retiring, James works as a volunteer community radio programmer and presenter. For James, this is an ideal post retirement occupation as it has allowed him to further his knowledge of music. It has also given him a way of meeting and interacting with people who share his interest and passion for music.

I've always thought you should pursue something other than your main occupation...I think you need to develop a new interest, which is what I did...I wanted to be involved with people of a comparable interest. And I must say, dealing with people with that sort of passion about music I find very, very helpful.

James enjoyed listening to music and following the score. He liked to read and research musicological aspects of musical works including the history, social

context, and the musical structures. The experience of music for James is also about having beauty in his life. He explained:

But often I'll just stop the writing and just sit down and really concentrate on the music. Then if I've got the score I'll have a look at it. I suppose I approach it intellectually, but it also makes me realise the spiritual content of music too. The fact that it is part of God's creative process...we've talked about the healing power of music, if you feel a bit stressed and that's because of the beauty of sound and as I said I think I tend to listen analytically to music, and I'll just listen to the progression of chords in a particular symphony for example. It's an incredible beauty I think.

Music is part of a life long quest for knowledge. James believed that listening to, and studying music that is both familiar and new, 'keeps his mind active'. Music made him feel more intellectually alert and less likely to experience the ageing process. This is because music made him feel more invigorated in life, and facilitated him maintaining a more youthful outlook.

I think you've got to have the realisation that you are getting older, but if you do have something like music that keeps you really absorbed and you really want to work at it, I do think your mind stays alert and relatively young...and also your outlook on life a lot younger...I think they would if you've got a passionate interest in something (it doesn't have to be music), obviously you're going to meet other people and I think that certainly keeps the mind more active and your outlook on life a lot younger.

James compared himself to other former colleagues who have now retired and have no particular interests. He saw 'their minds having gone into a state of vegetation' which he is eager to avoid. James believed people who are retired need to work at something that is stimulating otherwise their mind would grow feeble. This is because he believed that older people need cognitive stimulation to

counter balance the ageing process. This he considered especially important as people become less physically able.

I've got a couple of former colleagues and quite frankly they've become very dull. And they sort of just potter around the garden and that's about it. The occasional game of golf, but they don't have any intellectual stimulation in their life...When you retire you've got to work at something else and if you've got that passion or something that does have an intellectual event to it, or content, if you work at it I'm sure it keeps you young. Obviously keeps the mind active, and I think that's the situation in my case, I don't think I'm slowing up and I don't think that the mind is getting more feeble.

Sharing music was important for James. He especially enjoyed interacting with people who were as passionate and interested in music as he. Music was often the reason for the development of friendships because it facilitated ways for James to meet people from different classes, ethnic backgrounds and age groups. James described the socialising function of music as follows:

Well it's important in terms of social contact. It enables me to talk to, meet people I haven't met before. And I think that's important as you get older, not to isolate yourself and just rely on those who you've known for years. It's good to meet new people, younger people...I think that because it's so important to me, when I meet people I think, you know, if I'm introduced to someone it's not long before the subject of music comes up. Either they'll introduce it somehow or I will.

And I think it's important to meet young people. I think because they're coming from a different generation, different ideas, different backgrounds, I think it helps the old people understand what today is going through, the younger people. And I think we can impose some of our accumulated wisdom to them as long as they're receptive, so there's a wonderful interchange there of ideas...That's another function that music performs, it keeps you in contact with other people and changing ideas...Music has enabled me to mix in with a different class of young person and when I left school I started going to

concerts and I even joined the music for younger people. Yeah again I was able to mix with people who had a different perception of society, I've always wanted to do wanted see something in society that wasn't part of the norm.

James believed the loss of music in his life would cause depression. Music provided James with a lift where he feels exhilarated and 'on top of the world'. He consciously looked forward to concerts and listening to music in the hope of experiencing excitement. He also used music as a way to lift to his morale when he was feeling emotionally down.

I can come out of a concert and be highly stimulated. I suppose like everyone I get a bit dejected at times at things but I'm not a moody person. But I can come out of a concert and be absolutely on top of the world, really excited about a piece of music I've just heard, alternatively, it doesn't throw me into a fit of depression. It just really makes me think about some of the privations of the world to hear a piece of music that is powerful and very moving. So from that point of view yes, you know the emotional aspect of music is very important to me also. It's like Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, which I love and a lot of people think 'oh dreadful discordant sounds', I mean I really look forward to that as long as its well played I'll come out with a sense of enormous exhilaration.

Music played a very dominant role in James's life. It was important in terms of his identity, connection with other people, beauty, intellectual stimulus and sense of spirituality.

Conclusion

The six personal profiles presented give an insight to the depth of personal meaning that music carries for many older people. The profiles were specifically chosen to give a broad cross section representation of the informants interviewed for this study. Their stories were unique and varied in terms of their personal need and meaning of music within their lives.

For all of these informants, music was an important part of their identity and understanding of *self*. Music facilitates older people understanding their feelings and emotions. It is a way of people expressing emotions and feelings to others where words fail. Music also provides ways of communicating *self* to other people.

Music influences how older people think and is a reflection of a particular chosen lifestyle. Music for these informants was more than an entertainment. It brought together aspects of people's lives that included the intellectual, creative and spiritual. For all six of the people profiled, music was a way of connecting with others. Music facilitated friendships and provided avenues of introduction to people. Through music people could share life perspectives and experiences.

Chapter 6

Music and the Experience of Well-being

...be it laughter or tears, feverish passion or religious ecstasy, nothing, in the category of human feelings, is a stranger to music.

Paul Dukas (Shapiro, 1978:194)

Introduction

This chapter gives an account of the personal meaning and importance of music in the lives of older people. The experience of music is described by the different ways the informants were introduced to music and the ways music contributed to a developing *self*. For many informants, retirement has meant having more time to enjoy their passion for music, which had not always been possible because of time restraints, careers and family commitments. For others, retirement has meant the discovery of a new career in terms of volunteer work such as writing, teaching, radio programming and broadcasting. This is especially important because this new focus in their life enabled them to continue their life-long passion for learning and to interact with other people who shared their joy and love of music.

The chapter also discusses how music has the power to convey people's emotions and help them connect intellectually and emotionally. This connection does not always have to use language. It often relies on the interpersonal understanding between people and the music they share. Music also helps people to link life

stages by facilitating memory associations that may be related to past events and relationships.

Childhood memories and ways of being introduced to music

The informants were all exposed to music as young children. They could clearly remember listening to music and being drawn to it at an early age. The majority of informants also cited their family upbringing and either a mother or father as their direct link to being exposed to music. Their mother or father often played an instrument or sang to them as a child. Robert explains:

My mother playing the piano and singing. Music was an important part of the family. My father had the old vinyl records of Caruso, Peter Dawson, and all those, which I was brought up on, like 'The 'Oberon Overture', all those sort of things, and that was a major part of our social life at home. We had a number of people come in. My mother's great uncle was a concert pianist, her mother, my grandmother was a prima ballerina and her sister was a famous opera singer in the early part of the century. So there was that sort of influence all the time. We had a working class background, but we enjoyed ourselves, enjoying making our own things.

For many of the informants this was a reflection of the culture and times. People had to make their own entertainment given that television and pre-recorded sound systems did not exist. For many families, the radio and sometimes the gramophone were their only access to music apart from social gatherings. In the cases of Jane and June, music was also present in the family home. Both women could remember from an early age being introduced to music by their parents. This included Jane and her siblings having music lessons and participating in soirees from an early age. For June music was also a major part of her participation in church activities.

Well, my parents um... we always had music around but not classical music, just songs, and people would come around and sing in the evening and this sort of thing. But we had music lessons and I was never very good. Um, but I got very interested in classical music and started buying records when I was fairly young. I was the only one in the family. And then I remember my first concert very vividly and I went to Cambridge, of course this was during the war, and Murray Hest was playing in the Town Hall. And from then on I was hooked basically. (Jane)

Well, I was the youngest of six and we always had a house full of all my older brothers and sisters friends and they all were Churchgoing people and they all sang, they all played different musical instruments, and we virtually had a Choir and an orchestral band in the house all the time because my Mum and Dad encouraged them to come to the house. And we didn't even do the dishes without there being 3 or 4 or 5 part harmony in the kitchen because everybody could just sort of naturally join in. (June)

For some informants the earliest memories of music was associated with church such as listening to the choir or participating in congregational hymn singing. For others it was attending concerts and hearing live music making. Only a few informants did not have family histories where parents were either musical or had introduced them to music. These informants, however, did recall having teachers or mentors who introduced them to music.

For John, the love of music grew from his attendance at church and listening to the choir and organ and singing with his father.

I enjoyed going to Church to hear the choir and the organ, mostly the organ, and after the war, my father came back and he was I think musical. He was born in Wales, I don't know if that had anything to do with it, he played the saxophone as an amateur, he liked to sing so we sang together and he started to buy me records and take me to Brisbane to concerts. My first record was Wolfgang Schneiderhan playing the Beethoven Violin Concerto. And then I

think when I went to High School the Sydney Symphony Orchestra used to tour and that was a wonderful experience to hear them.

