

Musicians' Attitudes to Musical Influence

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ABSTRACT: This article discusses responses to an online survey on the topic of musical influence. 119 participants took part, answering both quantitative (five point Likert scale) and qualitative questions. A rich set of data was collected, which is summarized and analyzed in this paper. The primary research aim was to discover a good opinion base concerning issues of musical influence, to help illuminate some existing theories of influence, and in turn to inform further research directions. General trends observed included variation in attitudes to influences over time, the role of non-musical influences, and a usually positive attitude towards influences amongst participants.

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WHEN Lady Gaga made her first high profile appearance on Jonathan Ross's then Friday night BBC chatshow (April 17th 2009), she appeared on stage clasping a cup of tea with pinky outstretched, and made the astounding claim that she had no influences. The interview was generally awkward, and this claim in particular rather difficult to overlook, even if we grant that it may have been intended in an ironic spirit or as a deliberate courting of controversy.

Informally, influences are a frequent topic of discussion amongst musicians, critics and audiences. A musician might deliberately place themselves amongst a certain pantheon and genre, respectfully acknowledge their peers, or search for like-minded people through advertisements listing favoured influences. A critic might demolish a new musician as highly derivative of already well-known figures, or commend their good musical taste with respect to putatively worthwhile predecessors; a chief reference point for discussion of new music is comparison to music already well established.

In more formal academic work, musical influence has been studied via many routes, though not always by the direct discussion of 'influence' itself as primary theme. Psychologists have certainly investigated developmental issues around the formation of musical knowledge (Deliège & Sloboda, 1996), particularly in classical instrumental training, though studies of popular musicians' learning practices also exist (Green, 2002). In a questionnaire-based study investigating classical and non-classical (pop, jazz and folk) early career performing musicians, Creech et al. (2008) obtained ratings from participants on factors they considered important to their development. 'Classical musicians rated instrumental teachers, parents, musical events and professional colleagues as the most important musical influences, while non-classical musicians reported that their most important influences were well-known performers and significant musical events.' (p.226); the study did not look at the question of musical influence in general, however.

Academics must come to terms with previous research just as musicians negotiate their position with music history, and one attention-demanding text from literary criticism is Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (Bloom, 1997). Bloom's essential argument revolves around a poet's troubled relationship with strong predecessors, and the various ways a great poet can finally win out in the battle (chiefly by a sufficiently charismatic 'misreading' of their predecessor's work). The weight of history only increases over time to stifle 'latecomers.' Transplanting the tensions to music, musicologists have found the theory (partially) productive in such cases as Brahms's work in the supposed shadow of Beethoven or Chopin (Korsyn, 1991), compositional relations between twentieth century composers (Straus, 1991; Schwarz et al., 2008), or outside of the classical tradition in studies of Keith Emerson (Kawamoto, 2005) or Syrian and Moroccan Andalusian musics (Shannon, 2007). Musicologists have also fought back against perceived limitations in the theory. Whitesell (1994) argues that Bloom's conception is overly aggressive and masculine, and includes a wonderful quotation from Benjamin Britten refuting any burden of tradition: 'I'm

supported by it ... I couldn't be alone' (ibid, p. 156). Murphy (1990) goes as far as to subtitle his article on quotation in jazz improvisation 'The Joy of Influence,' observing that saxophonist Joe Henderson is happy to respectfully acknowledge other jazz musician's material in his solos, and use such 'Signifyin(g)' as a point of accessibility for audiences.

Recent musicological literature often uses the term 'intertextuality,' following post-structuralist philosophy and trends in literary criticism (the exact definition of the term itself is rather varied and disputed). As Klein (2005) discusses, intertextuality tends to denote a superset of influence, in general allowing any relations established amongst texts due to both their original design and subsequent interpretation, and not only historically ordered chains of ideas. Regardless of trends in new musicology, tracking connections between works has been a long time pursuit for scholars: 'The influence of one artist upon another can take a wide variety of forms, from plagiarism, borrowing, and quotation all the way to imitation and eventually to the profound but almost invisible...' (Rosen, 1980, p. 88; see also Burkholder, 1994 for a cataloguing of inter-work relationships). Quotation in jazz solos was already mentioned; another example of issues of respect and repurposing would be musical movements in sampling and the associated tensions in intellectual property law (Lessig, 2004; Miller, 2008).

The brute search for links between musical works can be assisted by computational means. Overtly sample-based works are especially explicit about their influences; Kriss (2004) catalogues source and derived works in an online history of sampling. Automated procedures using computer analysis of the audio content or online meta-data are being developed in the field of musical information retrieval (MIR). Veltkamp and colleagues write of refining understanding of intertextuality by 'finding works that employ the same material or refer to each other by allusion' (Veltkamp, Wiering, & Typke, 2008, p. 94). In one provocative project, Jewell, Rhodes, and d'Inverno (2010) explore the possibility of a jazz improviser identifying their own precursors through automatic audio analysis of their playing. For a further review and a project based around influence in synth pop, see Collins (2010).

Yet even with the aid of computers to sift through the massive databases of musical material, we will still need theories of creativity to drive investigation. What might guide compositional structuring decisions in sampling, for instance, where more than one appropriated source must be combined in a new way? Musical influence amongst sampling artists may operate around favoured techniques of manipulation and mixing, as much as common sources (Smith, 2000). Research into creative practice can inform studies of musical influence and vice versa. Certainly, creativity research provides support for the necessity of influence: in the balancing act of creativity, there is a trade-off in keeping close enough to existing work to be accessible, but far enough away to have some original integrity (Deliège & Wiggins, 2006; North & Hargreaves, 2008, pp. 13-42; Simonton, 1997). Leonard B. Meyer's contributions here are apposite too in terms of the creativity literature's products, processes, persons and press. In his own discussion of influence he emphasizes the choices composers make amongst a panoply of options, and the social factors at play determining reception: 'although the term "influence" is generally used to refer to relationships within a particular art, whatever affects the choices made by an artist is an influence. Cultural beliefs and attitudes, the predilections of patrons, or acoustical conditions may, for instance, be every bit as influential as prior musical compositions. Indeed, some compositions ... may have become "exemplary," and hence influential, precisely because they were favored and chosen for cultural, rather than purely musical, reasons' (Meyer, 1983, p. 529).

Although the reviewed work above outlines some theories of influence and pertinent context, it would be useful to gather a broader set of data here from contemporary musicians themselves. Do musicians commonly deny influences, or if accepting such connections, how do they view influences as operating? Are they anxious about their influences, or is there a more positive side? What are viewed as the chief components of influence in practice, and how might attitudes to influence vary over careers and backgrounds?

In order to tackle this topic further, an online survey was undertaken. 119 respondents discussed a series of questions about influence, meant to help gather information on musician's attitudes to the theme, and delineate future research directions. This article explores the results of this survey, and is structured in the main around the questions themselves. After a short discussion of the survey's preparation, participant responses are worked through. A later section provides cross-question analysis, before a conclusion including potential further research questions.

SURVEY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The eventual full set of survey questions appears as Appendix 1. Following the advice of textbooks on survey construction (De Vaus, 2004; Dilmann, 2000; Ozok, 2008), survey design followed a pilot stage. Graduate students and lecturer colleagues provided feedback on the initial survey structure, leading to a number of revisions on formatting and wording. Related question pairs were built in to provide a check on the consistency of participant responses (Question pairs 7/20 and 11/18). The total number of questions (22) was limited so that they would fit comfortably on a single scrolling webpage, without appearing intimidatingly long. The intention was for participants to spend around 15 minutes on the survey, though given the wealth of feedback some provided, they were interested enough to spend more time considering their responses.

Five survey questions restricted responses to one of five choices. These quantitative responses were enforced by a five point Likert scale, with response categories Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, and Strongly disagree. The rest of the questions provided good opportunities for qualitative feedback. Some questions proved relatively provocative, as further discussed below, but still solicited useful data.

