Liveness and Mediatization:

Folk Music Education in the Digital Age

BY

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THESIS

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SUMMARY

In this thesis I examine how developments in music and media technology affect how people listen to and perform folk music. According to Philip Auslander, due to the proliferation and development of sophisticated media techniques, the entire notion of the "live" is now contingent on comparisons to mediated experiences. My goal was to expand on the concepts of "liveness" and "mediatization" through an analysis of the relationship between the use of media technology and the performance and education of folk music at the Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music.

I performed 15 in-depth, open-ended interviews with music teachers who have worked at the Old Town School of Folk Music (OTSFM) for upwards of fifteen years. The interviews centered around two inquiries: what role new media technology plays in the classroom, both regarding how teachers implement technology as well as how technology helps inform students' musical backgrounds; and how the educational experience at OTSFM has changed over the last decades.

I transcribed the interviews and performed a constant comparative method to locate four prominent themes: ideas surrounding how new media technology has enhanced the community, including communication, archiving, and recording as educational tools; ideas surrounding new forms of access and discovery; ideas surrounding people's tastes, listening behavior, and identity as fans and players; and ideas surrounding technical skills and practice.

SUMMARY (continued)

I was then able to delineate three ways that the school offers contexts to the "live" experience: a social context, a traditional context; and a physical, embodied context. I conclude that the concept of "liveness," is in agreement with Sanden's (2013) redefinition of it; liveness is not simply the marked absence of technological mediation, but rather is manifest in a rich number of ways that people perform acts of live human expression within a larger technological context. Additionally, I conclude that folk music culture can function to destabilize the "authority" of the popular studio recording, challenge its technological aura, and cultivate a plurality of temporalities.

I: INTRODUCTION

A.   **<u>Origins</u>**

The relationship between folk culture and new media technology has been commonly thought of in two ways. People can use new technology in ways that promote folk culture, emphasizing sharing, community building, participation, and ritual. Yet technology can often change or disrupt the occasion for social interactions, leading to a decline in activities and pastimes.

Inquiries into new technology and its effect on social interaction date back well beyond the digital revolution. The idea that the internet fosters a plurality of voices and democratic communication echoes John Dewey, that "communication must take possession of the physical machinery of transmission and circulation and breathe life into it. . . . [Democracy] will have its consummation when free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication" (Dewey, 1927, p. 350). Simultaneously, the perspective that technological mediatization severs people from an authentic experience with their environment and distorts the way people approach reality echoes Martin Heidegger (1954).

As a musician and media studies scholar, these lines of thinking often inform my understanding of the relationship between music culture and technology. While new media technology can enhance the sharing of music, bringing people together in new ways, it can also erode and supplant live communication and performance. The relationship between technology and music itself is even more complex, because technology is integral to musical content. Music, as a form of communication, has been mediated through available technology since the invention of musical instruments. Developments in technology continually lead to new forms of music and

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art. In this way, music is mutable; people's understanding of music is not fixed through time, but continues to shift through technological and cultural changes.

That being said, one of the most revolutionary developments in music history was the invention of recording technology over a century ago. Recording technology dramatically changed people's understanding of music. It severed music from what was essentially a privileged live experience for over a millennium. The distinction between recorded music and "live" music emerged; "live performance" was born simultaneously when recording technology was invented, as previously, all music was experienced live (Auslander, 1998).

Today, the majority of music people listen to comes from the replaying of studio recordings. Recording technology has allowed music to be broadcast and listened to on a mass scale. Popular music as we know it is indebted to recording technology. Yet while recording technology has allowed more people to share and listen to music, it is not without its critics. After the invention of the phonograph in the early twentieth century, cultural theorist Theodore Adorno argued that the new recording technology reduced the musical experience to a two-dimensional commodity that could be reproduced at will (1934/1990, p. 57). Walter Benjamin articulated that mechanically reproduced representations lacked an "aura", a unique position in time and space. Yet he also argued that reproducible mediums have an important revolutionary potential, and can express new meanings about modern perceptions of time and space as affected by new media technology (Benjamin, 1936/1968).

Recording technology has led to the production of new forms of music. "Artificial" techniques developed in the 1950s, such as multi-track dubbing, cutting and splicing allowed for the creation of sounds that could not be achieved in a live performance. Due to techniques like

these, recordings evolved from reproductions of live events to include completely new representations of music. The production, distribution, and consumption of recorded music has been constantly changing, from the rise of the record industry, to the CD era, to the internet age. One important question that has emerged concerns how recorded music effects how people experience live music as a result. This subject of live music has often been explored by music fans and writers, most notably in the form of self-reflexive music journalism, but it is relatively recent that live music has been approached by academics as a dedicated object of study. As music recording and listening technology have developed, critical theorists, cultural studies and media studies scholars have begun to examine how people's live experiences are influenced, informed, disrupted, and extended by recorded media content. Ethnomusicologists have shifted an orientation to the study of music within its live, performative contexts. Cultural studies scholars have begun to study the culture and economy of the live music scene over the last decade (Frith, 1998, 2007; Holt, 2010). A pointed inquiry into media technology and its relation to the experience of "liveness" comes from Philip Auslander. Auslander employs the term "mediatization", originally coined by Baudrillard, to describe that the proliferation of recorded media content has radically altered people's conception of live performances. People cannot help but refer to recorded media in their approach to live performances, and the whole notion of a "live" experience now exists in relation to mediated experiences. In the case of the record industry, live music performances are often measured against the ubiquitous studio recordings and not vice versa (Auslander, 1998; Katz, 2010).

B.   **Purpose and Structure of the Study**

One significant musical scene in which to apply the concepts of mediatization and live-ness is the North American folk music revival. The concept of "folk" music emerged, not prior to the era of popular recording, but as a direct result of it. The live folk music space developed in opposition to ahistorical, commercialized, popular music as well as elite hierarchies of classical music; it emphasizes the oral, ritualistic tradition of sharing music in a live setting.

This thesis attempts to elaborate on the concepts of liveness and mediatization through an examination of the relationship of live music performance/education and new media technology at Chicago's the Old Town School of Folk Music (OTSFM). An organization where I taught piano for four years, OTSFM is the largest community arts school in the nation. Longstanding teachers at OTSFM are able to reflect on how folk music performance and education is situated within a changing technological context. They offer a unique and privileged perspective on how beginning students' assumptions, expectations and understanding of music can be informed by media technology, as well as how this relationship may have changed over time.

With the goal of developing a richer understanding of how media technology plays a role in the culture of live music performance and education, I engaged in open-ended interviews with 15 longstanding teachers at the school. In my process of conducting the interviews as well as in my analysis of them, I employed a constant comparative method to organizing prominent themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While the interviews were semi open-ended, I was interested in how the teachers used and were affected by media technology in their role as musicians and educators. I was interested in how things have changed over time in regards to musical content, access to music, and musical listening practices.

C.   **Overview of Analysis and Discussion**

In my analysis, I found that mediatization has always been integral to the process of folk music education. All the teachers shared vastly different different backgrounds, music education, access to music, and styles of music. Yet they all shared a love of music and a history of listening to and learning music from media like records and television in order to be able to incorporate these traditions into live practice. Through the constant comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) I organized themes out of how the teachers situated their work in relation to technology and popular music and how these positions may have shifted as music and media technology has evolved. I organized my analysis into four themes: Social Media and the Live Community; YouTube: Access, Affect, Archive; The Technology of Listening, Tastemaking, and Popular Culture; and Practicing / Playing / Listening. In all of these themes, the educator/performers at OTSFM offered compelling examples of how scholar and electronic musician Paul Sanden defines the performance of "liveness", as a "dynamically-performed assertion of human presence within a technological network of communication" (Sanden, 2013, p. i).

I continued to expand on "liveness" by offering three "live contexts" that OTSFM offers, each of which situates live performance in relation to technological mediation. Namely, the school offers a unique social space for people to get together and share music and ideas about music. It also offers a traditional context in which students learn about the historical situation of musical styles and actively take part in those traditions. Lastly, it offers a physical context in which students can develop a practice ritual over time, with an emphasis on variation and spontaneity in playing songs (such as through rhythm, voicing or style).

The teachers' perspectives illustrate that the experience of live music performance is intricately related to exposure to recorded music. Their stories also suggest that music recordings have come to develop a unique and influential "aura." Not only are studio recordings often approached as the legitimate authority in which people measure live performances against, recordings perpetuate a spatio-temporality that lacks a signification to a live physical context. Regardless of the style of music in focus, folk music culture can help destabilize the "authority" of popular studio recordings in order to encourage a democratic participation in music performances and to cultivate a plurality of rhythms and temporalities.