For Pam, music was fostered at school. This was because her music teacher encouraged Pam to sing and participate in schools choral ensembles.

I remember that I had some teachers who were important in fostering my interest in music and singing in class, singing rounds, a lot of the old English songs. So that was the start for me. The importance of music in my life, music is vital to me. I couldn't live without music.

Careers, retirement and personal time

The informants came from many and varied musical backgrounds. Eleven informants were professional or semi-professional musicians with careers that ranged from instrumental teachers, classroom music teachers and performers, to radio broadcasters, music therapist and composer. For others, it was a love or passion of music that developed throughout their life. Of these eleven informants, three are still working professionally, while the others, now retired, have found new careers as volunteers working in radio programming and broadcasting. Two informants developed a knowledge of music and musicology over the years through their passion of listening and reading about music. Both now work as volunteer broadcasters and one teaches community classes for the University of the Third Age (U3A). Another four informants work as volunteer music administrators for semi-professional music organizations.

For many of the informants, retirement has meant re-evaluating their identity in terms of how they would like to be seen by other people. For many it has been important to their self-esteem and well-being to continue being a valued contributor to the community. This is one of the major reasons why so many have

become involved in activities such as community radio programming and presenting, volunteer music administration activities, or singing in ensembles that entertain people in residential care. Retirement has meant that they now have more time to listen to music and learn about the historical and musicological aspects of the music. Some informants also draw personal satisfaction from being able to use their previous professional expertise in their post-retirement occupations. Examples include James who was a judge and now works as a volunteer music administrator, music magazine writer, and radio programmer and announcer. Others include Joan and Julie who both had teaching backgrounds and work in community radio. This was especially important for those informants who had careers in music and felt that their public and private persona were mostly known to others by their association with music. Don spoke of the link between his identity and career when he said:

...it's like most people in their jobs, they tend to be identified with what they do.

By adopting a new life focus in their retirement years, informants felt that they were giving something back to the community. This 'giving back' provided new ways to indulge their love of music. For example, they not only listened to music, but also associated with people who shared their interest in music. A secondary benefit was the intellectual stimulation that this interaction with other people provided in their lives. For example, Don who had a career as a professional singer had become a member of an amateur singing ensemble that performs for people who live in residential care. This offered him with a way of maintaining and using his skills for others.

Oh, well, its important because it makes me feel I'm still doing something with my voice that's helping people.

Both Joan and Julie had careers as teachers and shared their love of music with others through their work as volunteer radio programmers and announcers.

I am a teacher as well as a musician and I enjoy greatly my program preparation and presenting because I want to share the joy and fascination of music with people. (Joan)

I suppose I still wanted to teach you know I always said I didn't want to teach anymore don't want to go in the classroom anymore but I had this I must still pay back and spread the good word if you. (Julie)

James cited his volunteer work and association with 'like minded people' as providing him with challenges and intellectual stimulation.

I wanted to be involved with people of a comparable interest. And I must say, dealing with people with that sort of passion about music I find very, very helpful. Intellectually stimulating. I mean they'll challenge me about something 'Do you know so and so symphony?' And I don't so I'll go and listen to it...So just talking to people with a comparable passion.

Retirement had given many informants time to indulge in their passion for music by either listening to music, attending concerts or making music. For many informants this was not been possible while they had family responsibilities and work commitments. For Frank, music had become a full-time occupation that took up most of his time, apart from family responsibilities. This included instrumental practice and playing, concert organization, conducting, radio programming and presenting.

I do really now, music is my full-time thing apart from family commitments. But I'm in a fortunate position now. I'm doing the thing which anyway has always been most important! In a way I had those other jobs to help support them, the things I was doing musically.

For Margot, Bob and Bev, music is an enjoyable 'indulgence' that was not previously possible while they had family commitments.

I've had big gaps. I had 25 years when I didn't play the piano almost at all because my children were growing up, they didn't like me practicing, we had a relatively small house. In other words, I couldn't practice without interfering with their homework. I had a lot of big breaks. It was very important to me in adolescence, very important I would say. I learnt from Roma who was the one for 5 years. When I went to university in Sydney. (Margot)

There wasn't a lot of time to be able to enjoy music, so whatever time you did get, you had to grab it and you had to keep it, and over a period of years you had to then add to that because somebody with my background together with some of those people that you mentioned involved in the as it were, the academic or the administrative side of music, probably never had the ability to be able to express music. It was always in a sense, something they had to get. (Bob)

We now spend evenings just listening to recordings or the radio that we wouldn't have years ago. (Bev)

Self and others: sharing and connecting

The social aspect of sharing music with others was a reoccurring theme. For many older people, music has been an important form of socialising in their lives and continues to be a way of meeting and interacting with people.

For Bob, music facilitated people coming together and sharing in the singing and performing of musical works. The same applied to Owen who recalled social gatherings where people would participate in music activities, such as singing around the piano. For both Bob and Owen these were considered good times.

They regretted that such social occasions did not happen today. Whereas for John, music was a way of meeting people that he might not have ordinarily met in his work or social circles.

I think this age group represents a time in which we enjoyed music brought about by people associating with one another, visiting and enjoying singing at the piano and bringing it all together and at various times performing to individuals on their behalf and contributing to a large extent towards our way of life, and we notice very much how a situation like that has changed, and it's rather a shame in many ways. (Bob)

What we don't have now that I can recall when we were much younger, was singing around the piano at night time, you know, at parties and so forth, where somebody would play the piano and there'd be about 20 people. They were good times. That doesn't happen now. (Owen)

It enables me to talk to, meet people I haven't met before. And I think that's important as you get older, not to isolate yourself and just rely on those who you've known for years. It's good to meet new people, younger people. (John)

For many of the informants the experience of music was often linked with the concept of connection. This was largely because the joy and pleasure of music was intensified when it was shared with others and where a special bond was often formed. Through sharing music with others the informants often exposed who they were without having to use language and conversation. As Noreen said:

You don't need to discuss it, it's just there; but you realise you are sharing it because no words are needed, but just the emotion of it.

This was the case with Elizabeth where friendships and experiencing of music with others was about the sharing of emotions.

The social aspect of music is very important to me and I think that's because a thing of joy should be shared and therefore the pleasure does seem to become intensified when a group of people hear a performance... so that it's very important for my well-being to share my joy of music with other people. It is part of our nature I think to share joy, share emotions. So music has I think an increasingly important part to play as people get older for that reason...It's very difficult to catch the subtleties in a conversation. That also has because I'm sure there are lots of other things you wish to talk about, but the effect of sound basically on the human man and on the human brain does trigger off emotions.

For Robert and Bunty music was important in terms of connecting with other people and communicating the subtleties of their experiences.

Music is much better if you share it, share the enjoyment and the emotion of it with somebody else...I love people more than music, but music allows me to connect with people. (Robert)

We sort of hold each others hand and squeeze them or embrace each other or something, when it was something lovely we've heard. (Bunty)

Music was described as being a 'common language'. This was because music is a language that was understood by most people regardless of their background. It complimented and expressed feelings and emotions that many informants found difficult to put into words. Patricia described this when she said that music for her was a language that went beyond the expression and communication of linguistics.

I associate it with sort of a language that I experience...I think that's what I'm talking about when I talk about another language that's a part of your evocation of ideas and that goes into a spiritual realm, it's not physical is it? It's gotta be spiritual doesn't it or metaphysical I don't know. Music universalises emotion perhaps in a way which language can't because in

language we have the values of the linguistic forms and we also have the barriers of different languages.

Through music the informants have been able to develop friendships. This idea was often cited by the informants when they spoke of their schooling and developmental years, courting days, and family life. For Donald, Julie and Eileen, music was a way of being introduced and finding common ground when meeting new people. Donald felt that many of his friends were a result of his connection with music. For Julie and Eileen, engaging in music activities was an important way of meeting new people and forming close personal bonds.

...music makes friends, you make friends through music. Had it not been for music I probably wouldn't have made many friends at all. (Donald)

But I did travel around Europe by myself and yes the international language is true, because you'd be in a train with a group of Italians or French or whoever you know inevitable question comes when they hear you speak English to the conductor or something 'Where are you from, what are you doing?' And the minute you said you had anything to do with music then the smiles are there people find a common ground and they want to chat and in that way yes that's a social thing. (Julie)

I have other ways of meeting people as well, but music has always been an important way of being with others. (Eileen)

This particular type of friendship with other people was described by informants as often taking on a greater depth because of the shared experience of music. Margot and Noreen spoke of the meaning of friendships and how music contributed to making them special. Margot also pointed out that this sharing was often shared without words. It could be by touch or a look.