The phpESP website software was used to create and host the survey, and collect responses to a MySQL database. This software allowed export of CSV and text files with response data. Analysis of data was carried out using MATLAB and SuperCollider. MATLAB provided the main statistical tests such as the ANOVA used in the cross question analysis below. SuperCollider was the main scripting language used for text parsing and search.

Once ready for release, publicity for the survey was achieved primarily via mailing lists (e.g., MUSIC-AND-SCIENCE@JISCMail.AC.UK, Canadian Electroacoustic Community Conference, Music-IR (Information Retrieval), Sonic Arts Network), with also a local call to University of Sussex music students, and a call on Facebook reaching many musician colleagues. A good range of backgrounds and a healthy number of music creators as well as performers were actively sought. The cross-section of respondent backgrounds is detailed in the first section of responses below.

Ethics approval was obtained in advance, under the University of Sussex code CREC-IEM_2010_1. A condition of the collection of this data was the anonymising of any quoted statements.

RESPONSES

In the text below, individual questions and groups of related questions are handled in turn following the broad plan of the questionnaire in Appendix 1. All quoted response excerpts are as collected, and sic has not been added to indicate spelling typos or other grammatical issues. Anything subsequently in single quote marks ‘ ’ is an extract provided by a participant. Whenever ‘...’ is used it indicates an omission mid quote; these are only used for long responses where the omitted text did not assist the overall argument.

At times, it felt like every response in a question was worth quoting; reasons of space and occasionally preservation of anonymity require that only a subset of supporting comments are presented in this article. The author has worked hard to try to find the most representative and interesting responses, though any personal selection is open to accusations of bias. The over-interpretation of results is avoided to maintain some integrity here; the article is primarily cast as reporting of responses, and will not unduly impose theory.

Even though the process of conducting the survey revealed various questions as non-optimal, all provoked interesting and considered reactions to inform future research.

Respondents’ Musical Background

Q1 ARE YOU FEMALE OR MALE?

Q2 WHAT IS YOUR AGE?

119 responses were received for the survey as a whole, 98 male, and 20 female (plus one non-respondent on that question). The mean age was 39, and median 37, with ages ranging from 19 to 81. Apart from two octogenarians, ages were spread within 19-64, with a maximum at 33 (seven people). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test rejected the null hypothesis that the distribution was normal by a substantial margin ($p = 5.6913e-106$). Figure 1 plots the histogram of respondent ages as a bar chart, demonstrating that the representation at least from ages 19-64 has a fair spread.

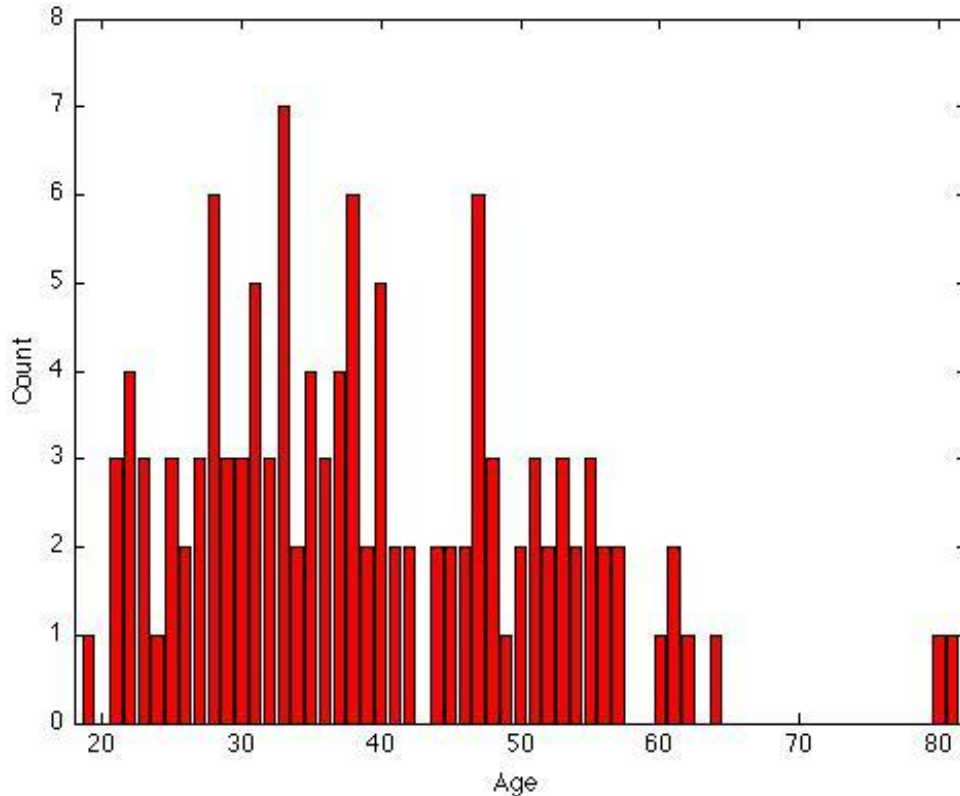


Fig. 1. Histogram of participant ages.

Q3 IF YOU PLAY ONE OR MORE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, HOW LONG HAVE YOU PLAYED THESE INSTRUMENTS, AND WOULD YOU SAY YOU WERE EXPERT IN PERFORMING ON THEM?

Responses were coded with respect to two dimensions, the number of years of practice on a primary instrument, and whether the respondent had experience of no physical instruments (though perhaps computer music software alone), mentioned only one primary instrument, or explicitly mentioned two or more instruments. Years of practice in some cases had to be estimated, with those referring to practice since childhood being allocated their age minus 10 (assuming that serious instrumental practice begins around age 10 on average, see Deliège & Sloboda, 1996, p. 183), and other qualitative ratings allocated conservatively as per 'good' = 5 and 'expert' = 10 years of practice (Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996).

Of all 119 respondents, only nine marked themselves as having no instrumental practice, either through abstention (six) or by only concentrating on computer music software (three). 67 played at least two instruments, and 43 played one. Given that the call for respondents had involved a number of computer music lists, it was interesting to see that the computer musicians often also had training in traditional physical instruments.

The respondents had a variety of ways of conceptualizing their own musical ability, often placing themselves outside of an imagined conservatoire training regime. For instance, one participant charmingly wrote: 'conservatory would not consider me an expert, but I feel quite skilled and content with the relation with my instrument.' The number of self-rated experts was 42 of 119, where this was coded by a

respondent affirming an expert level of performance on at least one instrument, with clearly at least ten years of practice on the instrument in question.

The most commonly appearing instruments were piano and guitar (in acoustic, electric and bass variants). Orchestral instruments from all families appeared, computer and electronic instruments, and some non-Western instruments such as the oud and instruments from the gamelan.

Q4 PLEASE DESCRIBE IN BRIEF ANY FORMAL MUSICAL TRAINING

11 respondents did not answer or responded 'None.' 53 mentioned some form of university study, from undergraduate to postgraduate qualifications, 25 mentioning a doctorate, PhD or DMA. 41 explicitly discussed lessons (with an overlap of 19 people with university qualifications). Five explicitly placed themselves as self-taught (two entirely, three mentioning a short period of study followed by primary auto-didacticism). An interesting response in this line was '40 years of on-the-job and self-training, which will continue indefinitely.'

Most responses were relatively conventional in terms of mentioning particular qualifications, schools, colleges, conservatoires and universities, and different tutors and workshop opportunities.

Q5 DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A CREATOR OF NEW MUSIC, SUCH AS AN IMPROVISER, SONGWRITER OR COMPOSER?

118 responded to Q5, with: Strongly agree (58), Agree (36), Neither agree nor disagree (11), Disagree (2), and Strongly disagree (11). The vast majority (80%) of respondents thereby rated themselves as music creators. Some mailing lists used to promote the survey themselves have a composition related theme, so this was not especially surprising. In the current era, we would expect to see a good number of people with access to creation tools, and encouraged to study composition within their educational backgrounds, so a majority of musicians who only perform other people's music would perhaps seem stranger than this result. Further speculation beyond this on reasons for the observed percentage of music creators would be unwarranted given the data available, however.