II: LITERATURE REVIEW

A.   <u>**Historical Perspectives of Mechanical Reproduction and Live Music**</u>

Important perspectives of the implications of recording technology, still resonant in to-day's questions about digital culture, originated from scholars associated with the Frankfurt school in the first decades of the 20th century. These scholars critiqued the implications of re-producible mediums like photography, film, and music recording and the popular culture that emerged from this technology. To Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, the burgeoning "culture industry" simply offered people the "freedom to choose what is always the same" (Horkheimer & Adorno 1944/2005). They saw mass-produced popular culture as repetitive and manufactured, to be used as a tool for social, economic, or political control. Adorno tended to privilege traditional "high art" like live classical music and modernist painting over popular culture. Modernist art tended to reflect active, human expression through interrogating the limits of a technical medium. As music recording technology developed, Adorno and others argued that the concert performance remained the superior experience of music. In a 1934 essay Adorno argued, "the phonograph record is not good for much more than reproducing and storing a music deprived of its best dimension, a music, namely, that was already in existence before the phonograph record and is not significantly altered by it" (1934/1990, p. 57). He likened the phonograph record to a photograph of an object that "even a dog would recognize." It strips the music experience of its unique point in time and space and reduces it to something that could be turned on and off at random, a commodity that could be bought and sold. "It designates the two-dimensionality of a reality that can be multiplied without limit, displaced both spatially and tem-

porally, and traded on the open market. This, at the price of sacrificing its third dimension: its height and abyss" (1934/1990, p. 57).

Related to the way that Adorno spoke of "the height and abyss" unique to the live performance, Walter Benjamin coined the term "aura" to describe an object's "presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (Benjamin 1936/1968, p. 223). This allowed him to differentiate original, singular objects, like paintings, vs. mechanical reproductions such as photographs. People experience the aura of an object by being in its presence, such as standing in front of the painting of the Mona Lisa at a certain moment in time. In agreement with Adorno, he argued that the felt presence of the aura is decimated through mechanical reproductions such as photographs. The loss of the aura due to the technique of mechanical reproduction detaches the experience of objects from the domain of tradition. Yet far from damning the decimation of the aura qua mechanical reproduction, Benjamin saw in it a revolutionary potential. Mechanical reproduction could usher in new ways of thinking and challenge bourgeois hierarchies of cultural knowledge.

> By making many reproductions [mechanical reproduction] substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind (Benjamin 1936/1968, p. 221).

In addition to its political potential, Benjamin argued that the new media art of his time could help reveal perceptual changes in the age modernity, such as "the ascendance of multiplicity and repeatability over singularity, nearness over far-ness, and a haptic engagement with things and space over a contemplative relation to images and time" (Hansen 2008, p. 354). Benjamin saw that cinema had the potential to facilitate a new political consciousnesses and self-awareness, but

it also had the potential to reproduce bourgeois value systems as well as capitalist ideology.

Hansen articulates that the most useful understanding of the aura is not just as the "genuine

aura," of the physical object, which he argues is "irrevocably in decay," but a "*simulated* aura".

The simulated aura is cultivated through reproductive technologies. The cult status of movie or

rock star is a good example of a simulated aura developed through reproduction. It is the simu-

lated aura, Hansen argues, that "prevents a different, utopian, or at the very least nondestructive

interplay among those three terms- art, technology, the masses- from winning" (Hansen 2008, p.

356). Hansen argues that it is the simulated aura towards which the essay was calling for demo-

lition. According to Hansen's reading of the essay, Benjamin was presciently arguing for an

awareness of how technology can shape and infringe on people's perceptions, and encouraging a

mindful use of such technology.

B.   **The Question of the Digital and Live Music**

    1.   **Digital reproduction**

        Adorno and Benjamin's nuanced dialogues about popular culture and technolo-

gies of reproduction are still reflected in people's perspectives of digital technology and its affect

on the production, distribution, and reception of music. Undoubtedly, digital technology and the

internet have challenged traditional hierarchies of the music industry. Since the 1950s, gate-

keepers such as record companies and radio stations played the ultimate role in determining peo-

ple's access to what could be heard. Today, cheaper access to digital technology and the internet

has allowed for a plurality of musicians to bypass such gatekeepers by producing their music

more independently and distributing it online (Kot, 2009; Wikstrom, 2009; Knopper, 2009). The

fact that digital files like MP3s can be copied and reproduced without deterioration makes the

processes of discovering, sharing and archiving music more easier and more affordable than ever (Katz, 2010). The use of YouTube, Soundcloud, and other music-oriented social media sites to share self-recorded music reflects a social and participatory culture that is sometimes referred to as Web 2.0 (O'reilly, 2007). A much broader array of music is accessible for people to listen to than ever before. People can instantly and easily amass digital music collections. Easier access has bourgeoned a remix culture replete with expressions of pastiche, homage, and parody.

However, music sharing on the internet has become governed by new forms of gatekeeping, such as social networks or music recommendation software. Some researchers argue that most distribution on the internet harbors the same propensity for a small number of songs and artists to achieve a viral popularity and royalties while the majority goes undiscovered (Tan and Netessine, 2009). Echoes of Adorno resound in arguments that digital technology has led to a degradation in sound quality and listening experience (Evens 2005; Katz 2010). Aden Evens argues that popular music has adapted to low-fi listening conditions. Popular music aims to grab listeners' attention with an easily discernible beat, whether listened to through speakers at a loud club or through compressed speakers on mobile phones or iPods. Evens offers the concept of "indexical listening" to describe a diminished form of musical listening in which people distinguish the main components of the music (drum beat, bass line) in order to quickly identify and categorize it as part of a pre-existing genre. This is why, he argues, "intolerable listening conditions are tolerated- precisely because listeners are not interested in the music as sound but as index" (Evens 2005, p. 10).

2.   **<u>The form of digital representation, hyperreality, and "liveness"</u>**

In his 1934 essay, Adorno predicted that music would eventually be converted to pure information. In a way, this has been achieved through digital technology. Digital technology does not capture a continuous sound wave but approximates its dynamic range into tiny samples of information in the form of binary, mathematical code. This results in a compression of the sound into small music files that can be shared quickly and easily. Yet the more the sound is compressed, the less that the sound's full dynamic range that can be heard. It is arguable that differences in compression are not all perceptible to the human ear, and that developments in speakers and recording devices have improved listening quality. Yet these arguments continue, resounding Adorno's early perspective of the phonograph (Evens, 2005).

Both in form and content, digital music continues to transform the music recording from a reproduction to a representation. While the binary code of an MP3 contains enough information to represent the song, the sound has been converted into an entirely new entity in the form of a digital, numerical representation. Early music recording technology like the phonograph was developed in efforts to preserve live performances. But as recording technology became more integral to the music industry and technology evolved to include new tools, such as multi-track recording, recorded music began to develop into something that was not simply a reproduction of a live performance but a new type of musical content altogether. Rock and roll became the first "technologically engineered" popular music of this kind (Frith, 1986; Jones, 1989, pp. 9-10). Rock emerged out of a fusion between, folk, blues, roots, and new music technology- namely the electric guitar, electric microphone and large speakers (Holt, 2010). But it was the recording technology developed in the 1950s, such as magnetic taping, that allowed for the "artificial" mu-

sic-making techniques of "cutting/splicing/dubbing/multi-track recording" that became the hall-mark of the early artistic rock albums of the 1960s (Sanjeck, 1994, p. 352). These techniques led to multi-tracked rock music which was entirely artificial; the sound could only be achieved in recorded form and could not be produced the same way in a live performance. Frith points out that what is now considered the "rock studio" began as a "sound laboratory." Today, the studio is deemed the most important rock instrument by many music critics. Yet ultimately, it does not "capture the audio-dynamics of live orchestral music... [but] instead, [is] the place to make music impossible to reproduce live" (Frith, 1986).

Digital technology, including synthetic instruments, MIDI, and audio workstations have furthered the trajectory of the production of sound as representation. While early rock albums were indebted to experimentation in tracking, effects, and overdub, they often included some recognizable instruments such as guitar or drums. Today's popular music is composed almost entirely of sounds that have been programmed through software synthesis. Synthetic sound lacks clearly denoted instrumental voices. There is less of an image in the audience's minds as to how the sound is being produced or performed. In this way, synthetic music is arguably a form of "acousmatic sound". Michel Chion describes the term, originally coined by Pierre Schaffer, as the "sound one hears without its originating cause - a invisible sound source" (Chion, 1994). Radio, record players and telephone can be considered as facilitating acousmatic sound without a visual image of the sound emitter. Music can be considered increasingly acousmatic when the image of the corresponding source becomes less identifiable in the listener's mind.