Music is a bond with my friends. We'd look at each other at the same spot and think this is beyond belief, this piece of music. (Margot)

The people who are not interested in music which I am, are still good friends, but not such good friends. You're closer to those who have similar interests. (Noreen)

The linking of life stages

For many of the informants the experience of music held strong associations and memories. This was because music was associated with life stages and particular life events. One informant referred to the importance of music in terms of 'relating to the warm spots of people's lives'. These include childhood days, family, school days, romantic attachments, friendships, courting days, parenting, and special events such as the rites of passage that include births, marriage and deaths. For many of the informants, the music of their youth and courting days had some of the strongest memories. Some believed that popular composers of their day knew how to write 'music that flowed' which they felt contributed to 'really good tunes of the era'. This was one of the reasons why they felt music had such a memorable impact upon them.

All the informants stated that they could clearly remember being a child and influenced by music. Music was part of growing up and was played and heard via radio, dancing at social events, sung at home and in church, and performed in the home or at concerts. One informant referred to music making as 'the social glue' because it was music that brought people together and facilitated interaction.

Robert described how music was an important form of entertainment for family and friends during his childhood. Musical soirees were often the reason for people getting together and having fun.

Terribly important there! And we'd have musical evenings where another auntie would come in with her flautist and sing, 'Oh, Hear the Gentle Lark' and all those party pieces, and it was riotous, sometimes riotous. Another friend came in and he did adagio dancing, in a smaller room than this and did crazy things like that.

For June, music was a family activity when she was growing up, and when she had a family of her own. The gathering of people to share and enjoy music was considered an activity that all family members could participate in and enjoy.

Well, I was the youngest of six and we always had a house full of all my older brothers and sisters friends and they all were Churchgoing people and they all sang, they all played different musical instruments. We virtually had a Choir and an orchestral band in the house all the time because my Mum and Dad encouraged them to come to the house. And we didn't even do the dishes without there being 3 or 4 or 5 part harmony in the kitchen because everybody could just sort of naturally join in.

All the informants spoke of the many associations that music had for them. Listening or playing a particular musical work would often trigger memories for the informants. As Margaret stated:

...something will stir a memory and you'll want to go and find it.

For many informants, music facilitated a connection with the past. Maureen had many musical memories and associations with her childhood and family, and as a nun when singing in the choir. She also stated that these memories and

associations were triggered by music often relate to the music and emotions of those times past.

Music. Yes, so I mean music sort of seeps in my definition of soul, it really seeps into my soul as I said before. And uh, I mean a lot of my memories and a lot of my emotional responses to music would have been of those early years of the Choir. (Maureen)

For Donald the experience of music was often associated with memories of the past. Music provided him with a direct link back to people, place and events of his life. Joe had the same experience and spoke of singing with the family while driving as one of his fondest memories.

You see, there is a direct link back to your whole life. Strong memories of sensations, emotions, people and places...they are still very vivid in my mind. (Donald)

I have some lovely memories of singing along with my kids as we went for drives. I can remember singing 'The Green-Eyed Dragon with Thirteen Tails' going across the Drummoyne Bridge. I sang it many times and I can remember many happy instances such as this with the family. (Joe)

Elizabeth believes that all of the significant events in her life are associated with a particular musical work. In this excerpt, Elizabeth described the association of a Beethoven work which she found 'dramatic, thrilling and absorbing' and was directly related with her excitement of travelling interstate to see her lover.

I think most major events in my life have been marked by an association with some composition perhaps, or part of a composition. For example, like most young girls I was very excited when I first became engaged and I was engaged to a medical student who lived in Brisbane. Now, I had finished uni and I worked in Sydney, so that meant to have this great romantic meeting every time, it meant getting on a plane and spending a much longer period in flight

than now of course, and my sort of desires and hopes about this romance was such that it inspired music. So a particular piece of music, which was a Beethoven piece, just kept coming to me. Now I associated that excitement and whenever I heard bit of music now, it does bring back those memories of me on a plane in a blue sky with white fluffy clouds going up to meet my beloved, sort of thing. It was dramatic, compelling, absorbing. (Elizabeth)

Music is important to people for many different reasons. Peter suggested one of these reasons was because music 'has very powerful effects on the imagination'. Music is abstract and people assign their own particular emotions to it. These assigned emotions are the ones that move people when listening or performing musical works. He also suggested that music could call up 'normally buried aspects of the imagination'. As a result, people often have associations when listening to music. Peter equated the associations with the memory of 'agreeable and disagreeable friends'. This is explained in Peter's words when he said:

...so people see, have visions in their minds when they hear music, other people think of personal relationships and music has the power to call up these normally buried things I think. In that respect I suppose music helps one like literature, I think it helps one to know something about one's self really its a thing of self discovery isn't it.

The memory association triggered by music, however, was not always pleasant. For some informants, particular music could cause them to feel melancholy and down. Some informants stated that they specifically chose music that would avoid this melancholy. Others, like Graham, stated that he specifically chose music to compliment these moods. For instance, if he was feeling down he would chose music that would allow him to 'wallow in his thoughts'.

Marion spoke of how music could at times get her down because of the association with happier times when her husband was alive. While music could often lift her spirits, music could also cause her to feel melancholy because of the associations that it has for her of the past. This Marion described as follows:

Oh, well, I'm quite happy to say, that if I'm at home and I'm feeling a little bit down, I will play music which, if I play the right sort of music, it really lifts my spirits. But then I find if I play ... those that have memories of long ago, I can feel very down at the end of it too, I like to hear them but then I sort of feel worse at the end of it because all my memories have gone that way and I think, 'Oh, that's passed, and all those good times have gone,' so I have to be careful what I play according to the mood that I'm in. Sometimes I will cry when I hear a particular tune.

Shared accounts: the effects of music for people with special needs

Five informants spoke about music as having a profound effect on other people. One instance was a woman who had severe dementia but upon hearing a song from her courting days got up out of her chair and danced with her husband who she had not communicated with for years. The second and third stories are similar to many of the other stories of music and the connecting and sharing with older people who may be suffering from Alzheimer's or dementia.

Music offered many people a glimmer of hope in terms of communicating and sharing memories such as the accounts by Stan, Zillah and Marion that follow. These first hand accounts are from people who have been involved in the care of incapacitated parents or partners and tell of the physical and psychological reactions of music on people who suffer from dementia, for example, Alzheimer's disease.

In the case of Stan, it is an observation that he made when he was involved in sharing music with some older people in residential care. The story is moving and compelling in its portrayal of how music can create physical and psychological movement. This movement can momentarily open a window of reality that is both meaningful and special for the patient and the carer. This effect is testament to the power and potential of music providing a meaningful experience in the lives of people who are cognitively impaired.

I tell you a little story about that? There was a lady in the hospital in Tamworth who was recovering from a stroke and she was in a wheelchair, and we were having some music and some of the people were dancing, and her husband got her up — she couldn't walk — and she just stood there and he just held her and they rocked, and it was a wonderful for her. It was the first time she'd been in her husband's arms for many months and she felt wonderful about it. We all had tears in our eyes.

For Zillah, music was a very important medium for communicating with her husband, Gordon, while she was caring for him, and coping with his medical condition. As a carer for her husband over a period of six years, Zillah had used music to help calm him when he became distressed or disoriented. Music for Zillah and Gordon was associated with happier times. For example, their courting days when they enjoyed dancing. Music has also been especially important in recent years and has helped Zillah connect with Gordon when he started to lose his sense of orientation. Following Gordon's death, music continues to be important for Zillah. It helped her to deal with her emotions and was a way of maintaining a connection with her past.

Music has been important since my husband retired and became ill. I've used it as therapy for him. He had Parkinson's for six years and then dementia for

two years before he died...Through the war years we danced a lot and he remembered the old tunes, and of course we shared them a lot in our later years, even if it meant dancing around the kitchen when we felt like it, you know....and I can listen to it now and become emotional, but, yes, it is my company now I'm on my own. It was very important to us. It helped so much in getting through each day. I mean, there were times when he'd look at me and say, 'Where's my wife?' and I said, 'I'm right here.' And he said, 'Not you, the other one.' So maybe our memories are triggered first by music in relationship to memory than to other things, so music is important.

June told the story of her mother who had suffered a stroke some years ago and had not recognised any of her family for a period of four years before her death. She was not only incapacitated but, as a result of the stroke, had not spoken for two years. Like Stan's story, June tells of how her mother who had been in a non-conscious state for some time but reacted to the sounds of a band playing a well known hymn to her from years past. This story is one of several compelling accounts of the power of music and how it can effect people's senses.

She was 84 when she passed away. She was 82 when she had her big stroke, and she'd been almost 2 years that she hadn't even recognised us when we went to visit. We'd just talk to her as though she did know we were there because we weren't sure if she did or didn't. But there was no conversation whatsoever. And then the Salvation Army were there with their Band the week before Christmas, just not long before she passed away, and they were playing the hymns in the big Common Room, which was quite a distance from her room, and Sister said that when she went passed, she heard a noise and went into the room and Mum was singing and she sang the hymn right through, word for word - she didn't miss a word. And yet she hadn't spoken to anybody really for the best part of 4 years. And yet she sang that hymn right through, which was quite amazing.