Q6 PLEASE LIST ANY MUSICAL STYLES OR GENRES YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR MAIN AREA OF EXPERTISE

Categorisation can be a real issue in music (Aucouturier & Pachet, 2003; Bowker & Star, 2000; Landy, 2007). Perhaps surprisingly, only seven respondents of the 119 rejected the question entirely, by failing to respond (3) or writing a riposte: 'don't do genre or style,' 'none,' 'I have a poor understanding of genre vocabulary. I am aware that many people have very specific understanding of exactly what is and what is not within a given genre, for this reason I tend to avoid the subject—I'd rather be aloof than misunderstood,' and 'I have never met a composer who thinks they specialise in a musical style or genre.' Somewhat in opposition to this latter comment, 112 provided genre terms, with a median of 2 each (min. 0, mean 2.69, max. 16 across all participants). Even if respondents had reservations about the question and were playing along to help the survey, the data collected provided a broad sense of the musical interests of those contributing, and highlighted some common terms people turn to when describing styles. A few respondents provided some conventional terms, and then added a qualification, or found other ways to approach the question: 'no particular style,' 'I listen to almost everything,' 'I have no taste. I like them all. I guess "algorithmic composition," but lots of times I'd rather listen to Trent Reznor.'

Although there were some witty and off the wall singular responses: 'Academic music,' 'various bass-heavy musics,' 'colliding banter ill field recordings,' 'Improvised music on improvised instruments,' coding of the genres mainly followed very recognizable terms such as rock or classical. After many singly and doubly appearing terms, the more popular terms (following their incidences) were:

- 3: algorithmic, early, metal, minimalism, sound art, techno
- 4: avant garde, funk, indie, prog rock, sampling, acousmatic
- 5: folk, free jazz

6: computer, electronica
 7: blues
 8: noise
 9: pop
 13: experimental
 15: contemporary
 16: electroacoustic, rock
 17: improvisation, jazz
 18: electronic
 36: classical

The larger number of more experimental music terms appearing matches to the larger proportion of music creators taking the test, and again to the nature of some mailing lists the survey had been publicized on. However, these genre designations in alliance with instrumental expertise demonstrate that the survey was not taken only by those interested solely in computer music. It potentially also avoids any perception of digital musicians as lacking traditional acoustic training, showing their interests across multiple fields of musical activity.

Main Part of Survey

Q7 MUSICAL INFLUENCES ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF MUSICAL PRACTICE
 Q20 INFLUENCES ARE IMPORTANT TO A MUSICIAN

Two question pairs were incorporated into the survey, in order to provide a check on consistency. Both these pairs involved respondents using the same five point Likert scale. The first pair discussed here, Q7 and Q20, proved least controversial, with a substantial affirmation that influences on a musician have an important role.

116 responded to Q7, with: Strongly agree (73), Agree (38), Neither agree nor disagree (4), Disagree (0), and Strongly disagree (1).

115 responded to Q20, with: Strongly agree (72), Agree (36), Neither agree nor disagree (6), Disagree (0), and Strongly disagree (1).

Only seven respondents were more than one step on the scale out between the questions. Cronbach's alpha coefficient consistency test (De Vaus, 2004, pp. 184-186) was applied to the data for those who had responded to both questions.[2] The consistency test score was 0.7275; scores of 0.7 or above are conventionally taken as demonstrating reliability.

This question pair provided a check on reliability, showing that the survey was being answered sensibly. In general, no particularly perverse or trolling responses were found across the questions. There was good feedback from participants enjoying answering the questions.

Q11 ARE YOU MORE THAN THE SUM OF YOUR INFLUENCES?
 Q12 WHY?
 Q18 HAVE YOU SURPASSED YOUR INFLUENCES?
 Q19 HOW?

The other question pair proved more contentious. Fortunately, qualitative responses (Q12 and 19) were collected along with ratings, to give some insight into the reasons that consistency broke down.

117 responded to Q11, with: Strongly agree (41), Agree (45), Neither agree nor disagree (23), Disagree (6), and Strongly disagree (2).

115 responded to Q18, with: Strongly agree (7), Agree (12), Neither agree nor disagree (67), Disagree (20), and Strongly disagree (9).

Q11 had a good majority of agreement, but still 20% of respondents were unable to commit to agree or disagree. Q18 caused a lot of confusion and disgruntlement with its phrasing. A Cronbach-alpha score of 0.3183 indicated an inconsistent response between Q11 and Q18. 85 respondents gave different ratings to the two questions, further demonstrating a lack of comparability, 51 with responses at least two ratings separate on the scale. Four respondents explicitly noted the links between questions 11 and 18 in their responses to Q19, two referring back to their earlier answers, and two noting the similarity of the questions; this is greatly outweighed by those who did not consider the questions comparable in response.

Responses to Q12 were fascinating, with many poetic and passionate declarations on the originality and newness possible in the face of influences. Many survey participants argued that a sum was an insufficient characterization of the sorts of 'unique mess' possible, arguing against the coarse implications of a simple sum, 'merge' or 'mixture': 'How does one "sum" influences without re-combining them,' 'influences interact, so at the very least, an artist is the product, and not the sum.' Three different respondents wrote a close variant of 'More? Sum?,' questioning both words! Turning the question around creatively and satirizing the implied quantization, one wrote 'I am the sum of the influences.'

Individuality was sometimes taken a priori as the reason why: 'Every individual personality can be correspondingly creative in individual ways,' 'Because there's me in the equation,' 'my own glue.' Context could determine interpretation: 'meaning is only in relation to the milieu in which it is embedded.' Some participants noted the weight of culture, over 100,000 years in one case, and acknowledged the difficulty or impossibility of escaping the orbit of influence: 'anyone who thinks they've "escaped" the pull of culture probably doesn't understand culture,' though history could also be a positive: 'we have the perspective of history, we can develop into new territory.'

Other concepts invoked (with number of incidents in parentheses) included transformation (2), distillation (1), assimilation (1), spirituality (2), forgetting (2) and synthesis/re-synthesis (3). One participant likened influences to an experimental aid. Three respondents mentioned non-musical influences, a theme that recurred at a number of points in the survey. Three respondents also emphasized the importance of inexactness in communication, one evocatively portraying 'Imperfect transmission and misremembering combined with wishful thinking.' Another respondent indirectly alluded to this by mentioning 'something my first composition teacher told me: if you really want to create something original, try copying somebody else' and yet another deliberately sought out tools with 'elements of instability or unexpectedness.'

The phrasing of Q18 was argued against much more vehemently in the main, with the majority neither agreeing nor disagreeing. 31 chose not to answer Q19 at all, and of these demurrers, the Q18 responses were Neither agree nor disagree (15), Disagree (9), Strongly disagree (4), No response (3). Otherwise, the qualitative feedback to Q19 provided some insight into participant qualms.

First tackling the Q19 responses of the 19 who agreed with Q18, reasons often echoed notions of innate individual contribution from Q12, such as 'Any build on top of a range of influences surpasses them simply by being a combination of those separate influences, plus yourself.' One acknowledged the role of learning, 'I have generalized their lesson,' and one glorified the role of chance: 'Fate, accident and sheer stupidity.' Six respondents who had disagreed with Q18, supported the sense of the question by acknowledging they did not feel they had gone beyond their influences, though tempered by a sense that this may happen in time: 'Just not there yet!,' 'I do not feel that I have yet developed enough to find "my voice".'

In the main however, respondents disagreed and argued against the question, often on grounds of the unfairness/ineligibility of the comparison of different implied historical and contextual positions and the political and social connotations of a notion of surpassing: 'Surpassed? Silly word. "Developed on".' Disagreement often centred on avoiding too one-dimensional and competitive a depiction of musical relations: 'It is very hard to put people onto some kind of global ranking,' 'I associate the word "surpassed" with a 1-dimensional scale, sort of like a racing track,' 'Music doesn't feel like a race to me, but as a journey of identity.' Skepticism of the existence of any order relation continued: 'You can't be better, only different,' 'I did different things which are nor worse nor better, just different,' 'Where's the sideways option?' (15 in total used the word 'different' in some way). One person wrote: 'I don't know how to evaluate this. Perhaps we're all just re-presenting our influences in varying, and unique, proportions. New techniques and technologies help to give our work the sheen of something new?'