The move from a "reproduction" to "representation" in cultural production is notably the-orized by Baudrillard in his concepts of hyperreality and simulation. Baudrillard sees the prioriti-

zation of representation as the mark of the "the age of simulation" (Baudrillard, 1983). He argues that Benjamin "anticipated the advent of simulation and the hyperreal in his theories of recognizability, reproducibility and static dialectics" (qtd. in Roberts, 2008). Benjamin predicted the move from reproduction to representation. The age of simulation is characterized by a new temporality of the present: "Rather than viewing image and event as moving through and across interactive historical and discursive lines, one is now met with the immediacy inherent in reproducibility. Each image orbits within its self-induced trajectory, each event and object drifts apart from its source in historical reality" (Roberts, 2008). The mass culture reproduction that Benjamin wrote about has now developed into a state in which the cultural artifacts that once reproduced objects, events, or experiences are now preferred to the original. They are hyperreal objects more real than the real.

Performance studies scholar Philip Auslander was influenced by theory of hyperreality in his articulation of the dichotomy of "liveness" and mediatization, people's "live" experiences in relation to "mediated' experiences. Auslander builds on Baudrillard's concept of "mediatization" to argue that media has come to affect and frame people's reception and deep-seated assumptions of all live performances and "non-mediated" reality. The concept of a "live" performance, scholar Philip Auslander points out, did not exist until the recent advent of recording technology. Until the twentieth century, liveness was an essential quality of all music because all [music] performance was live. Today, he argues, there is a binary relationship between the live and the mediated; live performances today are constantly framed by and perceived in reference to models set by mediated forms. Ontologically, there is no truly live performance today; "live performance now often incorporates mediatization such that the live event itself is a product of media technolo-

gies" (Auslander, 1998). Theater and live performances are perceived in comparison to film and the televisual; live music performance is perceived in comparison to the recorded song and video (Sanden, 2013).

Auslander based much of his empirical research on the history of television, which has increasingly conflated people's binary understanding of the live and the mediated in its move from "reproduction" to "simulation". Television began with the overt intention to bring "live audience performances" into the comfort of people's homes. Through the development of more sophisticated camera technology, which afforded multiple camera angles, television developed into something more artificially edited and closer to film. Yet people continued to watch television programs as if they were "live events." This, in turn, helped lead to the obfuscation of people's perception of live experiences. Auslander's argument is that people now emotionally and affectively react to televised content as if it was composed of broadcasted live events which the medium originally touted. Subsequently, people approach live performances with expectations shaped by televisual and cinematic techniques (Auslander, 1998).

In the case of music, the most easily identifiable obfuscation of the live and the mediated is in mixed media content- when rock and pop musicians incorporate video, visuals, and elements that are connected to their music videos or recorded material. It sometimes becomes difficult to detect whether the videos inform the live material or vice versa (Auslander, 1998; Katz, 2010). The indy rock group, The Gorrillaz, whose members perform as cartoon personas behind screens during live shows, has often been cited as an example (Auslander, 1998; Richardson, 2005). The binary relationship between live performance and music video collapse; the two become identical (Auslander 1998, p. 32). Other examples of mixed media events include concerts

temporarily broadcast through Internet live feeds or showed at limited film screenings with high resolution recordings of live events. One example is LCD Soundsystem's *Shut up and Play the Hits*, part airing of the band LCD Soundsystem's final show at Madison Square Garden and part self-narrated documentary. It was shown nationally for one night so that the "theater would be full and loud and crowded, like a live show, not a solitary trip to the movies" (Murphy, qtd. in Frere-Jones 2012).

Auslander focuses on the fact that mediatization often ends up economically serving the mass media industry (Sanden, 2013). For example, The Korean popular music (K-pop) business model offers a compelling illustration of popular music as hyperreal/simulation/representation. K-pop stars, or idols, are trained by entertainment companies over the course of several years in every facet of performance, including singing, dancing, dressing, and speaking. The average contract for these performers is thirteen years. The entertainment companies study and focus-group every component of the "personality" of the idols to be represented in the music videos as well as in each country and cultural context, down to the color of eye shadow to be worn (Seabrook, 2012). In place of previous music industry models in which a major source of profit was generated through record/album/CD sales and live performance, the K-Pop labels have built a model that begins with the digital dissemination of its corporate music videos for free through YouTube and other content providers. Fans share the music and video through social media sites (SMS), and the primary sources of profit are generated through advertisements and product placements which the K-Pop "idols" endorse. The live music experience, in this case, exists to replicate the digital material to the extent that it proliferates national and international fandom (Batmanghelidj, 2012; Seabrook, 2012, Oh and Park, 2012). Additionally, K-Pop performances increasingly

make use of virtual holograms. In this way, the K-Pop scene can be seen as perpetuating a radical

example of the "simulated aura" created through reproductive technologies; fans go to the con-

certs to get a sensation of being "close" to the contents of the music video.

Hyperreality is not limited to pop music, however. As recorded music has become more

synthetically-produced and readily available, it is worthwhile to consider how all people's expe-

riences of live music are being shaped by their prior exposure to media. It is also important to

investigate how definitions of "liveness" are culturally-constructed. Sound studies scholars in-

cluding Jonathan Sterne (2003) and Andrew Crisell (2012) have articulated that historically, this

discourse has been biased in favor of face-to-face interpersonal communication. Thus, many his-

tories present technological development as distancing people from live, interpersonal commu-

nicative interaction. Rather, the relationship between "liveness" and "recordedness", as Crisell

puts it, is and has always been fluid and complex. Just as different technologies have long aug-

mented people's voices, so have people's communication with each other been intermingled and

mediated by recorded communication such as written speeches or notes.

3.   **Expanding "liveness"**

The concept of liveness has proved useful in arguments of how mediatization

benefits corporate stakeholders in the music industry model, such as in the case of K-pop. How-

ever, the concept has only recently begun to be operationalized in the study of specific live music

contexts. This scholarship is limited in offering how mediation might serve to strengthen or

augment contexts of live performances. Paul Sanden (2013) argues:

> Auslander's focus on proving the ubiquitous mediatization of live performance in modern
> Western culture (an ontological, epistemological, and ultimately economic concern) al-

lows little room for realizing theoretical potential of understanding just *how* the concept of liveness itself is formed in all its flexibility and diversity.

Sanden points out that the concept of liveness is not the same for everyone. Liveness is something that is dynamically performed, and Sanden wishes to enlarge the concept to encapsulate a plurality of experiences (Sanden, 2013). In Sanden's analysis and defense of the electronic music scene, he argues that "liveness" is a plurality of performative acts of human expression "in productive tension with the electronic machines involved in making this music" (Sanden 2013, i). Sanden argues that Auslander discounts several common audience understandings of liveness such as "communal interaction, spontaneity, and presence" which he believes are vital to "comparisons of live performance and electronically mediated culture."

It is also worthwhile to consider how a sense of historical or ritualistic context can augment or enrich a live experience. For example, Angela Landsberg argues that media can serve as a form of prosthetic memory. Prosthetic memory, she argues, occurs when developments in mass media lead to vivid, visual, heightened sensory viewing experiences that facilitate greater personal connections to events and coalesce collective memories among groups of people. Landsberg suggests that new technology has had the ability to rupture generational gaps and increase circulation among groups of people, ultimately "making possible and necessary a new form of public cultural memory" (Landsberg, 2004). Live practices surrounding different traditions can be strengthened through access to media content. Mediated artifacts can serve to help situate people within groups or communities through an enhanced knowledge of tradition, which is suggestive of a "historical" or "cultural memory" component to liveness.

C.   **<u>Historical Perspectives of "Live" Folk Music Culture</u>**

I argue that an analysis of the historical development of the American folk music scene

demonstrates that, contrary to the argument that mediatization supplants live experiences, live

contexts can also emerge as a result of new media technologies. The concept of American folk

music developed as a direct result of the recording and the recording industry. Writers, early

ethnomusicologists, producers with recording equipment, and academics were the first people to

discover, name, and collect traditional or rural "folk music." Notable fieldworkers in the early

efforts to collect folk recordings were John and Alan Lomax, much of whose work composes the

Library of Congress Archive of Folk Music, established in 1928 (Ferris, 1982). In this way, the

concept of folk is not often self-labelled by a musician or group of musicians of a certain genre.

Rather, it is labelled by others. The concept of folk comes from "city dwellers," ethnographer

Tanya Lee puts it. Rural, world, or traditional music only becomes "folk" when it is deemed so

by the "Cosmopolitanites" (Lee, 2011). Bau Graves, current director of the Old Town School of

Folk Music, writes, "in twenty-first century American culture, most people carry unexamined

misconceptions of what terms like folk and tradition are all about. I have never heard a single

traditional performer- and I've worked closely with hundreds of them- describe himself as a folk

musician. Meanwhile, singer-songwriters who have no connection to any community-based tra-

dition call themselves folksingers and their com-positions folksongs" (Graves, 2005, p. 44).