Music as an indicator of well-being

Music provided ways of knowing and identifying *self*. As Elizabeth stated, music 'is still part of reality and that is you feel and think about it. And if it gets to that level, yes it is an integral part of one's being'. Apart from music being identified by many informants as an integral part of their personal construction of *self*, music played an important role in terms of contributing to a sense of well-being. This sense of well-being centres around balancing the intellectual, emotional and spiritual facets of the informant's lives. Don summarised how many of the informants experienced music as contributing to their well-being.

'I believe, as human beings, we are made up bodily, mentally and spiritually, and music comes into your whole being and if you happen to be down, which is not very often, it uplifts you, but music flows and brings something extra into you, and I think that all helps in your general wellbeing'.

If music contributes to an individual's sense of well-being must also mean that their quality of life must be improved. The assumption here is that when a person feels that their quality of life is high, then they are most likely to also consider their well-being as high. This is largely because music significantly influences people's senses, emotions, and intellect. Pam spoke of how music made her competent to carry out routine daily tasks.

If I have some difficult tasks to do and I hear say on the radio the right music, I do better, I'm more efficient. I work better. I think more clearly, I feel healthy. If I'm down or feeling tired, or my bones are aching and I play some nice music recordings, I feel better. I feel fitter, I feel more competent uh. (Pam)

Donald spoke of the contribution of music to his experience of well-being when he stated that music has always had a strong influence on his emotions and senses.

Regarding your life, your quality of life, it is something which has so much a strong influence on you, especially on your senses, on your emotions, and that's how it's been all my life. Music has been not only my love, but it's been a great influence in my life.

Music contributed to Jane's well-being, because for her, something would be missing if she did not have music in her life. For Jane, music has a strong emotional and intellectual influence on her daily sense of well-being.

I just feel that part of my life is missing (if there is no music). It's just there all the time. It's something that I enjoy so much. I think it's stimulus, emotional, sometimes exciting which I think it's something you listen to and it can be an intellectual exercise if you want it to be, but I don't like that part of it. I've been to concerts and people say "Oh dear, the violins weren't all in tune" or something like that, and I don't get into it like that at all. To me, it's an overall experience, picture, whatever you like to put it.

May was also very selective about the music she would listen to. This was because May believed in the Pythagorean theory of music and the music of the spheres. For May, there must be a balance of harmony and sound in her life and ultimately this influences her feeling of well-being. She said:

Well, I believe in these old Pythagorean Theories, and the harmony of the spheres. And there's some connection between sound and your well-being. I'm sure that that's what it is. And when it's in balance and the harmonies are right, I'm sure you have a better, your well-being is better. I understand that some of the hospitals in Sydney now, that they play sort of therapeutic music- sort of subliminal- in some of the wards.

Informants spoke of music as providing a sense of 'inner happiness', 'inner contentment', 'inner satisfaction' and 'inner peace'. All these descriptions are attempts to describe the psychological need, affect and meaning that music had

for these older people. Donald described this sense of 'inner happiness' as being something that affects the chemistry of the body and, in turn, had an affect on the senses that led to a feeling of peace.

...something from outside that you absorb and it gives you, through your senses, aural and emotional – it does something to the chemistry of the body which gives you a feeling of peace and happiness.

Pam described this sense of inner happiness as follows:

My soul, my spirit, my inner self needs the music to fill me with joy, to fill me with wonder, to fill me with peace. If there's a God, I think that's God talking to me. Um, it gives me intense pleasure and intense emotional satisfaction, so music contributes to my well-being. Without it, I don't know what I would do. Perhaps I'd sing, I don't know. But I can't sing well enough to satisfy. So the more music I get of the music that I love, the better I feel. It's stimulating for my brain. I think it gets me awake, thinking well, functioning well.

For informants to have a sense of well-being and happiness, they did not always need audio stimuli and could often rely on internal hearing. Inner hearing is when one is attentive to music that they are hearing in their mind. For example, Bob has already been cited as enjoying walking down the street and listening internally to music that occupied his attention. Other examples include Eileen at the eye specialist and Pam at the dentist. Although these are specialised clinical applications of how internal hearing may be used, they also suggest a more important aspect of how music can contribute to people's well-being and health. Bev provided an example of the importance of internal hearing in her life when she could not have direct audio stimulation.

Music has always been important in my life and I must have it. I listen to it every day and every night. If I can't listen to it, I can still hear it in my head.

For instance, I can hear and sing all of Tosca in my mind without having to hear it.

The need for music in the lives of the informants was essential and the level of need varied from informant to informant. For some, music accompanied daily 'mundane' tasks, for others, music provided a therapeutic release from stress, for others, music could uplift and carry them forward psychologically, and for many it is an intellectual stimulus. The sense of well-being was not only an internal feeling but was outwardly evident to others, for example, by the way they sang, had 'a spring in their step', or were more engaged with others. Bob stated that music is always a reflection of how he felt because:

Music to me is fairly well a reflection of how I feel. Oh yes, you can get a great smile, it really does make you feel better. And to me, you can take all the tablets you like under the sun, you can go and see all the Psychiatrists, all the doctors and you can think and read, but music pulls you out.

For Maureen, music was a public way of expressing how she felt at any given time. This was usually evident in the way she would sing and the choice of songs she would sing. Some informants stated that they found it difficult to describe the meaning and importance of music in their lives because much of the significance was associated with their feelings, emotions and personal sense of spirituality.

And also one of my friends used to know, she reckoned she always knew when I was distressed because of the songs I sang, If I was miserable, you know, if I was upset about something, I would sing or choose the song. Sometimes it would be the words. Sometimes it would be just the tune, the expression.

For many informants, music provided an escape where they could indulge their fantasies and be intellectually stimulated. Through music people could experience

the entire spectrum of emotions and feelings. For Peter, music provided a valuable source of imagination and intellectual fulfilment in his life.

...because music itself is extremely difficult to convert its significance into words I suppose one would have to say that music fulfils a very important role in terms of imagination and integration and also intellect.

The effect and influences of music

The effect that music had on the informants was unique and varied. However, one of the most unifying themes that emerged was that music could have a therapeutic effect on people. As a consequence, informants felt that music had an effect on their health, both psychological and physical. Robert described listening to music as equivalent to having a 'mental massage' because it alleviated the daily stresses of life.

Music has a calming effect on me, releases your tension. It's like a massage, a mental massage, if you like.

For some, music was equated with a psychological need, and for others it was directly associated with the physical aspects of playing music. For example, singing and breath control, playing the organ to keep the fingers, feet and mind agile, and playing the piano to maintain technique and also helping ward off arthritis. Pam spoke of the benefits of playing the piano as being a good way for her to keep the arthritis in her hands under control.

It is wonderful because (a) I'm not very good and (b) I've got arthritis in the hands. So that's another thing that music gives back to me is keeping my fingers reasonably free of arthritis. Um... and of course it's such an all absorbing thing. It takes up so much of my time.

The playing of a musical instrument and maintaining instrumental technique was important for many people as they grow older. There are benefits that extended beyond the physical ability and technical agility required to play a musical instrument. For example, Phil enjoyed playing the organ because it required a degree of physical stamina and the ability to read three music staves. Thus, music provided him with a way of being intellectually and cognitively stimulated. He also believed that singing directly contributed to his health because of the positive effect that it had on his respiratory system.

And the mind, very much so. I don't have to tell you that the organist has got to use his brain quite a lot. It's one of the most demanding discipline there is in music I think, to cope with a variety of medium sized organ and to read the music, three staves thereof etc. It keeps the brain cells busy. There is another aspect of music and health and well-being that's important. And that is the involvement in serious choral music is tremendously helpful to one's respiratory system.

Morton felt that singing was important in his life because he considered it as the 'barometer' of good health. He suggested that although people may not always be feeling in good health they could begin to feel better if they participated in singing activities.

Ah, yes, music's a most important part of my life, daily, all the time. My singing teacher used to say that singing, in his instance, was the barometer of his vitality, that if you were feeling crook you didn't sing too well, but if you started to sing then you'd feel better, and that's the method that I've adopted.

For Peter, the playing of a musical instrument was part of striving for perfection in one's life. The practice and playing of the violin for him was about trying to achieve the ultimate goal, which he sees is a metaphor that carries across to other areas in his life.

I suppose it's partly the fact that one feels that one has acquired a certain minimum technique and doesn't want to lose it but it also, there is also the struggle with perfection, one always want's to do the thing better than one who has done it in the past, more perfectly in tune to play more accurately and better tone and all that kind of thing. I suppose one is always searching for perfection in chording and intonation generally and the rhythm and the same is true of playing an instrument. So I'd have to see music for me as part of striving for perfection really. Its a kind of metaphor for perfection in life itself.

The regular making of music either by the playing of an instrument or singing was agreed by most of the informants as providing benefits that included keeping the brain stimulated and the body healthy and functioning. The playing of an instrument was viewed as contributing towards a positive outlook on life. This was considered by several informants as a way of 'warding off' the ageing process. For example, Phil cited the playing of the organ as keeping his fingers and feet active while the learning of new works helps keep his mind alert. Singing for May, was much like yoga, and had the benefit of improving her breathing. By singing, May felt her respiratory system became more efficient. For James, music was especially important in keeping his mind stimulated, which he believed was important as he grew older and was experiencing decreasing physical ability.