One respondent described shifts in the historical weight of influence towards unarguable prominence: 'I think the different influences pop up over time, increasing in importance and in a sense

becoming unsurpassable.’ A longer response, pondering the complexities of the question, gives some insight into the twists and turns available:

‘If one had only a few identifiable influences of similar types, the question might be answerable. And I have no delusions about having achieved anything like most of the names on my list, in terms of quality of work, reach of work, and influence on others. But at the same time, most musicians are unique in some significant way, except those immersed in an emulative tradition where the goal is to replicate your master’s work. In that context, no one can really surpass (or fall short of) their influences.’

If a new version of the survey was engineered, the formulation of any similar question to these should probably avoid idiomatic expressions such as ‘more than the sum of your influences’ and ‘surpassed your influences.’ The first seemed more familiar to respondents, and the second really was argued against. Whether the very notion of quantifying musical influence itself is seen as suspect, or certain aspects of ‘surpassing’ regrettable, could be a subject of further inquiry.

Q8 WHAT IS THE MOST RECENT MUSICAL EXPERIENCE TO STRONGLY INFLUENCE YOU?

The 113 responses to this question varied widely; the only repeated artist/resource terms were youtube (2), Porcupine Tree (2), dubstep (2) and Grisey (2). Interesting recent sonic experiences included ‘sounds of insects under water,’ ‘propellers,’ ‘the sound of the extractor fan in the toilet at Starbucks in Leeds,’ and the Cagelan ‘staring out the window.’ Three participants mentioned music research itself as their recent influence, including developing a new music analysis technique, and ‘research and autoethnography within new music performance.’ Attending a live performance was specifically mentioned 30 times (keywords live/performance/concert/gig). Only two people mentioned returning to music they knew already, one through the prism of new equipment: ‘Getting new headphones and listening to albums I have heard before, hearing lots of new little things in hidden away in the mix.’

One respondent was concerned that reflection on recent experiences could take time to digest: ‘Can’t say for sure until it has percolated, as influences tend to come out in subconscious and long term ways.’ One wrote that ‘I suspect the strong influences happened long ago. Any recent experiences have not succeeded in influencing me as much.’ Alongside this, the longest response: ‘Most recently I’ve been listening to a lot of Edgard Varèse. I have to say that the older I get the less likely I am to “seriously” (i.e., analytically) listen to music. So in this sense I’m probably less “influenced” by things that I hear—at least in any directly causal sense. Probably still in more subtle ways though. Maybe somewhat paradoxically though, I don’t think this is because I’m closing off my musical experiences, I think it’s more because I want to follow my own voice, instead of directly quoting others.’ Another family member could provide the stimulus to consider music: ‘Teenaged daughter’s pop music background listening—it confirms, on a daily basis that—my responses to music are very strong and very consistent—my responses are usually confirmed by objective observation—I am constantly surprised at how much I know about music I don’t like!’

In general, responses to the question supported the sense that there are many more musical artists and experiences available in the world than any one individual can keep track of. A record was made of all original artists/groups mentioned by name in responses; of 85, this author had heard work by 40 and did not know 45 (a complicating factor was occasionally knowing of an artist’s existence, i.e., Tin Hat Trio, but not knowing their music itself; concert performances by well known artists, e.g., Bryan Adams, were counted as being aware of them, even though the unique show was not attended). This very rough poll could be extended out in future work to cover recognition of genre and artists terms more systematically. Even in the case of well-known artists, participants could find unique ways to view them; one wrote of ‘Buddy Holly and Yoko Ono’s singing styles, that hiccupping, almost extended vocalizing they both do in a pop-music context.’

Q9 PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT YOU CONSIDER TO BE YOUR EARLIEST MUSICAL INFLUENCE:

There were 115 responses to Q9. Running the rough ‘heard of’ test again from Q8 for Q9, there were only four mentions of artists this author didn’t know.[3] This may indicate that Q8’s emphasis on more recent experiences is biased to reveal newer artists, or that the social base of the survey meant that earlier experiences drew from a smaller pool of educationally relevant music artists. Certainly, some obvious

figures turned up more in Q9, The Beatles having five mentions, Bach four and Beethoven three, compared to zero, one and zero mentions respectively in Q8.

In technology terms, records were often mentioned (by 18 participants), but computers only once ('zx spectrum computer games'). This may be traced to the good mix of ages taking part in the survey, and the rise of home computers only on a large scale in the 1980s. We may well see many more mentions for computers in future years as the ubiquity and respectability of computer and game music continues to grow (Collins, 2008). The piano was part of 15 responses as the most popular traditional instrument available for early tinkering (in contrast, the guitar appeared four times).

The most frequently appearing theme was introduction to music by a family member; close family (parent or sibling) appeared 36 times, including some charming memories: 'my parents choir practice of German traditional music,' 'Listening to my parents' harmony group (while hiding under the baby grand).' Live concerts accounted for ten explanations: 'my father once bought me the Cologne concert by Jarrett, I was perhaps too young for this at that time, but very proud about the present'; and TV occasionally provided inspiration: 'when I was a small child, I saw a movie about a kid who played the trumpet and got almost magical powers from his playing ability—that's the first thing that drew me to making music.'

Q10 WAS THERE AN EARLY INFLUENCE YOU ARE NOW EMBARRASSED BY?

Of 114 responses to Q10, 63 simply responded with a variant of no (33 extremely minimally, others with further comments). When additional explanation was provided, respondents tended to state that they may have once been embarrassed, but were too wise to now worry ('I no longer feel shame'), that another word might be better 'not really embarrassed, more amused,' 'my enjoyment just went from sincere to ironic,' or simply that it didn't matter. Two very pertinent comments here were 'No—I've understood for a long time that all influences, and all musics (even weak, boring, or objectionable ones) contribute to musical awareness' and 'I stand by all my influences. Some I may like some I might not like anymore but I stand by them because in the long run they still are a part of me whether I like it or not, there is no embarrassing music for me.'

When participants acknowledged an influence they were prepared to consider embarrassing, the musics mentioned did not range in any way as widely as those mentioned for Q8. Whilst the full list should perhaps remain hidden to avoid embarrassing specific artists, it included musicals, prog rock, metal bands, electronic dance music, and popular music marketed at teens. No experimental music or classical music was mentioned aside from one count of Tchaikovsky, and one lesser known composer associated with attempts to popularize contemporary classical music. The closest comment: 'Some of the pompous British Art rock of the late sixties and early seventies is definitely cringe worthy.' The Beatles-Bach-Beethoven score was 2-0-0, showing that the more historic composers perhaps have more automatic sanctity about them. We should probably leave this subject with one respondent's comic rejoinder 'Yes, so much so that I've repressed the memory.'

Q13 WHICH PEOPLE WERE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU AS A DEVELOPING MUSICIAN?

114 responses were made to this question. Often mentioned were teachers (59 mentions), friends and peer group including 'the guys in my band' (27) and family (23). One respondent wrote 'family members (support), music teachers (direction), professional musicians (inspiration),' another 'My parents because of their financial support (and piano), my guitar teachers for inspiring my passion and my hunger for musical knowledge,' and admirably, one admitted 'My mother, for forcing me to practice. My partner, for telling me to keep practicing.'

The longest response was from a participant who listed 'from one of my web sites' a big list of musicians and some figures known in other arts (such as Douglas Adams) they considered important. Other respondents gave smaller lists of influential musicians, both locally known and of more international reputation: amongst some famous figures, John Cage had five mentions, Beatles/Bach/Beethoven two/four/three respectively, Brian Eno four, and Stravinsky and Miles Davis three each. Contact with new music was most often through family, peers and teachers, but radio had four mentions, recordings likewise, and television was not mentioned. One pertinent response here was 'At different times: family, teachers, radio, friends, fellow musicians, more radio, recordings.'