Early collectors of folk music shared the idea that folk songs collectively compose a na-

tional spirit. Their motivations were similar to those of the poets Carl Sandberg or Walt Whit-

man, reflected through the motif "I hear America Singing" (Ferris, 1982). An appreciation for a

democratic plurality of voices linked early folk music aficionados with the "popular front" of the

1930s and 1940s, a critical cultural movement in which entertainers, writers, musicians, and filmmakers creatively expressed their support of unions workers' rights and a critique of the capitalist system that perpetuated inequality and poverty, especially during the Great Depression. Charles Seeger, an early folk musician and father of musician Pete Seeger, wrote, "The folk music of America [has] embodied . . . the tonal and rhythmic expression of untold millions of rural and even urban Americans . . . the American people at large has had plenty to say and the ability to say it" (Qtd. In Kazin, 2011).

Unfortunately due to the political motivations of many folk musicians, folk was "driven underground" due to the censorship, persecution, and paranoia associated with Mccarthyism and the Red Scare. In the 1950s, particular styles of folk music became commonly performed in bohemian coffee houses and on college campuses. New forms of folk music emerged in those spaces, such as poetry-inspired singer-songwriter material. But by the end of that decade, a broad range of American folk music styles grew in commercial popularity to form the North American folk music resurgence.

Although the designation of "folk" is externally constructed, folk music communities share common characteristics. Folk music has come to be understood as an active expression of an oral tradition, generally against the grain of mainstream music, with a preference for traditional or acoustic instruments and voice. Folk culture can be seen as an appreciation of the oral ritual, which to Walter Innis, is marginally practiced and understood in our visual, spatially-biased culture. Whereas spatially-biased cultures, such as our own, tend to favor media that can be physically reproduced and reproduced geographically, oral cultures tend to preserve traditions through time, emphasizing listening and collective rituals (Innis 1950). Popular music spreads

virally through a population but does not necessarily stand the test of time; folk music maintains an active appreciation of the oral tradition. It is music that is shared and performed amongst people in a live setting, sometimes passed down through generations.

Another perspective applicable to folk culture is that it emphasizes what communications scholar James Carey calls a ritualistic mode of communication (1989). This is in opposition to what, he argues, is the dominant mode of understanding communication: transmissive exchange. Similarly, folk music culture can be understood as celebrating an oral rhetoric, which engages different modes of learning and communication. The concept of mimesis comes from the Ancient Greek rhetorical pedagogy in which imitation is an important component to teaching, discourse, and persuasive efficacy. Mimesis is central to folk music pedagogy; folk traditions celebrate the ritual of oral learning through the form of a live, social sharing of music. People often learn and retain material through communal practice and oral repetition.

Albeit the commercial success of many folk musicians, folk music has also come to define itself against commercialism and the dominant music scene. "When the arts are defined explicitly as the folk or traditional arts, it becomes particularly important that they remain untouched by commercial forces" (Jenson, 2002, p. 157). Folk music is arguably community-enhancing: "traditional arts are 'doubly local: they are 'both rooted in time and place, and expressions of the shared aesthetics, values and meanings of a cultural community" (Jensen, 2002, p. 157). Historically, folk music is associated with a live performance of acoustic instruments, sometimes labelled as anti-technology (characterized by the infamous reaction to Dylan "going electric" at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival). But broadly speaking, folk encompasses a wide range of technologies and even wider range of perspectives on technology, so that the relation-

ship between folk music and popular music can be illuminated through a multitude of perspectives.

D.   **The Old Town School of Folk Music**

Situated in the center of the north side of Chicago, the Old Town School of Folk Music (OTSFM) is the nation's largest community arts school. As of 2014, the school is home to 6,000 students a week, 2,700 children. The school offers hundreds of private lessons, but is known for its group classes. During the second half of class, several groups join together to form an even larger jam session in the auditorium. Set in the middle of the north side of Chicago, the school is evidence of the idea that folk music is a concept of city dwellers: in the waiting area, children in strollers play with iPads, and a majority of beginning piano players start by practicing on digital keyboards at home. In recent years, music education has often shifted to organizations like OTSFM due to arts budget cuts in public schools. For many students, both children and adults, coming weekly to the music classes at Old Town School serves as their only experience playing on acoustic instruments or performing live with other people.

The first full-length biography of the Old Town School was completed in 2011 by Tanya Lee. She focused her study on how students and teachers understood the value of the school, with an emphasis on how they conceptualized the meaning of folk music. Lee concluded that the school's ethos is based on: inclusive participation; music making as a social activity, what the planning committee calls a "community of learners"; egalitarianism (openness, diversity in its corporate structure); and tradition (Lee, 2010). In Lee's ethnography, many school affiliates described that folk was not a certain style of music but any type of music that was shared and kept alive over time. Music becomes folk music when it is actively shared and performed with others.

Lee concluded that folk is not a particular music, object, or style but a process by which people make music. Two significant elements to this process are participatory music-making and sharing. Lee employs ethnomusicologist Tom Turino's "four fields" of artistic practice to contextualize the uniqueness of music making at OTSFM. Turino categorizes participatory performance, presentational performance, high fidelity recording, and studio audio art as constituting a continuum of artistic process in which "different aesthetic values are pursued through different social arrangements" (Turino, 2008, qtd. in Lee, 2010). Participatory performance is characterized by a lack of separation between artist and audience and a renewed focus on the pleasure of the musicians. Of Turino's four fields, participatory performance is the least valued by American audiences, and what, Lee argues, OTSFM is uniquely able to offer. This is reflected in the regular group playing in the ensemble classes along with the larger "second half" jams in the main auditorium. Students in group classes also have the opportunity to participate in group performances at the end of each term, in which the instructor and students perform on the main stage in front of a large audience of students, friends, and family. For most students, performing on a large stage in front of an audience is a singular opportunity.

The organizing structure of the school also reflects important qualities of folk culture. The school originated in 1957 during the resurgent popularity of folk, by founders Win Stracke and Lee Hamilton, who sought to teach music in a social setting to amateur musicians who loved and appreciated music. Founder Win Stracke describes: "The interest in folk music by city people betrays their search for the basic realities which they don't find expressed in commercial popular music" (Grayson, 1992). During the 1960s, the school hosted concerts of highly-regarded musicians in the folk scene and launched the careers of many others. However, the late 1970s

and early 80s left the school on the verge of bankruptcy. Gas prices skyrocketed and utility rates rose, preventing many potential students from driving to the location. Additionally, it would appear that "more people were interested in punk music than in acoustic guitar" (Grayson 1992), arguably an alternative scene for live, socially-rooted performance. During the late 80s, however, the school recovered due to a restructuring of its organization. A non-profit status was initiated in order to maintain the same affordability of classes and events while helping the school to grow. The administration placed a deeper focus on fundraising and marketing the concept of folk music to the general public.

Over the last decades, the institution has expanded to include an array of world music, dance, movement and art classes. The school continues to introduce new classes and ensembles, based on demand and other factors. A new building was inaugurated in 2012. It provides more noise-contained classrooms for louder instruments and can house more movement-based performances in the dance hall. An electronic piano lab is currently in development.

While its array of faculty and employees identify folk music in various ways, as a whole, the school plays a vital role in the cultural definition and education of the concept of folk music in Chicago. It has broadened and redefined itself through time, adapting to the changing context of new developments in music technology and culture, while all the time encompassing the folk ethos through participation, ritual, sharing and community building. As there is low faculty turnover and many teachers have worked at the school for upwards of two decades, they have a unique and privileged access to working with large groups of beginning students of music who share the basic goal to play an instrument in a social setting.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

A.   **Goal and Defense of Research Aim**

The folk music classroom at OTSFM is an important site in which to study the concept of liveness. It is a space where the mediated and the live converge. Folk music teachers draw from particular histories of folk music in its recorded, mediated, and archived forms in order to demonstrate and share music in a live setting with students. As the internet and new media technology has increased access to music and educational materials, students enter the classroom with different mediated references to the music. An inquiry into these folk music teaching experiences within the OTSFM classroom can illuminate specific ways that live music experiences are influenced by different media technological contexts.

Little research has been done to explore and operationalize the notion of "liveness" in live music performance contexts beyond analysis of the music industry model or of recorded or mixed media content. I aimed to expand the notion of "liveness" through a theoretical analysis of how live music performance and education has been cultivated over time in the unique setting of the Old Town School of Folk Music. I sought to question teachers who have worked there for a significant amount of time and who have been witness to beginning students' ideas, assumptions, and experiences of what is live music performance, specifically as it relates to developments in popular music and new music technology.

B.   **Research Question**

I was interested in the reflections of the group lesson teachers who have worked with beginning music students for a long period of time (over 15 years) concerning their firsthand

accounts of working with students in the folk environment and how it has changed over this period of time. My research questions can be described in two parts: first, how has the classroom experience of teaching folk music to beginning students changed in the last 15 to 20 years? Second, while specifically this study involves an examination of the changing nature in which live music performance is experienced and interpreted in the folk school context, on a broad level it concerns how digital media intake shapes and constitutes people's every day experiences, in which music is one significant domain of cultural practice. Thus, how do teachers use new media technology inside as well as outside the classroom, and how do their students use technology? How does new music technology and popular music play a role in the teaching of folk music in a live setting to beginning students? Through an investigation of the relationship between the experience of live musical performance and the experience of digital music culture, I hoped to expand the concept of "liveness" as I believe it is of increasing importance to communications researchers and other scholars of various fields.