Well, it keeps the fingers and feet active. I do try and keep my mind fresh and I do try to learn new works, even though I don't have all that much brain allows me to. (Phil)

Because, you know, all these yoga things basically is about breathing. So I think music's got that aspect too because you have to breathe properly and control your breath. And I always think that sends the oxygen around in a better way, so I'm sure of that in my mind, anyhow. (May)

And I do think it keeps the mind active. I think I've seen a couple of my former colleagues who retired about the same time, when I meet them, I hate to say it

but they haven't got much to offer now. I mean they almost, their minds have gone into a state of vegetation. I think its very important 'cos people have to be aware if they are getting older they cant do some of the things they might have been able to do when they were younger - certainly from the physical sense. Therefore, I think they ought to make up for that loss of physical ability by keeping the mind as active as possible. (James)

Mildred described music in her life as giving her 'meaningfulnss'. At the age of 98 years, she feels that she had a purpose and 'each day is worth living'. Mildred plays and practices the piano as often as she can and draws much pleasure from music.

Well it's life. It's living. It's the kind of life I like and it must have music there, and Christianity, yes. I think they go together. If I felt a little bit tired even, I can revive myself with the piano. I feel the day hasn't been completed unless I do a little bit each day. Music gives you something to live for now, you see.

Music provided many informants with a tangible experience of beauty that was paramount with feeling a sense of well-being and health. June described this beauty as equivalent with the experience of beautiful flowers in her life.

When you're finished listening to a really beautiful CD, it's just, ah! that was lovely! you know? That's all I can say. To me that's satisfying. So, it's expressing sort of beauty in your life, the same as some lovely flowers. The same thing!.

For Peter, music provided the senses with the same ecstatic feeling as that of a beautiful and dramatic landscape.

...it (music) can have an ecstatic effect on people of course can't it but a supremely beautiful landscape can sometimes bowl people over just as a supremely beautiful piece of music will.

Noreen's story told of her compelling need to have beauty in her life. She also described how music could significantly provide a sense of beauty when she did not have access to it in other forms. Noreen explained as follows:

I just took the ear phones off and I heard the roar of the waves and I thought, 'What a stupid girl I am! I should listen to this back up in the house. I should be listening to the sound of the sea.' That moves me very much. I'm mad about the sea. I miss it terribly. I don't go down there now. But that sort of beauty, and country side beauty. This friend who took me down to Anglesea has died a couple of years ago. Because I'm not going there so much, I didn't realise until just last month, this Hungarian friend took me out to a winery for lunch, a birthday treat. And as we went out it was the most gorgeous day and the countryside was lovely, and there was mist just rising out of the blue mountains. And the wattle were just, it was so gorgeous. And I suddenly thought, 'Golly, I haven't had any country side. I've had no beauty. Before it was just a part of my life. But I'd been missing it but not aware of missing it until it came back to me, and now I am bitterly missing it because I know its there and I'm not getting it.

Music can be an intense experience whereby the listener is engaged in playing an instrument or listening intently to it, or it can be enjoyed as a supplementary pleasure while doing everyday activities. Many informants spoke of having music playing while they were working to help fill the 'void' or 'gap' and make mundane tasks such as ironing or preparing meals more enjoyable. For Frank, Morton and John, music filled a void and provided comfort and pleasure while they were going about their daily lives.

It's something that does provide, fills a void, is a comforting thing. (Frank)

Yes, without it, it's pretty ... there's a void there, I suppose. (Morton)

Yeah, well I like to have the music there because it fills a void I suppose. I just like to have the music going at all times. (John)

For Eileen, music provided a pleasant distraction from daily household activities. It could also help her to feel in a better frame of mind to do household chores.

And if I'm stuck on something that I'm doing, or get bored with the housework, you know it's nice to go and sit down and play the piano for a bit. Maybe something that I know thoroughly, which gets me to a better temper, with the ironing or everything.

Psychologically, music has many benefits. One informant spoke of how music provided a tranquil respite from the noise and clutter of everyday life when he said 'if there is lots of noise and chaos around me, I just long to hear music'. Some informants described music as alleviating depression, loneliness and general tiredness. Others spoke of the intense physical joy and pleasure that music provided them when listening or making music. An example of music causing people to feel better was Mildred, who played the piano every day, and especially when she was tired, feeling a little down, or feeling lonely. It was the playing of the piano that alleviated those symptoms for her. Morton used music in a similar way. He said that he was never lonely when he was engaged with music. For Bev, music provided an intense feeling of pleasure that she equated with a sensual and beautiful experience.

I do because I love it and it helps to make me feel better. If I felt a little down or lonely, the piano will fix me. No, but you can feel more tired some days and if you don't know what to do, there's always the piano. (Mildred)

Well ... well, I suppose music can be a background for me for all of those things. One is never lonely with music, I suppose. (Morton)

...there is almost a physical feel, an orgasmic feeling I get when I hear beautiful music or the sound of a beautiful chord. (Bev)

Informants spoke of music as being a self-administered therapy that provided comfort, distraction and relief for them. For Pam, music could help her to endure pain such as she experienced when visiting the dentist. Similarly for Eileen, music helped in the distraction from pain or discomfort while undergoing eye medical surgery. Elizabeth spoke about music as being a therapeutic facilitator that helped her to feel better when she was ill or suffering from pain or discomfort. By listening to music she described herself as undertaking a 'self healing' therapy.

I hope that there is enough music in my brain to carry me through. If I'm at the dentist or the podiatrist that hurts, I think about music and I can endure. I mean it's not bad pain, but it's discomfort. It helps me in those situations too. (Pam)

...this eye operation, it was done under a local anaesthetic, and I was sort of singing songs and so on to myself, inwardly, because it was more painful than it should have been. (Eileen)

Music cheers me up if I'm sad or feeling unwell...I'm a pretty healthy lady, but if I'm sick or I've busted my toe or done something where there's like a sense of deep pain or a chronic pain, my reaction usually is to use music because I'm into self healing techniques and prayer. But to use a favourite sort of chord or to use some majestic sort of combination of musical notes that inspires me, and that does induce well feeling. So of course in effect, it's self applied music therapy. (Elizabeth)

For others, music provided an escape and way of being less stressed. Ian and Robert spoke about the therapeutic value of music for them.

I don't know if it was therapeutic but it made me feel better at the time, either to cry or because I could get involved in it and forget the worries that were going on around me. I can't listen to music and still worry about what happened at the office today, but if I turn to listen to music it's because I've said Ok I'm going to stop worrying now and listen to the music. (Ian)

Yes, I could come home and I could be stressed, let's say, from some meeting or whatever, and I will come in and there are only two composers I can play. One is Mozart. It's usually Mozart, or Bach. (Robert)

For many of the informants music provided an intellectual stimulation that was important in their lives. Mildred was one of many who saw music as part of a life long quest for learning. As she stated:

It stimulates your brain. It stimulates your brain so much that you are willing to learn and you want to learn all the time.

Mildred also participated in dancing classes and believed that her good health was the result of fitness, good diet and music in her life.

I would like to just get up in the morning and go to the piano all day. I have to have music and that's all about it. It means a lot, it means everything, it means my life.

When the informants were asked how music directly affected them, their descriptions were varied. For many informants, music could provide a change in their emotions. For others, music could offer comforting reassurance, and a feeling of uplifted morale. Many informants spoke of music as:

- lifting their spirits,
- changing their moods to being more positive,
- putting them in touch with beauty and spirituality,

- reviving and restoring them, and
- reminding them of happier (and occasionally) sadder times in their life.

Music was also thought to provide excitement, pleasure and exhilaration. For Peter, Elizabeth and Julie, music had the potential to provide a feeling of exhilaration, excitement, joy and electricity because of its ability to lift and carry people emotionally and intellectually.

...extreme logic of the fugue and the sheer electric vigour of that fast movement where it really is like electricity almost its quite exciting. And I suppose it brings out in one the sense of exhilaration that is always buried in one and can always come to the surface from time to time. And the sense of excitement and in a way it's a kind of revelation of how vivid life experiences can be I guess.
(Peter)

Of course it's the sheer excitement and joy of it too because if it moves you, it creates an enormous amount of pleasure which is certainly more than hedonistic pleasure, it's a very fine appreciation of the world of sound.
(Elizabeth)

...its that moment, almost a climactic moment if you like a sensual one. At that point it's so beautiful and it's so perfect that it's got nothing to do with a rush of blood its just a good moment and its almost surreal and so then you can be reduced to tears almost and so I remember this. (Julie)

The following extracts give an insight into the importance of the effects of music for older people. For Owen and Joan, music facilitated the experience of different emotions. Music could be used to cause a change in their emotions at any given time, such as when they might be in need of a psychological lift.