Three respondents particularly marked critical feedback as important for development: ‘critical peer review has been essential,’ ‘those ones being disparaging,’ ‘My girlfriend. She is not into music but yet has an artistic sensibility and she is the one who I think can give an honest, profane, naive comment that I found often more valuable than the specialist-I-have-to-prove-you-are-wrong-and-I-am-right comments.’ One person argued more forcefully against the terms of the question, ‘Far too many to be a useful answer. Maybe the more useful answer is to say that many people, whose music I DO NOT LIKE, have influenced my developing as a musician for non-musical reasons. Developing as a musician is also about developing as a person, not just about THE MUSIC.’

Three participants (ages 38, 47, 61) brought across the sense of ongoing development: ‘I’m still developing. I’d say most of all, people I’ve played with.’ From the 61 year old: ‘I am STILL a developing musician, so the list is long (and incomplete)’. To close reporting of this question, a longer (edited) response which may be illuminating: ‘The colleagues: they think alike, they are trying to reach the same goal as you and they will surprise you in many different ways.... I think every creator has some part of the creative process that s/he is not very good at, and others around you might be stars at such a task.... The teachers: you might learn so much from their experience. They have had to tackle the same problems as you and have a lot of times overcome them.... But be careful not to have your personal identity overwritten by a teacher.... Too much copying of the teacher leads to people associating your identity with the identity of your teacher. That’s a “do not want” in my world at least.’

Q14 HOW HAS YOUR PEER GROUP INFLUENCED YOU?

Peers had appeared strongly already in responses to the previous question. The 114 responses ranged in degree of acceptance of peer group influence from ‘Very little’ to ‘a lot,’ with some more extended anecdotes and reflections. Responses were coded into rejection or acceptance of any peer group influence, with a further category for neutral/not answered; counts were 72 respondents accepting that influence occurred, 18 rejecting peer group influence, and 24 responses difficult to assign to either position.

Responses differed in emphasis on whether respondents took peer group to mean their current and recent community of friends and colleagues (‘Similar tools, similar sounds, different slants’), or the group when growing up. Some participants did give a broader sense of changing peer groups over time, often expressed as the relief of moving from school to university: ‘In upper school, I was the only serious musician, so there wasn’t any influence. However, when in university, I was surrounded by other musicians, who greatly influenced me. I took more risks in music interpreting music and practiced more,’ ‘it wasn’t until college, where I met a bunch of people who also really liked classical music, that I finally had a peer group who influenced my musical tastes.’ The change over time could reduce peer influence: ‘Shared direction, created euphoric sense of interest in styles of music, most evidently during late teens, early 20s. Rapidly dropping off in late 20s.’

Whilst a few considered they were not yet in a position to reflect fully on the process, they still provided interesting insight; one 22-year-old responded at length ‘1) As a yet developing musician, I collect a lot of feedback from peer musicians. I haven’t yet reached a point where I can provide a steady source of feedback about my playing abilities, creativity and ideas. 2) Encouragement to go on in my music studies. It’s related to 1) but I list it separately because sometimes people may find a good word for you even if objectively there are lots of things to criticize. 3) New influences (one of the sources from which I learn about great music of the past and present is my friends). 4) Discussion of problems common to developing musicians, about music, style, theory etc.’

There was some variation in how lucky people considered they had been in finding musically inspiring and like-minded friends in their peer group while growing up. School peers’ tastes were often characterized as more ‘mainstream’ and ‘pop.’ Two recounted bullying at school based around their alternative musical tastes. A lack of similar interests could still provide an influence, as something to react against: ‘I have usually been an outsider so it might acted as an example against which to be opposed or differentiated.’

A certain pressure of conformity did occasionally appear—‘I have tended to avoid styles or gestures that might be poo-pooed by my peers,’ ‘to use certain gestures and sounds. I do not think this is entirely positive! I try to “shake off” this influence’—but could also be resolved through career decisions: ‘My peer group...taught me to be utterly uncompromising in my musical standards and vision. This ultimately resulted in my being ‘un-employable’ as a professor...I am a happy musician creating what I

want; not a burned out, washed up music professor.’ Pluses and minuses could be found in peer influence: ‘Positively, by supporting my individual interests/development. Negatively, by indicating the there are boundaries beyond which so-called real music no longer exists.’ A lighter response to the question here was ‘mostly by laughing at my music likes.’

Two further comments are worth repeating. A respondent directly addressed the self-selection and interaction elements of social groups: ‘Chickens and eggs.... Our peer groups can directly influence our musical tastes—but our musical tastes have a lot to do with the peer groups we choose.’ Another wrote: ‘peers have always served as both audience and role-models, to which I both aspire to match—at times surpass—and to which I have also rebelled holding closest to those views of my own which are seeming most rejected by my peers; perhaps for fear of losing them?’

Q15 HAVE YOU EVER PLACED ADVERTS TO FIND OTHER MUSICIANS, AND HOW HAVE MUSICAL INFLUENCES COME INTO THIS?

This question had much less take-up. 94 respondents had not dealt with placing adverts (6 did not respond at all, most others simply said ‘no’), though two admitted responding to adverts set by others. The many classical and experimental musicians here were probably not the best target group for this question, and a follow up survey specifically aimed at pop musicians would perhaps solicit a better sample. Of the 25 who did respond positively, five were women and twenty men, and 17 mentioned a ‘popular music’ associated genre such as rock or dance music in their genre responses to Q6. In the responses, a ‘band’ was mentioned six times, though jazz did appear twice. Websites, gumtree and Craigslist, were mentioned once each; whilst the implication in other cases might be music shops or press, no reliable data was collected here on advertising methods.

Of those who did respond, eight had placed adverts but found that nothing useful arose: ‘nothing serious came out of it,’ ‘it was always very disappointing,’ and ‘I have, but never successfully. All the people I have made music with successfully were personal acquaintances first.’ Ten people had managed to find other musicians through an advert, though not necessarily through listing influences: ‘I’m not sure the question of influences arose directly. Certainly the musicians who responded had arrived at the same juncture I had, which is why they were receptive to my proposals, but many had done so via influences quite unlike mine or each other’s.’ A few respondents gave their views on the question of influences as ‘reference points’ (as one person put it) which could be useful, or go wrong: ‘you drop a name because you like one thing in that artist, and then comes a person that likes another thing in that artist, maybe the one you really hate or despise.’ This latter comment was corroborated by another participant: ‘Another person with a lot similar influences might be a perfect partner in music. But only if from those influences, you both liked a substantial amount of the same LITTLE THINGS in those influences. Little things like chord progressions, or production sound, or sound of voice, pitch range, instrumentation etc. etc. Somebody with the same influences as me could theoretically have a non-matching personality. But on the other hand, a person with exactly the same influence probably likes them for exactly the same reasons as me. I have never met this person though.’

Q16 HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR INFLUENCES HAVE CHANGED OVER TIME?

116 responded, though of these, four essentially stated that their influences had not changed at all (i.e., ‘no,’ ‘it has not changed in any way’), and two ‘not much’ without qualification.

There is a sense in which the music an individual comes into contact with can only expand, given more time for discovery, and changes in active musical landscape. Many responses echoed this, ‘Yes of course. I wasn’t interested in the Hilliard Ensemble before they existed,’ and respondents preferred to emphasise ‘adding new influences doesn’t mean old ones disappear,’ ‘gathering more without replacement’ and that ‘I don’t seem to discard the original influences so much as put them away until they become relevant again.’ As one person put it: ‘an accumulative way: nothing has ceased to influence, only ever have more things arrived to expand and recontextualize the ongoing influence of other things.’