C.   **Conceptual Framework**

1.   **Studying liveness**

The concept of live, unmediated experience is difficult to operationalize and measure. We will never fully know how people conceptualized music and the experience of music performances prior to the development of music recording technology. The study of live performance is difficult as well; live performances are highly contextual, ephemeral, and subjective. The occasion of a live performance may lend itself more to descriptive prose than empirical academic study.

That being said, the live music context as a dedicated object of study is now being approached by ethnomusicologists and cultural studies scholars. There is a growing trend in musicology to focus on the live performance, which can provide different sorts of psychological "feedback" that exist apart from the recording studio (Antonietti, Cocomazzi, & Iannello, 2009). Doğantan-Dack calls for a scholarly attention to live performance in which the performer-researcher is uniquely positioned to engage with live performance as an object of study (Doğantan-Dack, 2011; 2012). The most deliberate examination of music in its communicative context, or the study of music as it is performed, lived, and experienced, has developed into the field of ethnomusicology (Titon, 1988; Cooley, 1997). Titon's ethnomusicological model restructures the affective experience of music as it is performed as the primary domain of music. The other two domains, he argues, are community and history/memory.

Cultural studies scholars have long worked to define the definition and boundaries of "performances". Drawing on Goffman's notion of the performative element to every day life (Goffman, 1959) cultural anthropologist Victor Turner attempted to distinguish the "ritually marked performance" versus the performance of "everyday life" (Turner, 1982, qtd. in Holt, 2010, p. 243-261). To Edward Said, live performances are extreme occasions "whose core is precisely what can be experienced only under severe and unyielding conditions" (Said, 1993, p. 17, qtd. in Holt, 2010). Cultural studies scholars pioneered by Simon Frith have begun focusing on live music performance in the digital age (Frith, 2007). In his studies of various UK live music festivals, Frith illustrated how the live music scene plays a significant economic and social role in the music industry (Frith, 2007). Fabian Holt argues that the live context of music performance is vital to understanding the music itself:

> When music exists as live music (that is to say, when it is associated with the discursive category of live music), the perspective is broadened from the music itself to questions about how, when and among whom the music is created, performed and heard in relation to practices of technological mediation. Only by examining live music in its communicative context can we understand its capacities in the production of authenticity, festivity and social presence (Holt, 2010, p. 243-261).

Holt expanded on Simon Frith's project of examining how the economy of the live music scene has risen in recent decades, even in the midst of the decline of the economy of recorded music (Frith, 2007; Daley, 2011; Holt, 2010). This is partly due to the development of new technologies such as large amplifiers that lend themselves to larger outdoor music festivals (Holt, 2010), the resilience of the live music experience in the face of the downturn of the record industry, and the increasingly important role that the live music scene plays for the music fan when music collections become easier to attain for the "casual" music listener.

In 2014, Paul Sanden directly interrogated Auslander's concept of "liveness" in his study of the live electronic music scene. Yet, along with other scholars in the burgeoning field of audiovisual and sound studies who tend to focus their analysis on historical archival documents or audiovisual content, he based much of his study on the analysis of recorded content that contains the simulated aura of liveness, such as the recorded work of pianist Glenn Gould. While examination of this audiovisual content is important, I aimed to approach the subject by interviewing well-situated people directly about their experiences of liveness.

2.   **Interviews**

In order to answer my research questions, I chose to engage in a method of interviewing long-term teachers about their experiences over time. I believe open-ended interviews can yield important revelations about peoples' interactions with technology in specific contexts.

Just like the folk method of teaching, it is through live conversation and exchange that the teachers could convey the richest information about the topic. As this topic is complex and understudied, information derived from the interviews could inspire further ideas for research and examination.

Sherry Turkle's work interviewing how people relate to their computers and machines (1984; 2012) has had a longstanding impact on the communication field because peoples' experiences and stories, encapsulated in their own words, can make poignant and memorable scenes which aid an understanding of the highly complex way that technology and culture is entangled. Interviews have also been an integral component to the study of music education. Many studies will mix interviews with surveys and/or observation, but ethnographic interviews alone can begin as preliminary data for other experiences (Mina, 2000, qtd. in Ortiz, 2003). Recent mixed method studies of music education that employ interviews include the investigation of the experience of urban instrumental music teachers in Chicago (Fitzpatrick, 2011) and the experience of music teachers in assisting children with special needs (Hourigan, 2009). Both rely heavily on the thoughts and ideas of the teachers compiled from interview transcripts in their findings. Another ongoing study that includes interviews is the Teaching Artists Research Project out of NORC at University of Chicago. "Teaching Artists" can be described as artists who teach part-time at after-school art programs or art schools. The study includes 211 in-depth interviews of teaching artists, along with surveys of 3550 people and a look at the work of teaching artists in their classroom settings (TARP, 2011). Additionally, the existing literature on the Old Town School of Folk music heavily employs information from ethnographic interviews as an important

component to the history of the school, beginning with interviews of the founders of the school (Grayson, 1992; Lee, 2011).

3. **Constant comparative method**

This research is a form of naturalistic inquiry, the qualitative study of activity that is believed to be best understood while performed within its natural context. According to the definition of method as "a way of thinking about and studying social reality" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 3) I believed this was an appropriate way to expand the study of liveness as it is experienced by many different people within a particular context.

During the interviews and subsequent analysis I performed a constant comparative method (CCM). In the constant comparative method (CCM), data analysis is performed in an open-ended way in which all data is continually compared to other data in the data set. CCM is employed as part of a naturalistic inquiry. Lincoln and Guba describe the process to be "comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting theory, and writing [the] theory" (1985, p. 339, Qtd. in Fram, 2013). CCM can also be employed in the process of developing a grounded theory, described by Barney Glaser as

> a set of rigorous research procedures leading to the emergence of conceptual categories. The concepts/categories are related to each other as a theoretical explanation of the action(s) that continually resolves the main concern of the participants in a substantive area (Glaser 2008).

CCM begins with the very first data collection (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p. 241). Glaser and Strauss write, "If the data are collected by theoretical sampling at the same time that they are analyzed (as we suggest should be done), then integration of theory is more likely to emerge by itself." I began thinking about the organization of the data into running themes from conducting

the first interviews. Themes were constantly re-evaluated as I conducted subsequent interviews

and transcriptions, allowing me to adjust my data collection simultaneously to obtain the maxi-

mum amount of relevant information. Glaser defines these initial themes/categories as a form of

substantive coding, which "summarizes empirical substance" (Glaser, 2008). Subsequently, in

my discussion, I delimited three theoretical codes, which Glaser defines as helping to describe

"how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into

theory" (Glaser, 2008).

D.   **Research Design**

I planned on conducting 15 open-ended interviews because it was a base line number of

ethnographic interviews of a population recommended by Siedman (1998). After about 10 inter-

views, I felt that a sufficient range of experience was adequately represented, and that I had suf-

ficient information to discern several thematic patterns and similar ideas. But I continued to the

allotted 15 which I had received approval by the UIC IRB board because the teachers continued

to provide rich descriptions and personal anecdotes.

Before performing the interviews, I researched methods of ethnographic and/or open-

ended interviews. Heyl (2001) defines the ethnographic interview as a method where there is an

on-going respectful relationship with interviewees, characterized by a 'genuine exchange of

views' that elicits the meaning the interviewees make of the world around them" (Qtd. in Ortiz

2003). I believe I was well-suited to conduct interviews at OTSFM because as a piano teacher at

the school myself, the interviews were benefitted from my knowledge of music, the school's en-

vironment, and my rapport with other teachers. Yet as a private music teacher, as opposed to a

group lesson teacher, I felt I was positioned to be both knowledgeable of the topic but sufficiently objective because I didn't work too closely with the participants.

With the approval of the OTSFM school administration and the UIC institutional review board, a list of teachers who have worked at the school for over 15 years was compiled, and I approached the teachers individually via email or in person to inquire about an optional and confidential one hour open-ended interview. I explained that the interviews concerned the role of media and music technology at OTSFM, and how the cultural environment has changed over the last decades. I hoped to interview teachers who capture the school's ethos and who could critically articulate what it means to play and perform live folk music against a larger context of technologically-driven popular music. I targeted teachers who tend to be communicative and social, and who would be likely to enjoy discussing connections between the folk tradition and new social or cultural trends. An approach to these "information-rich key informants or critical cases" also involved "asking well-situated people" and other interviewees who they recommend, in a "snowballing" effect (Siedman, 1998).