Well, I think it's a very emotional thing, I find music very emotional, how it affects and causes different emotions, and that's what I like, it can change the

emotions. It can make you feel sad, I suppose, and joyous — that's part of music, part of life. (Owen)

...yes the stirring of feelings that comes from music is tremendously valuable. To lift people out of the humdrum. And perhaps the pain that they're coping with, or the sadness depression or loss. (Joan)

David, like most informants, stated that listening to music was not just a way of relaxing, but a way of restoring one's psyche. Music could take him into a world where time is suspended and associated with great artistry.

If I want to relax, I listen to music and the world stops and there is serenity for that time...because I think music has the capacity to restore us to ourselves — that's why music means so much to me...I find a certain composure and a relaxation in that the music is taking me into a another world, one of great artistry.

Many of the informants experience music as having a positive effect on their psychological state and could cause change. May spoke of music as causing a change in her physical and psychological state when she listened to music. Bob described how music could pull him out of being inwardly looking, and Margot spoke of music as being the 'Valium ®' of life where her day and psychological outlook could change. The informants explained:

It has a soothing effect. You're not aware that you're uptight or, you know, like screaming or whatever it might be. But the right piece of music makes an atmosphere and an attitude, and you change, I feel. (May)

Oh yes, it gives you a lift. It pulls you out of yourself. (Bob)

I won't say it's the vallium of my life, but being a pharmacist, I can talk in medical terms, um... it can change. It can change my whole day because I can

feel pushed, rushed, tired. I can feel physically tired because I'm a very active person. (Margot)

For Bev, music was something that she enjoyed immersing herself in, and when she did, could feel inspired to the point that music caused a physical reaction such as being motivated to dance or move.

I love immersing myself in the music and the harmonies. Music inspires me to move, such as when I'm listening to the radio and I find myself dancing around the kitchen.

For Frank, music was a major part of his life. Each day he was occupied in terms of listening and playing music, preparing and conducting chamber music concerts, and presenting radio programmes. Music provided him with a psychological stability that he did not have in his younger years. Frank spoke of music in his life as follows:

...it's quite an emotional thing as well with me. And partly related to my background, and the strange thing with not having a father, and subsequently I did have a stepfather, but that was a problematic relationship because he was actually later, he was very ill because he had spent a couple of years in a concentration camp, and he got very bad diabetes, and in those days they couldn't treat it that well, and he got personality disorders. And that was a very sad situation. But, for me it's provided the nearest thing to any kind of a grounding or a stability, and I don't have any religious beliefs because of the strange way I was brought up. I went to a school where I was treated as an Anglican, so a minority, in a Presbyterian school, and in fact behind all of that I had Jewish background. And I'm still even now in a way coming to terms with that. Knowing that I'm Jewish, but knowing very little about the Jewish heritage. Feeling guilty that I've been brought up a bit as a Christian.

For some older people, music influenced how they saw history, how they thought life should be lived, how the flow of a musical line or phrase could be transferred into their everyday life, such as Robert when creating a garden path. For Robert, music was an integral way of thinking. The meaning of music in these people's lives was largely about how one's thinking was influenced, and for some, how life's experience could be converted back into their understanding and appreciation of music.

I suppose it's helped define me...but my musical training and knowledge of performance over the years, it comes into your life in other ways. The structure of paths, for instance, has to have flow. (Robert)

Both Donald and Robert had careers as professional musicians and music for them provided ways of knowing and experiencing life.

... music has been my life. I've been in music all my life, all my life I've made music and listened to music and it couldn't but help influence my thinking, my daily life, because never a day goes past that I don't listen to music, I have something to do with music, making music in one form or another. (Donald)

I used to play a lot of sports when I was younger, and I try and describe that to people. You don't talk in broken words like that, you do it all in one phrase, a flowing phrase, like you would do in a stroke in tennis or golf or whatever, cricket. So, yes, it's an integral part of my thinking, I suppose, whatever I may do. But then, also, other things I study or experience outside of music, I bring back into music too. (Robert)

Music was also about beauty and artistic ideals. Julie described how music could be beautiful and untainted by evil.

I can't just say beautiful because all music isn't beautiful but to me music is an extra sense for humanity, its not tainted, depending unless its supposed to be about the worst things of the 20th Century its not tainted by evil.

Music was more than a pleasurable pursuit. The informant's stories suggested that music is part of life experiences that encapsulates higher ideals and ways of knowing the world within which they lived. Music could have an effect on the way people lived their life, the way they think, and the way they interacted with the world. For example, Elizabeth spoke about music as being a way of thinking, connecting and experiencing the world. For Julie, music can provided ways for understanding the larger issues of life and humanity.

Yes. I think in effecting thinking and being part of one, one uses some kind of musical background often to important things in the way one thinks. We all go through periods of thinking about and connecting to certain beautiful pieces of music with events. I think with people who are more musically inclined, that becomes almost second nature, so that you're thinking music as you're thinking about other things, connections seem to become more important.
(Elizabeth)

... and so many of the great composers chose to write about the big issues of humanity and so through music, and all of the arts, but through music you can find some reasons for your existence. You can find some reasons for people acting in a certain way and if those reasons, if it's performed beautifully enough then you don't need any more. (Julie)

Choice, independence and well-being

The personal choice of particular styles of music was an issue for the informants who resented and disliked music inflicted upon them through lack of choice. This lack of choice in listening to music was confronted in doctor's surgeries, waiting

rooms, supermarkets, while waiting on the telephone, and when other people were playing loud music in public open spaces.

Choice of music was important for all the informants. This was because each person had likes and dislikes of certain music, and one person's preference could easily be another person's dislike. For example, not all music resulted in having a soothing effect. The simple components of a musical work such as beat, volume, timbre, style and choice all contribute to the older person having either a negative or positive experience. Negative reactions to music ranged from people leaving a room or shop, asking for the volume to be turned down, or being disturbed and unsettled by the imposed music.

Yes, the volume wasn't too bad, it was reasonable, but that heavy beat was there, it had no rhyme or reason, and if I'm shopping I'll never go into the shop that's playing, you know, this modern music the kids love. I've just got to walk away from it, I don't want to hear it. (Morton)

I'm in a cafe, and there's this bloody noise going on I'll say to the waitress, 'Is it possible you can turn the music down a bit? We came in here for a quiet time and a chat.' And then they're totally oblivious to the noise, those girls or boys. Because they work with it all the time. 'Oh no, not at all.' They've got to turn it down about 16 notches, you know, and it's pleasant in the background. (Noreen)

I was at a chiropractor and he just sort of said, 'Now, I'm going to leave you for half an hour to relax,' and this music was driving me mad, and he came back in and he said to me, 'Well, I thought you'd be asleep,' and I said, 'Well, you really ought to tell your neighbours not to play music so loud.' And he was horrified, he said, 'But I've just ordered that music from Japan, it's supposed to be the therapy for people who have just had this, you know, work out and relaxing,' and I said, 'Well, it wasn't for me! (Marian)

For Pam, music that was imposed in supermarkets 'is a form of hell' that she found difficult to cope with. Neville supported Pams feeling and stated that he found music that was played as background music was disturbing and intrusive.

I can't stand music that I haven't... that is imposed on me. I can't stand supermarkets. Oh God! oh! it's just awful, awful. Hearing cars go by with... they turn the speakers up and this thump, thump, thump - I just can't bear it. That would be hell for me to be forced to endure that sort of thing. So if you want to punish me. Oh! it would be just hell. It would be worse than being without. So, noise that is insistent and to my ear unmusical. (Pam)

I can't stand background music, wallpaper and Muzak and that sort of thing really drives me bonkers. And the stuff that goes on in shopping centres and so on that is alleged music, I'd turn off my hearing aides at time. (Neville)

The importance of choice is more than just the experiencing of jarring or loud music imposed by others. Being able to choose music was also about the individual feeling in control and having a sense of independence. This was a concern for many informants when they were asked how they might feel or cope if they were placed in residential care due to failing health. As Stan explained:

...once you lose that ability to make your own choices and to do your own thing, then things start to become depressing and melancholy.

For Zillah and Stan having choices in life is about feeling in control. Being able to make choices in terms of the music they listen to effects their sense of well-being.

Well, if you're in control of yourself, then you have the ability surely to make choices, and that is one of the things that's so important in my life. I need to be in control of myself, I need to make my own choices, not have them thrust upon me, and I think those things altogether make for a feeling of wellbeing. (Zillah)

Well, if you're in control of yourself, then you have the ability surely to make choices, and that is one of the things that's so important in my life. I need to be in control of myself, I need to make my own choices, not have them thrust upon me, and I think those things altogether make for a feeling of wellbeing. I mean, once you lose that ability to make your own choices and to do your own thing, then things start to become depressing and melancholy. (Stan)

For Pam, the concept of being in an aged care facility and not being able to have choice or access to music was unthinkable. Whereas for June, life would become depressing if she did not have access and choice with regards music in her life.