In discussing change over time, many considered themselves now more ‘tolerant’ (1) or ‘open’ (7) with a greater breadth (12) and depth (4): ‘Got both broader and deeper, whilst also being more critical,’ ‘I am now more open to be influenced. And I can do a better appraisal of them.’ Two people, however,

emphasized that time constraints had impacted the amount of music they now listened to, and one further that 'I'm MUCH less interested in listening to new music now than I was ten years ago, much less interested in collecting and knowing about it.' Processes of memory were occasionally alluded to: 'You keep some, you forget some, you acquire new ones.' Earlier disliked sources could be re-appraised: 'Things that I scoffed at when I was young (like old-time fiddle music) I now have a passion for, as I have come to appreciate the skill and the tradition.' Six respondents explicitly discussed this cycle of return, where influences were 'reawakened' and 're-listening' took place. For one of these participants, the early influences were proving definitive: 'I'm rediscovering my early influences and finding them to be valid for me, and possibly me alone, having explored a variety of other paths.'

Teachers were only mentioned four times, and the influence of teachers was in all cases only one stage of an ongoing journey: 'Besides my interest morphing from jazz to classical music, I think my influences have switched from solely teacher/mentor/famous performer to including far more of my peers and fewer teachers,' 'up to teenage; parents in 20s; teachers in 30s; colleagues including students.' Three participants mentioned cultural issues, from 'more awareness of world music,' through 'I changed countries, that was a very deep influence,' to the issues of reconciling multiple musical cultures: 'Over time I've had mixed feelings about my parents' (Japanese) culture in relation to music...I've always liked the Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu because he confronted the question of Eastern & Western influences in his music to create his own unique sound world.'

Q17 IS THERE ANYTHING A MUSICIAN HAS SAID ABOUT THEIR INFLUENCES YOU FIND FALSE OR STRANGE?

The rationale for this question was to explore situations where musicians have denied or subverted the act of influence, such as the (perhaps ironic) Lady Gaga claim at the opening of this article, and provided an attempt to crowd source further interesting examples. Around half of the survey participants responded with anecdotes and comments, and 61 responded with a variant of 'no,' 'not sure' or '???' Of those giving longer responses, another three began with a denial, but then provided a further comment, the most evocative being 'no, but I think the question is very interesting. A few musicians demonstrate a fairly straight line between their influences and their output, but the most creative ones can never really identify the melting pot of influences that have formed them. Therefore, almost anything such musicians say about their influences can sound false or strange to someone who does not understand the non-linear simultaneity and disparate nature of musical influences.'

Ten participants were concerned about 'marketing' and musicians who 'name drop,' 'burnishing their reputation.' This could lead to disappointment when encountering the resultant music: 'They often don't sound anything like their stated influences,' 'I sometimes find comments made by musicians about their musical influences to be pretentious, e.g., they might claim that they were influenced by certain ideas, but when I hear the actual music I am sometimes disappointed that it sounds much less interesting than their description.'

The participants' own anecdotes included both classical and pop composers, from Charles Ives to Captain Beefheart. 16 participants specifically named well known musical figures, which is in no way a condemnation of the entire musical establishment: individual imputations would need further research to fully investigate fairly. Lady Gaga was not named, though three respondents mentioned a similar situation: 'I've known someone who claimed not to have any influence at all.'

Others responded at the level of a general comment or reflection on personal musical experiences. Concerns went from teaching practice: 'continuing a certain "brand" of identity, which sometimes is based on reasons obscure to me'; through inter-generational tension: 'the tendency for the young generation of experimentalists to denigrate the prior generation' to 'I'm continually baffled by those who find theory "limiting".' Perhaps the final word on this question should go to this response: 'I liked this vinyl title from Nomex (UK noise musician): "Are you anything more than just a product of your influence?"'

Q21 PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY WAYS YOU HAVE INFLUENCED OTHER MUSICIANS YOURSELF

Many respondents were modest in reflecting on this question, one writing 'that would be for them to say'; and another: 'You'd have to ask them that!' For some, the question proved awkward, with 15 non-

responses. 18 people thought the state of their influence on others was ‘unknown,’ and eight directly stated there was none. Aside from more ambiguous or off-question responses, 66 people gave a positive response that they had influenced others. However, the nature of this influence was a critical point of difference between responses, with some differing interpretations of what constituted influence. Whilst for some, influence was ubiquitous and constantly occurring ‘one can always learn from anybody,’ three examples of tighter conditions on the word were (1) ‘Most of the positive feedback I receive is more in the form of “admiration” or “respect” than “influence”’; (2) ‘I don’t think that I have—at least not in any non-superficial way’; (3) ‘Some people have found my music exciting but I don’t know of things that I recognise as influence except simple tricks techniques that are shared.’ There could be skepticism on the impact of one’s own role: ‘I have taught guitar to friends, others have said that they like my style and are influenced by it. This, of course, mostly means they like my influences, which they may not have heard before (e.g., Derek Bailey).’

The medium of influence varied between teaching, performing, composing and other social interactions. Two illuminating list-like responses here were ‘I have founded various performance ensembles, periodicals and CD distribution networks’ and ‘played with others, remixed others, studio produced others, curated music, released music from others....’ Performing solo or with bands and ensembles appeared in 15 responses, but family only once (‘I told my 5 year old niece the story of the Earl King the other day’). A popular transmission medium was teaching—‘encouragement, teaching, exposing them to new ideas, critique’—with 32 associated responses. However the responses differed on the degree to which influence was apparent (or advisable) in the pupils: ‘I know that many of my students have told me that their approach to listening and performing changed after having me as a teacher. I usually don’t hear “me-ism’s” in their music though...I take this as a compliment that they have learned how to find their voice while taking as much of other people’s work into their world.’ One respondent mentioned deliberately teaching aspects outside of music itself, such as ‘Fibonacci, Bauhaus, Albers, Vasarely, la poésie concrète, etc.’ A good example of a mixed response concerned performance in particular: ‘You influence people merely by playing within a group of musicians. So I have influenced people, probably in very small ways, but not knowing how. Within a group of musicians, I think that behaviour and personality outside of the actual music can also be an influence on the music produced.’

To close for this question, two more charming reflections showed some of the human warmth and hope that goes into contact between musicians (the first has been slightly anonymised):

‘When I was a teacher, I taught [relatively well-known electronica artist] music at school. He told me that he was strongly influenced by a performance of Stockhausen’s *Kontakte* which I took him and a bunch of other kids to in [city] in the mid 80s. I keep telling my students that as teachers, they are responsible for things like this and that the whole thing is very fragile. They need to know the power they have to influence people.’

‘Just the other day I receive a note from a lad in Australia who composes music and he thanked me for my inspirational music, though our voices are quite different.’

Q22 DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER TO ADD ON THE TOPIC OF MUSICAL INFLUENCE?

Q22 provided a host of fascinating comments, though 53 people felt they’d done enough by the time they got to this final question, 31 leaving it blank, and 22 having some variant of ‘no’ (19), ‘sorry’ (2), or ‘thanks’ (1) (One of the noresponses was from a musician who may be considering a musical response to the question instead: ‘Not that I wish to disclose through this medium.’). Of the 67 who did respond, many wrote larger responses, with a median of 228 characters each (min 27 ‘Influence spurs motivation,’ max 2444, mean 321.5).

The question gave chance for respondents to air any concerns about the questions and emphasis in the survey. A few were more concerned about the end result than any process of influence: ‘it’s the music that counts, not the influence.’ Three people wanted to make sure that media were given due credit: for two of them, Internet distribution was predicted as key to future developments in the rate of flow: ‘the new methods of distribution and networking are really going to change the game.’ One respondent was concerned that the survey was too ‘past-oriented,’ so that we may ‘miss ambition and imagination as sources of influence.’

Three respondents connected up to more academic discussion around these themes, mentioning Margaret Boden’s writing on creativity, the nature vs. nurture debate, and ‘a sort of Chomskyan “music

organ” in our brain that is similar in its nature and development to the “language organ” he proposes, an openness to musical grammar that is narrowed down by our early exposure to music.’ Two participants separated out ‘feeling’ from the ‘technical side,’ with one of them noting: ‘Maybe the stuff that forms my overall sensibility and the stuff that helps furnish me with creative tools are simply two different sets on a Venn diagram with a rather small intersect. But most of all, I’d say that the most efficient and meaningful kind of influence definitely has to be playing with people.’