I interviewed each teacher off campus for about 60 minutes, following the script listed in the Appendix, and recorded the interviews with a digital field recorder. I designed the script to begin with "low risk," easy-going questions in which to develop rapport and employed probes to help pursue in-depth answers to my research questions. Often, teachers initially expressed doubt that they had much to offer on the topic of folk music teaching and its relationship to media technology. Yet once they started talking about their experiences, they became very enthusiastic. I always began by asking each interviewee to describe their own early backgrounds and exposure to music- what music they listened to, how they discovered and listened to music, what was their

first exposure to playing an instrument, and whether it was through formal or informal education. I would then ask them to elaborate on their own musical history and how it eventually led to teaching at OTSFM. This would develop a rapport, especially among the teachers I didn't already know. Then I would direct the open-ended conversation to their new media technology practices (recording, emailing, downloading) and their class teaching experiences over time, as well as their opinions about new media and music technology trends. I found that by first directing the conversation to the past, the teachers were more likely to draw connections about how things have changed. The general direction of the conversations is well-represented by the questions listed in the Appendix.

Early on in my interviews I began to identify patterns and themes in the teachers' experiences and interpretations of the influence of technology and popular music over time, regarding popular music, the internet, and students' expectations, assumptions, and habits. I was first able to develop a theme about how the teachers commonly discovered, used, shared, and archived music and educational tools using digital technology. This theme was often discussed in tandem with how technologies have helped mediate new ways to access, discover, and share music. Another theme I initially identified, often the last topic discussed in most interviews, included thoughts about students' practices and physical technique and how this has changed over time. After completing and transcribing the interviews, the final theme I delineated concerns musical tastes and fandom.

Many ideas in these themes overlap. Discussions about YouTube, for example, extend into all of them. The theme about tastes and fandom very much intersects with ideas from the first two themes, concerning community, new media technology use, and access. These overlaps

initially made it difficult for me to decide how to organize the totality of information expressed.

However, where there are overlaps, I believe these categories clarify, rather than obfuscate such

intersections. Last, the order of themes as I have presented them in the analysis best illustrates a

common chronology of the interviews.

<center>**IV: ANALYSIS**</center>

The themes represented in this analysis are: the role of technology to strengthen the folk community; technologies of music access and discovery (most significantly, YouTube) as a means to mediate music sharing inside and outside of the classroom; the role of the teachers as a means to help students discover and cultivate musical tastes as well as identity; and finally, thoughts on the fast-paced speed of contemporary society and its relationship to patience, practice, and technicality in learning an instrument.

A.   **Social Media and the Live Community**

The most central theme on the topic of new technology concerns how new media technology has helped strengthened a core element to the school: the live social community. While the teachers often resisted offering a definition of what is "folk music", they constantly iterated that the live community is one of the most definitive characteristics of the school. Several of the teachers I interviewed have been affiliated with the school since its very early years; a few began as some of the earliest students themselves. One such teacher describes that "Old Town has always been about community. Teachers' early experiences are often the community that brought them there... I liked to sing, and I liked the second half. It was like 20 or 25 people.. I liked the joy of having a musical community that I didn't have before." Several teachers remarked that it is the live interaction which continues to bring students in the doors. "People go to OTSFM for human contact, and exchange and intercommunication with others, as opposed to just the raw technique." Another group guitar teacher reflected that:

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The guitar already has a more back porch sort of mentality, as opposed to piano or classical music. You have a farm, you get together every month, you show them your songs, they show you theirs. . . . That's how people have carried songs for hundreds of years.

With the perspective that the live community is a central aspect of the school, the teachers offered multiple ways in which new media technology has enhanced their work in the folk music "classroom." Email has helped classes of students coalesce. Technology has helped make it easier for teachers to introduce and share traditional music to students through MP3s, digital videos, and streaming music online. Sharing links to recordings helps inform and inspire students in between classes throughout the week. Technology has also made it easier for teachers to recall, archive, collect and share sheet music and charts through digital scanning and data storage. Recording technology has extended the reach of the classroom; students can record audio and videos of classes, share the recordings with each other, and practice to them at home. YouTube, which will be discussed further at length, makes a breadth of historical recorded music easily available, helping to connect students to music traditions and communities. The teachers described some ways in which new media technology may be perceived as a threat or challenge to OTSFM; one perspective is that ease of tablature and educational material online, and opportunities for distance learning through Skype and other video sources my supplant the need for live music classes. However, they did believe these to be major threats. Overall, they shared the view that new media technology has helped facilitate their teaching and strengthen many of the core activities of the school as defined by Lee (2011), such as inclusive participation, music making as a social activity, and tradition.

1.   **Email and group correspondence**

One of the most important and common uses of new media technology at OTSFM is emailing. Prior to email, the only way for students to contact teachers outside of class was through a one-way voicemail box set up at the school; it was the school's policy not to give out teachers' phone numbers. Teachers would have to routinely check their voicemail boxes. The standardized voicemail message set by OTSFM warned callers that the diverse range of teachers meant that many were not easily accessible by telephone; some teachers would be on the road regularly performing throughout the week, and could only come to the OTSFM location once a week to teach a class.

The group teachers enthusiastically described that email has made it much easier to reach out to large classes of people. Email encourages students to ask questions during the week, and the busy teachers are better able to organize large group communication. Teachers are also much more comfortable about giving out their email addresses as opposed to their private telephone numbers. "It's not as invasive," one teacher put it. Several teachers described that regular email-ing ensures that fewer beginning students drop out of the classes, by keeping them more engaged with the class throughout the week. Regular emailing helps strengthen the communal feel of the class, mobilizing it to "coalesce" more quickly. In this way, it helps strengthen the inclusive par-ticipation and social element to the school.

There are varying opinions about privacy and openness among the teachers, and each teacher acts according to their own level of comfort regarding group communication outside of class. For example, one teacher prefers to send out blind carbon copy emails to the class (so that

the individual class members do not see each other's email addresses) but encourages class members to share their email addresses amongst themselves. All the teachers described that they were happy when relationships among students form beyond the classroom. Students commonly form friendships based on practicing an instrument or style of music. Email has also made it easier for students to get together to form additional practice sessions throughout the week. According to the teachers, more group communication throughout the week enriches the classroom experience and has helped facilitate their group teaching tremendously.

2. **Digital archiving of sheet music and written material**

Many technologies have aided the process of archiving and accessing folk music through sheet music and guitar tablature, making it easier for teachers to recall older music and share a wider range of it. In the last twenty years, digital archiving on PCs has allowed people to access and archive materials that would be difficult, timely, or expensive to locate. This greatly strengthens students' and teachers' ability to connect to traditional material. It also makes the job of the teachers much easier when putting together sheet music for classes that they would otherwise have to handwrite and copy on copy machines. One teacher sums up the situation prior to the internet, and even prior to the PC: "When I first started teaching in '94. . . . I would have to handwrite everything. Not everyone had a typewriter, let alone a computer. . . . Right now you can go online and there are a million songs on YouTube, a million sites for guitar teaching. [For a long time before that] there was the OLGA Online Guitar Archive."

A sharing culture has long existed at OTSFM. The resource center and library developed in the early years of the school as a place for people to locate and share music from an archive of sheet music and recordings. More informally, there are boxes in the school where teachers can

leave extra copies of sheet music from their classes to share to the community. Computers and digital technology have made the process of sharing sheet music and textual materials much easier and expansive. Teachers are able to share and access more songs for their classes. The technology has also made it easier for teachers to manage their own collections of music. Many teachers described that they were constantly managing boxes of sheet music material that wasn't always easy to organize. The process of digital archiving has helped them from constantly amassing large and unorganized stacks of paper. Several teachers described how, early on, students helped them digitize their music archives. The students worked as informal research assistants, helping them scan the paper sources into digital files. The level of participation among the students varies, and many teachers described that there will always be some students who are eager to help organize, grow, or contribute to the class, beginning with suggesting or sharing music to be played or listened to as part of the class curriculum.

The teachers' involvement with new media technology is varied. In some ways this parallels the varied way that teachers choose to document their playing in writing. For example, there are a few older teachers at the school who write very little down in their classes. They write only a bare minimum of information, such as chord progressions. This particular "folk method" incorporates a more oral way of playing and teaching. Instead of writing down transcriptions, melodies, and harmonies, these teachers prefer to teach the music through playing together ritualistically and enforcing a more mimetic style of pedagogy.

There is also a range of how the teachers embrace new media technology. Many describe that they are slow or resistant to adopt new practices when they have already found "something that works for them". Others are more willing to adopt new technology that facili-

tates the sharing of information, documentation, and music to their group classes. On the surface, the OTSFM community does not resemble the stereotype of a high-tech community, such as a face-paced corporation or a Silicon Valley start-up. But cutting across the wide array of styles, traditions, and demographics that are represented, the OTSFM teachers are rather technologically-savvy. Many expressed pointed opinions about the future of cloud-based technology. Many teachers share materials through remotely through the "cloud," accessible storing services on the internet such as Dropbox. Yet while those same teachers embrace such technologies they simultaneously express doubt and criticism about the future and implications of cloud-based services, which raise great risks to privacy and democratic access. The teachers' work at OTSFM continually provides an exigence for adopting new media practices while simultaneously facilitating a critical thinking of their implications.