I can't go into Aged Care. Some of my work is done in an Aged Care facility. Um, I'll just have to go crazy in my own house, because I wouldn't have access to music. (Pam)

I think it would be depressing. I think if you didn't have music for day-in/day-out, I think you'd become depressed, there'd be an emptiness there. Music for me is rejuvenating and satisfies a need that I must have. (June)

Many of the informants stated that they consciously chose music to suit their mood. Choice played a significant part in the experience of music for older people because music was often used as a self type applied therapy. By using music in such a way, people could change or enhance their moods, attend to and experience emotions and feelings, connect with memories, be uplifted, or calmed and relaxed as they so desired.

Bob chose music for an emotional lift and to compliment his spiritual thoughts and meditation. Whereas Jane, the choice of music is important because it could revive her and give her an emotional lift. For Maureen, the choice of music is a reflection of her mood.

Frank purposefully chose music so that it both calmed and distracted him from worry and stress.

Yeah, oh yes. Oh yes, I quite often choose music a lot. If I'm at home...I'll quite often put on, particular Bach, I sort of think that Bach does give that element. Uh, I put on quite often music of Beethoven, it might be one of the Piano Sonatas, uh, I put on say Faure's Requiem, uh, just to give that extra what I call elevation to my own thoughts. And I think music does have the ability to be able to humanise one's own spiritual thoughts and to be able also to add as I think I've said earlier, that extra dimension to one's existence. (Bob)

I'll choose what I want to hear. That's usually Chamber music of some sort or other. I think I'd probably need some emotional sort of um...help probably. It's the only way I can put it. And the music does that for me because it's emotional type of music. I think it brings me to life again. I think I use it as a life-saver, you know! (Jane)

I think my choice of the music reflects my mood, so if I'm in a non-mood, you know neither up nor down, or just ordinary, then I'll have a look and see what I feel like. (Maureen)

If I'm distracted or busy or worried about things, it does have a calming influence on me. It'll take my mind off the more practical and down to earth worries of everyday living. It takes me out of myself. Music also fills a void and a need in my life. (Frank)

Time, reality and escape

People often use music to provide structure in their daily lives. This can include listening to music such as June who listens to radio in the morning and afternoons to selected CDs, or Mildred, Phil, John, Pam, Margaret and Bev who played the piano regularly. For David, Julie, Don, Noreen and John, much of their time was spent listening, preparing and presenting community radio programmes. Frank

enjoyed preparing concert and radio programmes, and like Peter, Eileen, Neville and Phil, making music with friends. Bob listened to music and presents community classes. Many others spoke of playing recordings and listening to music to accompany daily activities so that the activities are more enjoyable.

However, one of the reasons why many of the informants were attracted to and enjoy music in their lives is because it provides them with imaginative play, fantasy and escape from everyday living. Music allowed people to become lost in thought and escape reality and time, whether it be associated directly with the music they were engaged with, or the thought associations that the music stirred in the mind. Several informants spoke about how they used music to assist in pain management, avoid loneliness and to just be lost in abstract thought. For instance, Pam and Phil found that music could take their minds off their physical conditions when they were engaged with listening or playing music. Pam could be distracted from her arthritis condition and Phil from worrying and thinking about his medical ailments. They offered the following comments:

I guess it takes my mind off the physical circumstances and I can go into the state where I'm listening and thinking about music. (Pam)

Because I think that if you're involved in playing or even listening to music, you're not thinking about your personal worries or ailments. It takes away that if you like. (Phil)

For Peter, music could have the effect of stimulating imaginative thought and fantasy such as the music of Wagner with its dramaticism and often unresolved musical lines. Patricia, like Peter, was also drawn to music because of its abstract

qualities. The following extracts illustrates how music being could be used as an escape.

Music has a very powerful imaginative potential. I was listening to the Lohengrin of Wagner and that is something that makes me feel physically ill and its a very interesting question of why that is so I suppose and I think it has to do with the fact that it arouses within one because of the extreme dramaticism lack of resolution and so forth it arouses within one all sorts of sub-conscious awareness that normally don't come up to the surface at all. And I think the lack of resolution in particular is a disturbing thing because it reminds one that life itself is full of unresolved situations. I think this is brought home extremely forcefully by that sort of music of Wagner, I'm not particularly fond of Wagner's music but I do think its very powerful. It has these very powerful effects on the imagination even if one were not to know the story behind it, the sheer force and power of the various motives and the way Wagner treats them, it can't help but call up, normally buried aspects of the imagination. (Peter)

I rather like abstract things, I'm rather keen on abstract thinking and abstract ideas and music is a dimension of that abstraction which, Bach's music for instance attracts me tremendously because of it's sort of mathematical precision and the polyphony and so on and I guess I like that because it's the clear line and this is a bit like 18th century architecture in a way. (Patricia)

For both James and Margot, music provided an escape into fantasy, which they felt was important. It was an escape into world that is devoid of social injustice and violence.

As a person in my 60's and I'm a sensitive person I am extremely upset that there's so much violence that I suppose has always gone on and I have not had time to notice it, now I have but at least in the arts you can escape from the evils of society as much as possible. (James)

Yes it is. I'd rather escape into something I respect and am overwhelmed by.
(Margot)

For Bunty and David, music transported them into a different time and space. It was a space where time was suspended and they are totally absorbed by music.

It sends me into another world, a joyful world. (Bunty)

I was transformed into another world where the world was passing by outside, but I was there listening to a masterpiece. That gives me such satisfaction that I don't want to be interrupted from it. It's also a kind of addiction that I enjoy.
(David)

Music can also be a facilitator and stimulus of imaginative thought. As an art form, music can take the listener on a journey or adventure that is limited only by the imagination of the individual. Peter enjoyed the psychological aspect of music being able to take him to the edge of the known and conscious thinking. For Jane, music could provide a transcendental experience and feed her imagination. The same applied for Bob, who liked to use his imagination when he was listening to music.

... well I think that a great deal of music to me at any rate it takes us to the edge of the known I suppose it takes us, we're faced with an abyss in lots of respect. Yes I think there are many aspects of music, which seem to put one in touch with whatever the source of thinking and feeling and imagining is really.
(Peter)

There is something that lifts you out of yourself. I don't know how you describe it. I mean when you're there, when you're listening to it, I mean I think one's imagination can run wild too. It's a very personal sort of thing where you just wonder...an emotional wonderment and not really knowing why some people can do this. It is so incredible. I mean it just takes you out of yourself. It's

amazing sort of sound. I don't know, the whole picture, it takes you way out of yourself. (Jane)

I can perceive in my own mind what I call musician thoughts, musical adventures that give me pleasure even though they will never be realised. Then I can conger up visions of what I'm trying to think about, visions that probably was never meant with the music. It doesn't really matter, it's the thing that broadens ones life, it gives that extra level of spirituality and intellectual pleasure and just sheer physical pleasure that no other art form can give. (Bob)

Music can also contribute to how people structure their time. Many informants stated that they did not have time to become bored because they had music. This also has been discussed in terms of informants finding time to enjoy practicing their instruments regularly. Jane stated that when listening to music there was a sense of timelessness for her. By listening to music she felt uplifted and totally engaged in the musical work she is listening to.

Well, it's different, um... listening... getting pleasure from a concert or any music. This I think you would term spiritual actually because I think it's the area, the soaring feelings, the feeling of timelessness, um it's being there and you're in the most incredible building, how on earth was it built? The whole thing comes together and this wonderful sound. It is a really, really exciting, not exciting so much as uplifting I suppose. I can't think of another word for it really.

For Donald, music helped structure his day. He was so passionate about music and reading that he didn't have time to become bored in life.

I am a pretty well adjusted person and I have ... my daily life is one in which I don't allow boredom to intrude. Although I live here alone, I'm alone a lot, and boredom can take over if you allow it, but I don't allow it. I write a lot. I keep in touch with people overseas. s I have many friends overseas, and I listen to a

lot of music and I have a big library of books and I'm reading constantly, and there's no time then for boredom.

Music provided many people with a way of being connected with history and times past. Through music, people could access, understand and rationalise their heritage. For both David and Bob, music provided a historical and sociological perspective. For them, it was a direct link with the past and the present.

...it (music) gives you a contact with the world that went by, and by listening to music you can put yourself into that context. (David)

Adventure is what I call... adventures to me in music is how you look upon music. The various scopes of music, the various times of music, the various influences that one musical stream had on the other. So you're going through literally centuries from say 1601 say until the present time. You're going through all these various things that have occurred, all the social, economic, political changes. You're seeing how music is reflected either in those changes, or those changes reflected themselves upon music. You can get a perception and to me, it's a great adventure to be able to realise, and to know in your own mind, that you are a party to all these things. It's like in a sense being able to go back into time, and yet not be part of time. You are like a shadow in the outer side of the sun as it were. That to me is the adventure you can get from music, because you can be a partner into all the events that have happened over a period of say the last 400 years. You can realise just how all these things were important for the time and that they influenced society and how music itself was part of that. (Bob)

Spirituality

The experience and meaning of music in the lives of the informants had many resounding and recurring themes. One of the most repetitious themes was music and its connection with spirituality. For many informants there was a direct link between music and one's personal sense of spirituality. Elizabeth, like many other

informants, felt that there was a common link between her experience of music and her understanding and experience of spirituality. The experience of music for Elizabeth is much deeper than pleasure, distraction or intellectual interest. She also asserted that people that who have a deep interest in music tended to be more spiritually aware.