The most common complaint was the lack of a question specifically concerning non-musical influences, mentioned by 15 people. Suggestions for these included ‘literature, visual arts, dance... mathematical thinking and computer programming’; and ‘the sublime in nature, poetry, a sense of “coming from somewhere”.’ As one respondent propounded: ‘The amount of development needed to become a musician is so much that “musical influence” becomes pretty much inseparable from “life influence.” Books, films, philosophies, friends, geography, whatever, it all goes in there.’ Whilst not specifically mentioning extra-musical sources, two participants wanted to emphasise the holistic nature of musical exchange: ‘I believe that music evolves as part of a collective activity: everyone influences everyone, and that is beautiful.’

Many other responses echoed existing responses to earlier questions. Five reflective responses introducing further interesting issues are now presented:

‘I do want my music to be a story about ME. Not about WHAT a teacher told me, or some random opinion someone has about music. Since I am telling my own story, shouldn’t I choose my own vocabulary? I think my story is how much joy making music gives me. And how sometimes, it is like an adventure into yourself, your mind and body. I’ll be damned if someone tries to modify that story into what they think is “what people want” or “the way it is supposed to be”.’

‘I see music as a dialogue. I think of my influences as the previous lines, and the whole performance as something to which I now respond with my lines. Innovation is important for the sake of not talking in circles at each other...but we have to work at talking the same language also. I feel that some of these questions about influence seem to imply that I see my practice as something springing from an inner fount of pure individuality; but I see it as relational, evolving, collective.’

‘Musicians tend to “cherry-pick” influences depending on who they’re talking to; to please them. Influences are like intakes of breath. A few a memorable, but in reality they all contribute to the ongoing process of staying (musically) alive.’ (Another respondent also used a similar metaphor: ‘Influences are there, like air. You breathe them in everyday, and what comes out comes out.’)

‘I think musical influence is extremely important for the soul. I find it interesting also that many times the people we love can have an influence on the music we like due to the simple fact that they like it too.’

‘With some musicians, what you see (and what they say) is what you get—influences worn like clothing. With others, the influences are working deep within, creating hidden interests and provoking subtle creative results that cannot readily be traced back to source.’

FURTHER ANALYSIS ACROSS QUESTIONS

In this section we explore further statistics of comparison across questions. Qualitatively, questions had been designed to solicit a broad base of comments, and a good range of views were returned. Participants were never too slavish in their responses to questions, and were ready to take a contrary position. Participants seemed to enjoy answering the survey, even as they argued against the assertion of some questions.

In as much as the amount written can serve as a guide to the popularity of questions, Figure 2 shows some measures across questions. The upper bar chart is the per-question response rate (number of participants with non null responses, that is, a response of greater than zero characters, or actually making a selection from the Likert scale). The middle bar chart gives word counts for the qualitative response questions (Qs 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22); the 30,832 words of response have understandably not all been reproduced in this article. Whilst for example Q22 had fewer respondents than most earlier questions (attributable, in part no doubt, to survey fatigue), though when it was undertaken, responses were generally long. It definitely met its function of allowing space for additional comments. In

this vein, the final lower bar chart in the figure gives the words per active participant as some measure not of global popularity, but of enthusiasm for the question (when wanting to answer at all).

The most popular words over all text-based responses were analyzed by creating a dictionary with unique keys for each word found, and an associated value as the multiplicity of that word. Appendix 2 gives the most popular words with counts of at least 10 appearances across the corpus, where standard pronouns, connectives and other small parts of grammar have been stripped out to leave the interesting vocabulary. Related words, such as singular and plural, have not been merged. The final score for Beatles-Bach-Beethoven was 9-14-6. Interesting words could be traced back to their context in the original database; for instance, ‘Paul’ (with a multiplicity of 10) referred to a number of musicians such as Paul Hindemith and Paul Lansky. N-gram analysis and further natural language processing techniques have yet to be explored, though the original context of the questions already provided a strong framework for treating responses.

One test, appropriate to the issue of anxiety over influence, was to check for occurrences of positively and negatively valenced terms, to assess the general mood of participants. This supported a more positive approach to questions of influence, with word counts such as:

- positive (7), happy (4), joy/joyous (1), like/liked (131), good (52), fun (9), love (9)
- negative (4), sad/sadness (0), worry/worried (2), don't like/didn't like/dislike/disliked (5), bad(7), boring/bored (1), hate (4), anxious/anxiety (0)

Checking the original context, none of the negatives indicated a theory of influence anxiety directly; one ‘bad’ for instance referred to Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds.[4] In the discussion of Q12 and Q19 above, competition tended to be rejected, and whilst processes of miscommunication might seem to imply (a literal sense of) misreading, the overall weight of attitude to influence was much more positive than might have been expected from Bloom’s theory.

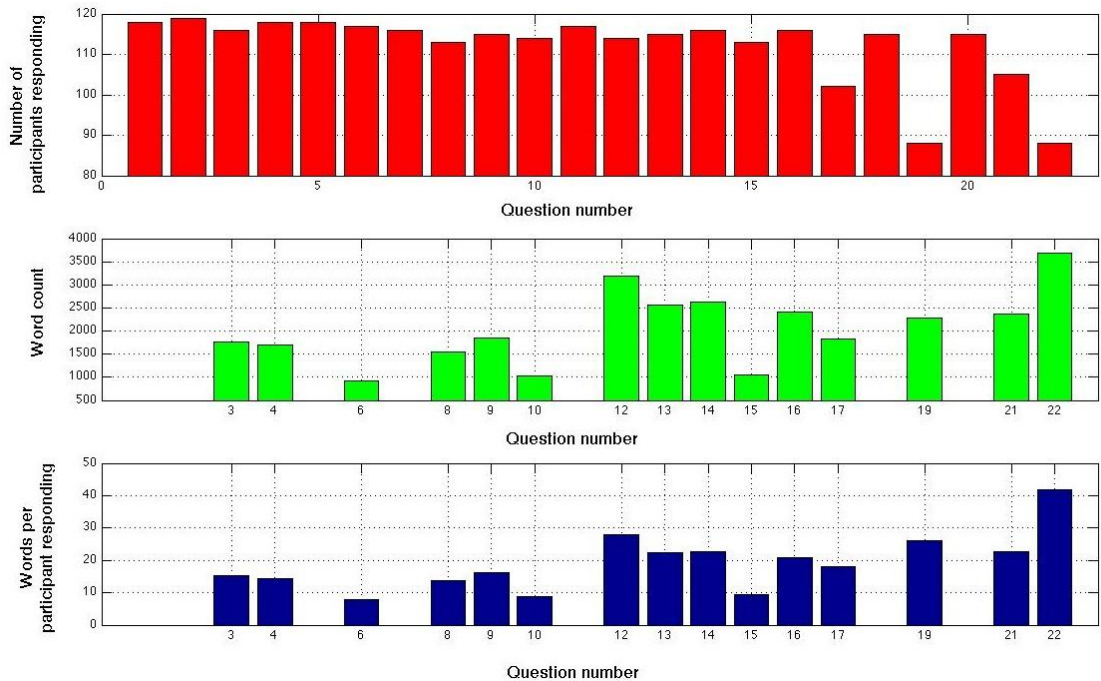


Fig. 2. Measures of question popularity.

Statistical comparison is also possible between quantitatively coded responses. A set of groups were established for sex (89 male / 20 female), university degree (53 having / 66 not having), age (29 people under 30 and 90 greater than or equal to 30) and rating as an ‘expert’ musician (see Q3 above, 42 as expert, 77 not). Multiple independent variable ANOVAs were run over these group memberships, in turn on the dependent variable of responses to questions 5, 7, 11, 18 and 20. The only statistically significant

main effect was sex and Q5 ($F(1, 108) = 7.44, p = 0.0075$); in the data, half of women rated themselves creative, whereas 84% of men did so. This perhaps only indicates more modesty amongst women, and given the smaller sample size for women, no wider conclusions would be warranted. However, the lack of main effects on other factors and across the quantitative response questions does help to show some uniformity of distribution outside of the group categories (assuming the categories themselves are appropriate as factors in analysis and ANOVA's robustness is not pushed too far by the distributions being non-normal themselves or by unequal group sizes). Anyway, the general lack of significant results here was a motivation to not make a big deal of participant responses in the light of such groupings.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has framed responses to an online questionnaire on the topic of musical influence. I have attempted to let participants' own voices come through wherever possible, including the direct inclusion of a number of interesting quotations without discussion. It is hoped that the materials here can provide a rich resource for researchers interested in these phenomena, whether directly concerned with the theme of influence itself, or informing aspects of musical creativity, practice and development. The varied and intriguing responses from the survey participants can provide many ideas and much grounding for future research.