3. **<u>Audio and video recording</u>**

Another key use of technology in the classroom at OTSFM is video and audio recording. Elements of video and audio recordings will be discussed in the subsequent subsection on YouTube. However, in the context of how this practice is employed at OTSFM, there are some notable thoughts about how video and audio recordings are used to record performances and classes.

Video or iPhone recordings have become a ubiquitous component to the student/teacher performances that occur at the end of every eight week session of classes, where group classes come together to form several large performances in the school's auditoriums. (The private lesson teachers organize their recitals separately). These performances are an important element to the "live experience" at OTSFM because, for many students, the performance is a singular op-

portunity for them to play music on a stage in front of such a large audience. The teachers describe that most students develop some form of nerves that they have never experienced before. Because many students get extremely nervous, organizing and facilitating a smooth and comfortable performance is an important part of the teacher's job.

If performing on a stage in front of a large audience marks Said's notion of the "extreme occasions" of a "performance" to the students, to the audience, an important component of the performance is recording it. In addition to my own experience, several teachers described that almost every audience member now holds a camera phone to record their friend or family member onstage during their performance. For the audience, it appears that the act of recording the event has become an important component to experiencing the performance. A group teacher who also teaches children's classes described his experience that when classes or performances are being recorded, children will almost always draw their attention to the screens of the phones or tablets. He is surprised by the fact that these young students are drawn to watching performances through the screen even if it physically separates them from the event or their peers.

Video recordings usually mean something else in the context of the classrooms: video functions as a multimodal form of documentation or class notes. It is increasingly common that student record their classes, usually with a digital recorder, iPhone, or iPad, which they can consult in between classes to help in their personal practice. Sometimes, students like to record the teachers playing a song the students are currently learning, so that they can study it as a model. Playing and replaying the recordings can help encourage the important practice of ear training. Sometimes, students can record teachers playing a certain section, duet part, or chord progression so that students can practice corresponding parts or improvise to it at home. The video documen-

tation of a class can also be shared socially. One teacher referred to a student in his 70s who has regularly recorded their group class with a small Tascam digital recorder for over eight years. The teacher described that the class is composed of a group of friends around the same age, and 'this man is sort of the "un-informal leader"'. At the end of the week, he drops the video in a special folder in Dropbox for the rest of the class. "I always encourage it, no matter what, to tape me playing [songs]," the teacher says. "As long as you don't share it on YouTube. It's fine if you share it with everyone else in the class. . . . We have a trust together as a class."

In this way, recordings and videos can "extend" important information from the classroom into students' homes. Videos can help restore the important visual dimension of music playing. It is increasingly understood that music is multimodal and visuality is an important component to music learning. Pedagogically, visual information of live folk music performance can reveal hand / body placement, chord structures on a piano or other instrument, dance and body movement, and emotion. Visuality takes on an added importance in the context of OTSFM as the folk music style of teaching and sharing elevates a mimetic style of learning. In this way, albeit "newer" than writing and audio recording, digital videos arguably facilitate a better mediated folk music experience than writing or audio recording alone.

The audio recording of classes and practice sessions is not a new concept. For many of the teachers, recording their own practice sessions has been a long-term heuristic in their songwriting process. "We don't remember as much as we think we remember," one teacher and songwriter pointed out. Personal audio recordings allow musicians to revisit musical ideas in order to build on them and expand them into more complex songs. One teacher describes the use of video as integral to his songwriting process; for many years he has ritualistically videotaped

his practice sessions by positioning a camera on the opposite side of a table to focus on his hands. He records himself in this way as he practices new material. "The technology has made it much easier," he says. "The visual component of video contains so much more information about the way that people play complex things using their hands." The importance of the visual component to folk music education is well illustrated in this story regarding the student in his 70s who has taken a video recording of every class over the last eight years. His teacher describes:

> Two weeks ago, for the first time, I had a music stand in front of my right hand (when he sent the video I noticed). Its the first time I noticed he didn't ask me to move the music stand. Sure enough, the next week, he asked if he could record the song again.You get so much information from looking at that right hand. . . .

4.   **Perspectives of the future**

When asked whether the internet or new media posed any threats or challenges to the future of folk music teaching at OTSFM, some teachers described the prospect of distance-learning through web video software such as Skype. Currently, virtual education is not incredibly common and is more likely employed by music instructors who already have a reputation or roster full of students to supplement other classes. But greater access to free educational material online has arguably lead to an "I can just teach myself" mentality and the future of distance learning is up for question.

However, all the teachers argued that learning from the internet cannot supplant the live experience. They argued that the live experience at OTSFM includes forming communities around a shared enjoyment of music. It offers a space for students to get help physically performing an instrument. This means correcting one's hands or body in order to play the instrument better. For many stringed instrument players, it also means getting help in tuning an in-

strument. One teacher replied to the idea of distance learning, "What can and cannot you teach

remotely? Could you teach a tennis lesson remotely? A teacher can't reach through the screen to

help a student tune their guitar." The physical element of music education includes learning how

to play the instrument and project the sound in different spaces or in front of people live, adding

new psychological dimensions. One teacher described that the live lesson functions almost like a

psychoanalytic live space for many students, which can function as a form of guided practice:

> I think that you cannot replace a human being. And I especially think there is no
> substitute for the one-on-one lesson. The first priority is to make the student feel safe so
> they can explore and skin their knee and break out of the awkwardness of learning in
> front of somebody who cares and who can nurture that. The worst case scenario is the
> nun smacking your hand, shaming you. The teacher has to be gentle, challenging. . . .
> The most you can affect is gentle disappointment. I don't know that YouTube allows for
> that. Having a witness to your learning process is something that you just can't substi-
> tute.

The shared belief is that overall, the internet supports the community of OTSFM by inspiring

people's initial interest in music playing, which then leads them to the school. The teachers de-

scribed that increasingly, beginning students come to classes explaining that "they tried to teach

themselves on the internet until they couldn't anymore" or that "they heard this great thing on the

radio and have come hear to learn how to play it." The statistics of the school enrollment indi-

cates that overall, school enrollment has remained strong and has steadily grown. However, en-

rollment has dropped in the school's hallmark beginning "Guitar 1" classes. Some teachers be-

lieve that one of the likely reasons for this is that many people are indeed turning to the internet

for their initial music education resources, but will turn to other forms of education when they

reach the limit to what they can teach themselves alone. Another reason for the drop in begin-

ning guitar classes, some teachers suggested, is that the guitar is not currently as featured in popular music.

Overall, the teachers believe that the internet has had a positive effect on the scene. New media can facilitate people's initial interests in certain styles of music, and the internet puts people in touch with each other to subsequently meet in the live space of classrooms and performances. The school's website has become an integral component to its marketing and enrollment. As the school has grown, networked communication, facilitated by the internet, has transformed OTSFM into a hub of resources for various types of music, helping OTSFM to expand its concept of folk music. OTSFM has become the premiere institution in the wider Chicago area to consult for lessons and ensembles of more esoteric styles of folk and world music. Teachers and ensemble members commonly play in other groups and performances around the city, so that incoming musicians can be linked to dedicated performance opportunities around Chicago.

The live element of the community of fans and players remains at the core of the scene; it adapts according to new demands for styles and content. Many of the course offerings at OTSFM originated with a group of people who got together at the school to play a particular style of music. Informal jams commonly get integrated into an official class or an ensemble. The popular "Guitar 4ever" class got its name after a group of students continued to re-register for the same class. Eventually, the running joke between the group became the official title of the class in the school's course offerings. Group classes are cancelled at the beginning of each term if a minimum number of registered students is not met, and new sections are added when there is a demand. In this way, the course offerings emerge from the demands and tastes of

members of the community, and the website helps facilitate and market the classes to even larger audiences.

B.   **YouTube: Access, Affect, Archive**

YouTube was the most prominent example of technology used in the folk music class-room as discussed by the teachers. Every teacher I interviewed mentioned it as one of the most class-enhancing tools that has emerged in the last decades. YouTube is a video-sharing website that was created in 2006, and is predominantly composed of user-generated content. It is emblematic of the participatory, dynamic, and social dimensions of the internet that has become referred to as Web 2.0 (O'reilly, 2007). YouTube allows teachers and students to quickly and easily access music and video inside and outside of the classroom. YouTube has helped link students to rich traditions of folk music that would be otherwise difficult to obtain. Its video format facilitates a folk style of mimetic learning. The user-content encourages the playing of multiple variations of songs. YouTube, as a widely-used mediated resource, is not a mere infringement upon the live, but plays a complex role in people's experience of live music playing in terms of how the music is accessed, affective, and archived. It illustrates how the live experience in the classroom is related to and enhanced by the mediated musical recording.