I think that the idea of sound is at a much deeper level and I think this is exemplified by the fact that people speak of music as being imperial. So somehow intuitively they recognise a connection between what is spiritual and what is musical. My observation is that having mixed with hundreds of people over the last 20 years, particularly those who are musically interested, perhaps, are usually people with a very wide broad spiritual base to their personality.

Bob stated that it is music gives a person an extra edge to their spiritual experience because it had the capacity to lift people out of the ordinariness of their lives and take on an extraordinary dimension that would have not been possible otherwise.

Music can add that extra dimension because we live in a world of reality and I think at times we need music to lift us out of the 'mundaneity' of reality to realise of course there is a spiritual life beyond what is the mere physical and the mere visible. We need to be able to have something that will add that extra edge as it were, that extra sharpness to the soul that one particularly has, and music can add that from time to time. (Bob)

Music for many informants puts them in touch with a sense of spirituality that otherwise they would find difficult to access, and for others, was a way of complementing a meditative state of mind. Thus, the experience of music for many of the informants was to know a sense of spirituality, a way of connecting with a sense of spirituality, or a way to enhance their knowledge and understanding of it. The descriptions of this experience, from the informants, was as varied as their definitions of spirituality. It is interesting to note that several

people who stated that they did not see themselves as religious or spiritual, believed that it is music that brings them closest to an understanding and experience of spirituality in their life. For example, Jane stated that she did not see herself as a religious person, yet through music can felt uplifted. Music had the effect of providing her with a spiritual and transcendental experience.

Um... well I mean I don't have a religion as such. I don't have the belief system and I believe sort of probably in the Ten Commandments, this sort of thing, but that I don't know. But I think the music is a lifting experience. It's a spiritual experience, which does take you out onto another level, let's put it that way, which nothing else will. It's transcendental.

Joan spoke of music having the capacity to connect people with a larger world, which she believed was essentially spiritual. This world of the spirit was closely associated with people's emotions.

...music is about connecting with people, yes but moving into a different world and a bigger world and a world of the spirit to some extent and your emotions.
(Joan)

Music and the experience of spirituality

Bob described music and spirituality in the following extract. He believed music could be defined as 'spiritual' because music has no bodily form, yet has the potential to influence and effect people emotionally, psychologically, intellectually, and physically. Music can inspire people, and for Bob, at times feel unearthly.

...music is spiritual. It's something of the thought. If it is said that we come from a divine being, and that divine being is spiritual, in other words, not having a body, then music itself can have the same spiritual uplifting. To listen to a beautiful Bach work, to even listen to say some of the marvellous music that Wagner wrote, there is a spirituality, a sort of... there's something

unreal or unearthly about the feeling that you get when you listen to that particular music. Yes I get a lot of spiritual thought.

Bob also provided a description of music in terms of how it could be spiritual in people's lives. Music for Bob was uplifting, inspired transcendental thought, was invigorating and is ennobling. He also believed that through music the individual can feel spiritually in tune with life and the world. This was captured in Bob's statement when he said:

Because music of itself should be of the spirit, it should be uplifting and it should be ennobling. And I would think that most music does that a lot to my spirituality. But music can add to that because it's very nice to be able to do things, but if you have the advantage, well like wearing a beautiful cloth, it adds that little bit more to your own spiritual existence as human being.

David believed there was a definite link between music and spirituality. Music gave him a feeling of another world that was beyond his immediate reality.

... when I listen to music I experience a feeling that there is another world.

Margot spoke of her personal experience of music and spirituality when she stated how music was something in her life that was not superficial. It is part of her soul and sense of being. Spirituality is more than religion, as she explained:

...you can have no religion, no faith, but you do have a sense of spirituality. Well for me it is because it (music) touches my inner depth. I mean it doesn't just stay on the surface. Music therefore seeps into my definition of soul.

The experience of spirituality, like the experience of music itself, is personal and individualist. It often defies description through language. Elizabeth linked the spiritual effect of music with one's intuition and personal belief in systems of

knowing. She saw music as being directly connected with what she described as a 'universal energy'.

And the spiritual part is very, very hard to define because it comes into left brain, right brain sort of stuff and the spiritual aspect of life is connected very much with one's faith in the belief systems, which usually is... well that's either developed instinctually if you look back at the Freudian stuff, or it's something which is just there. And if it's just there, it's the intuitive part of a person. So the intuitive part of a person's make-up is related I believe very strongly to the soul. So that the development between what you could call spirituality and soul growth or what is the soul, what part of the person is that, has a very broad connotation. It's I believe every person has that, obviously we ritualise that in Church ceremonies, for the part it continuously other religions ritualise it in very, very many other ways. It's becoming more widely accepted that the spirit within a person, that twinkle within them, that flame, which is always there doesn't now pass through one generation to another...I suppose the spiritual part of a person is that unique part of a person which connects them with universal energy. So gee, that's getting very difficult now.

For Peter, like many other informants, the link between music and the experience of spirituality was difficult to define or describe. This he explained as follows:

...you can only say music is like something or other or in a metaphorical sense it is something rather but you can't ever say what it is of course. Well it's sometimes said I know that Beethoven's music much of it is intensely spiritual...were one would have to say that I guess that it's truly religious music in that it seems to put us in touch momentarily with whatever the source of moral and physical reality is. I don't really like to talk about it because I don't know what the word spirituality means.

The need for music was often stated as being a quest for beauty and equated with the experience and perception of spirituality. Elizabeth claimed, 'I see music as part of one's soul'. By listening to 'beautiful music' one could come closer to

knowing and experiencing one's sense of purpose and spiritual being. As Bob stated:

...music is meant to be the whole bringing together of the whole physical and spiritual being of a person.

Maureen described the experience of listening to music as being similar to prayer. She saw music as a way of being in touch with God. For Maureen, music was a direct gift from God, and like all beauty, was in the eye of the beholder. Music helped to provide Maureen with a broad understanding and experience of spirituality in her life.

And so that's why it is prayer. And I think that for me, that's what music is. I mean I'm not always as conscious of that, but I will often be driving along and hear something and I'll say: 'Oh! Thank you God for that, that's just...I mean you know, that there is the wonder of technology that you know we can hear - I can hear Jussi Bjoerling sing you know um, even though he's been dead for so long. I can listen to some of these other emerging people who...and sometimes somebody will hit a note, you know a soprano just with such clarity. So for me, I can't... it's such a gift and anything for me that is a real gift is from God. I've got a fairly broad definition of God. But for me, any beauty, if it's like a sunset or whatever, is just another manifestation of that.

Maureen described listening to music as feeling in touch with God. The beauty of music for Maureen was a tangible way of experiencing God, and a way of reflecting God's influence in her life.

...it (music) is life giving in I think just for it's beauty. And also for me, it's prayer. It really is because I think it's one of the great manifestations of Gods wonder, the wonder of music, the beauty of music. I mean you know, if you talk about God is beauty, God is wonder, God is this, God is that, well so is music to me. So it's a great manifestation of that...Well, if I'm listening to something like Borodin's 'Nocturne', I would probably never put that on and

just walk around the house. If I put that on, I would probably sit here and really take that in and I would listen to it for its own beauty. But as I said, for me that that would be the reflective beauty of God touching me.

For Peter, beauty was closely associated with a search for perfection. As a musician he strived to achieve this through playing the violin. Perfection was something that he recognised as being unreachable, but nevertheless was an important quest and carried over into other areas of his life. Peter explained as follows:

...I'd have to see music for me as part of striving for perfection really, its a kind of metaphor for perfection in life itself and in that respect it's a spiritual thing too because I guess in one's life one is constantly striving for perfection in relationships and whatever one does and all the rest of it, and usually one falls far short of course. and hearing very fine performances too one realises that people have come very close to the ultimate perfection, I mean to hear Elizabeth Schwarzkopf or Gerald Souzay singing Schubert for example, and then to hear a good amateur, one comes to realise that the really gifted top professional is very close to perfection really. That in itself is a thing of perfection. Whatever the form it may take, it has a powerful spiritual importance I think!

Conclusion

For many informants, music was now a major occupation in their life whether it be listening to it, making music, attending concerts, or preparing music programs for other people to enjoy. Music was essential because it provided immense pleasure, a sense of beauty and ways of connecting and sharing with other people. For many informants, music had become a post retirement occupation and focus, as they had become involved in community based music activities that included playing in ensembles, working as volunteer radio programmers and presenters, and music administration.

Music for older people is a valuable way of linking life stages and providing tangible ways of revisiting and reviewing one's life. By being engaged in music, older people can experience psychological movement as music helps them through feelings of loneliness, depression, melancholy or tiredness, and more alive, invigorated, and uplifted.