Participant comments inspire many potential research directions; a number of research questions would be:

- In what ways do extra-musical influences have a role in music creation, and when are these factors most observable in the resultant music (lyrics aside)?
- How are influences manifested in actual music? What musical characteristics are foremost when observing influence? What would a music theory of influence look like?
- Issues of attribution can arise through genuine co-creation, re-invention, tribute and remixing, as well as more invidious means like plagiarism for profit. How can better understanding of musical influence inform studies of musical copyright?
- Survey responses indicated variation in time that existing theories of influence do not specifically address. How do attitudes to musical influence vary during the course of musical careers as well as across cultures?

Future work is by no means restricted to surveys. Face to face interviews of musicians, analysis of historical interviews and even the adverts placed in the back of old music magazines, would provide a wealth of further data on musician's attitudes when influence appears. Whilst musicians might have been concerned about discussing their influences, participants of this survey were by no means shy in sharing their opinions on and interest in the topic, with a generally positive outlook. The contribution of future studies of musical influence to our understanding of musical creativity and preference may be highly productive.

NOTES

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[2] The statistic can be defined in this two-question-comparison instance as:
 $2 * (1 - ((\text{variance}(\text{Question A}) + \text{variance}(\text{Question B})) / \text{variance}(\text{sum of ratings for Questions A and B})))$

[3] This remains a rough check, since only one individual is judging. To clarify, my listening history is that of an academic music specialist with interest across all eras and styles, with particular specialty in electronic music; nonetheless, I would suspect similar tests with other listeners would lead to the same results, though this hypothesis remains open to further experimental inquiry.

[4] See Bloom (1997) and Korsyn (1991) for more nuanced readings of Bloom's theory; these results on affective terms certainly have limits, particularly if most anxieties are (conveniently) repressed, or if survey respondents self-selected as helpful, happy people. Further tests for terms have not yet turned up any overwhelming evidence in support of general anxiety; for instance, word counts for sharing/share/shared (14) (there were no 'don't share' variants) versus competition/competing/compete/competed (5); the context of 'competition' in all but one case was actually against competition!

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Original Survey call and format

Musical Influence

You are invited to take part in an online survey on musical influences. This is part of an exploratory study into musician's attitudes to influence and the creative process. It would be great to get your involvement, and hear your opinions!

Responses are anonymous, and you are under no obligation to complete the survey even if you start it; however, if you do choose to submit the survey, the anonymised data will be used to inform the study, and may appear in a future publication. Completing this survey should take around 15 minutes, and involves giving some quantitative ratings to statements, and some written responses to questions. I'm really interested in anything you have to say on the subject!

There is no financial reward for taking part; the only reward is my immense gratitude, and a promise that any resulting publication will be publicised in due course, including on the mailing lists where the survey was initially announced.

Nick Collins, Lecturer in Music Informatics, University of Sussex.

This research has been cleared in advance by ethics committee, under reference code CREC-IEM_2010_1.

First, just a bit about your musical background:

1. Are you female or male?
Female
Male
2. What is your age?
3. If you play one or more musical instruments, how long have you played these instruments, and would you say you were expert in performing on them?
4. Please describe in brief any formal musical training.
5. Do you consider yourself a creator of new music, such as an improviser, songwriter or composer?
Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
6. Please list any musical styles or genres you consider to be your main area of expertise.

Now the questions on musical influences themselves:

7. Musical influences are an important part of musical practice.
Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
8. What is the most recent musical experience to strongly influence you?
9. Please describe what you consider to be your earliest musical influence:
10. Was there an early influence you are now embarrassed by?
11. Are you more than the sum of your influences?
Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
12. Why?
13. Which people were most important to you as a developing musician?
14. How has your peer group influenced you?
15. Have you ever placed adverts to find other musicians, and how have musical influences come into this?
16. How would you say your influences have changed over time?
17. Is there anything a musician has said about their influences you find false or strange?
18. Have you surpassed your influences?
Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
19. How?
20. Influences are important to a musician.
Strongly agree
Agree

Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

21. Please describe any ways you have influenced other musicians yourself.

22. Do you have anything further to add on the topic of musical influence?

Appendix 2 Most popular words in written responses with 10 or more appearances

music 567	university 27	radio 17	composer 12
influences 238	ideas 27	experience 17	day 12
years 238	make 26	another 17	noise 12
piano 136	try 26	course 17	undergraduate 12
influence 126	musician 26	free 17	feedback 12
think 125	part 26	example 17	instrumental 12
like 113	band 26	though 16	form 11
musical 110	made 25	times 16	works 11
expert 107	grade 25	introduced 16	outside 11
people 98	ways 25	come 16	older 11
classical 93	violin 25	put 16	surpassed 11
new 91	did 25	teaching 16	general 11
other 89	hard 25	later 16	towards 11
musicians 89	become 25	learn 16	remember 11
guitar 87	peer 24	after 16	every 11
influenced 83	songs 24	started 16	looking 11
playing 77	interesting 23	ago 16	pieces 11
all 77	peers 23	folk 16	education 11
lessons 69	get 23	instrument 16	kinds 11
things 65	sounds 23	making 15	questions 11
time 65	hear 23	nothing 15	working 11
jazz 64	over 23	write 15	trumpet 11
because 64	contemporary 22	create 15	interest 11
composition 64	go 22	point 15	performing 11
say 61	john 22	college 15	together 11
different 61	experimental 22	similar 15	person 11
teacher 57	hearing 22	great 15	techno 11
play 56	sum 22	unique 15	traditional 11
know 55	phd 22	developing 15	terms 11
listening 54	electroacoustic 22	child 15	range 10
school 52	ones 22	progressive 14	process 10
teachers 52	genres 21	changed 14	piece 10
something 52	degree 21	bach 14	answer 10
good 52	composers 21	several 14	doing 10
age 51	anything 21	development 14	taste 10
way 49	flute 21	everything 14	software 10
find 49	take 21	private 14	thought 10
now 47	used 21	creative 14	feeling 10
rock 46	mostly 21	family 14	church 10
electronic 44	life 21	original 14	use 10
any 44	year 21	identity 14	place 10
sound 43	live 21	having 14	artist 10
never 42	metal 20	comes 14	surpass 10
up 42	got 20	learning 14	certainly 10
into 42	art 20	world 14	techniques 10
styles 42	concert 20	said 14	everyone 10
work 39	computer 20	choir 14	conservatory 10
performance 38	level 20	keep 14	paul 10
listen 38	kind 20	done 14	taught 10
out 38	song 20	strong 14	home 10
see 37	sense 20	records 14	strange 10
friends 37	practice 19	far 14	tastes 10
style 36	interested 19	bit 13	player 10
played 36	heard 19	why 13	via 10
being 35	improvisation 19	long 13	sharing 10
first 35	old 19	tend 13	performers 10
singing 35	off 19	give 13	experiences 10
others 34	high 19	idea 13	record 10
bands 33	believe 19	story 13	masters 10
still 33	understand 19	going 13	within 10
instruments 32	stuff 19	electric 13	does 10
question 31	voice 19	open 13	technology 10
early 31	popular 19	artists 13	
always 30	amateur 18	genre 13	
etc 30	students 18	above 13	
group 30	found 18	thinking 13	
bass 29	thing 18	listened 13	
important 29	liked 18	research 12	
same 29	feel 18	personal 12	
theory 28	training 17	us 12	
little 28	before 17	currently 12	
parents 28	trying 17	individual 12	
pop 28	young 17	recently 12	