1.   **Access**

YouTube offers a powerful and easy way for teachers to access an extensive archive of folk music in video format which was previously difficult to discover and share. YouTube also offers many versions of live performances of the same song, whether it be new music or old, rare footage. It is a tool that the teachers frequently use as part of their own musicianship. One teacher describes, "[YouTube] is a beautiful tool. As a teacher, I can look up some

songs I've been listening to for thirty years to figure out new things." Many teachers describe

that many beginning students come into the classroom having already first attempted to learn

songs off of YouTube. Its ubiquity has led to it being a starting point for students to pick up an

instrument and try to learn a song. In this way, YouTube is often their primary "mediated" expe-

rience of live music recordings. One instructor shared:

> I teach a number of different classes and in every one I have a student who comes in and
> says, 'I tried to learn it off YouTube last night and it didn't go really well, so here I am.' I
> use YouTube as the great resource for inspiration. So if I'm teaching a bluegrass banjo
> class, I'll give people names to search on YouTube because I know that these examples
> will be inspiring. Like Earl Scruggs. You can watch him all day long; you'll never be led
> astray.

On their own, students might not discover the same music without the recommendation of the

teachers, but the archive on YouTube allows teachers to share musical references to the students,

helping the students build on their personal tastes and music knowledge. Another teacher put it:

> Young people experience music differently. The availability of music is huge. . . . You can
> go on the internet, get the whole discography of Wes Montgomery, like that! For free!
> Before, it meant going to the library and taking out a record, and maybe finding a couple
> transcriptions. Now all this stuff has been transcribed. There are all these sub-genres of
> music and all of that. It's a much richer time for study... Videos that cost ninety dollars
> twenty years ago you can just look at on YouTube. . . .

One teacher described that it was much more difficult to recommend albums to students in earlier

years when the cost of CD was reaching twenty dollars. Many of his students could not afford to

buy the CDs he would have loved for them to listen to. YouTube greatly cuts down on the costs

of listening and discovering new music. Additionally, it functions as a library; after teachers rec-

ommend music for students to watch on YouTube, students can explore similar work by the same

artist or similar artists as recommended by the YouTube suggestions toolbar. Similarly, algo-

rithmically-based musical recommendation software like Pandora and Spotify can function in

this way. This broad range of musical material greatly excites people's interest in listening and sharing music.

2. **Affect**

One of YouTube's most significant attributes is that, as a video sharing platform, YouTube helps restore a visual component to the music recording. The video medium adds an affective gravity to the listening / watching experience. Over the last century, audio recordings have come to dominate how people commonly listen to music, making it quite common for music listeners to lack any visual reference to the producers or bands. Additionally, personal music education has long been mediated through the form of audio-recorded music- CDs, tapes, LPs, or written music in the form of tablature, sheet music, and tutorials. Yet many teachers describe that a good video can sometimes be better than any verbal [or textual] explanation, just as modeling a performance to a student can sometimes be more affective than just describing a technique. The inspiration that students get from the videos on YouTube is very much indebted to watching the performers move, in addition to hearing the music. One teacher describes the powerful affect of YouTube in a story about his experience teaching American folk music in Russia on an exchange program.

> At one point we were working on a slide tune, I was trying to describe through my interpreter, who was a guitar player, thank goodness, the attitude. . . . I was trying to describe the attitude of his playing. It was getting lost in translation. So finally I just said, "Go home and just watch this on YouTube." They came back and they were gobsmacked! They had never seen anything like that in their lives. It was better than any description I could have given. Things like that, putting things in historical perspective, showing the great artists of the past, that's what I deal in. The future is that way, but all the things we are looking at is behind us. YouTube is behind us. I would love to have access like that in the classroom, and be able to say, guys check that out. Call it up in a moment's notice, plan ahead for it, you have your own channel that you bookmarked all these things. I would love to have that as a resource.

This passage beautifully articulates how the audiovisual YouTube videos can affectively captivate audiences. It also helps illuminate how YouTube facilitates a form of "prosthetic memory," as its vivid audiovisual platform helps connect users emotionally and personally to musical traditions.

The audiovisual dimension to YouTube also helps foster a mimetic style of learning and teaching, which is central to folk music pedagogy. Students can watch performers' hand positions and how they are playing chords. They can discover what kind of gear the performers are playing on. Even watching the performers dance can help students embody the rhythm of the song. Listening *and* watching can better assist students to try to learn through copying, trial and error, and repetition. Many teachers describe that there are always more than a handful of people who enter the school after attempting to learn songs they watched on YouTube, but have reached a limit as to what they could learn. Other times, students come to the school and discover that playing the chord progressions to a song is much "easier" than it looks. One teacher describes that sometimes popular music brings the students in the doors, but then they get bored with the initial music they were interested in and want to learn more advanced and alternative music. YouTube can provide excellent performances to inspire players of any level. Many teachers described that there are many tremendous virtuosic performances on YouTube and they are constantly learning new things from them as well. One teacher describes:

> There are talented people who are heavily researching things on their instruments. Music fans who are great players, not teachers, but they just record themselves. Even about stuff about guitar tunings. The "Rain Song" by Led Zeppelin. They figured out the tuning, some weird-ass tuning, that sounds exactly like it. They nailed it!

YouTube inspires self-teaching musicians to challenge themselves, and its audiovisual compo-
nent encourages people to actively deconstruct popular material as well as to practice reassem-
bling the material in different ways.

3.   **<u>Archive</u>**

Coupled with the affective qualities of its audiovisual platform, YouTube pro-
motes a democratic sharing of music and video. It helps dismantle rigid distinctions between
producer and audience, and the authentic/original and the remix. Its archive of available music is
continually expanding, and much of the content includes user-generated variations, adaptations,
and covers. This quality of YouTube greatly helps the teachers inspire students to play more than
one version or style of a song. This is incredibly important in the process of learning how to
vary style, voicing, and rhythm. Additionally, the experience of watching other "regular people"
of various levels perform music on YouTube can help students become more confident in their
identities as a musicians.

One quality of YouTube that greatly encourages the folk music education process is that it
fosters playing different versions of the same song through covers, variations, and even mash-
ups. The participatory, user-generated culture challenges the aesthetic authority of the studio
recording and encourages a more democratic participation in recording and interpreting songs.
This is markedly different from the history of popular radio, which tends to promote and repeat
studio-recorded hits. Simply acquiring expensive records, tapes, and CDs of studio-recorded al-
bums has traditionally been a challenge alone to many people. When studio-recorded hits are
people's only exposure to music, their imagination of the possibilities of music is limited. For
example, it is common for young students to ask questions like, "Is this a real song?" regarding

songs in their piano lesson books which they have never heard before on the radio or computer. This is especially true as increasingly the music they do hear at home features little or no piano at all.

The many different musical covers on YouTube allow students to experience a variety of ways to play a song. This greatly helps teachers encourage students to go beyond emulating one specific way of playing a popular song and to discover their own style and voice in playing music. One teacher put it, "As a teacher I'm always trying to direct students to music as a form of communication. This is how you are going to be able to communicate, and express yourself- as opposed to xeroxing or carbon copying this sound or that sound or that artist." This can be particularly true of guitar students, who are likely to emulate the exact style of the studio recordings of the songs they want to learn. One guitar teacher described that he constantly experiences students who want to emulate verbatim the studio recordings of their favorite songs and artists. Yet even to students who aren't consciously trying to to do that, often a comparison to studio-recordings determines whether a song sounds "right" or "accurate." Their knowledge or memory of a popular recording that they want to play greatly informs and shapes their experience in learning the song.

YouTube can help illuminate the many different ways that songs can be played. One teacher described that he emphasizes a tripartite technique of listening to a song on YouTube: "I always listen to the studio recording, followed by a live version of it, if possible, followed by a few covers." He described how YouTube helps him teach guitar students rhythmic variation:

> I try to get them to listen to as many different variations of that song as possible if they are listening to a song. . . . Using YouTube as a tool. . . . I remind them if they haven't listened to that song in a long time, to listen to it. . . . It's hard as a musical educator

> when things are supposed to be sold. YouTube is a very handy educational tool.
> YouTube can show lots of different versions. [With] television you just get the one popu-
> lar version of the song. It's not black and white like that. It's malleable. You can make it
> however you want it to. Thats why I created the rhythm guitar class at Old Town School.
> There was a void in the curriculum there. My inspiration was that the people were say-
> ing, 'All my songs sound the same. . . .' It's really rare that people look for their own
> version of a song. They go and try to emulate. Even after I say, 'don't emulate it'. They
> go and do it. If I have a mission, thats what it is. . . . to teach people about rhythm. . . .

YouTube helps support the goal of the rhythm guitar teacher to expand students' openness to

rhythmic possibilities and variations.

It also helps support another of the teachers' goals, to impart the fact that students don't

have to be studio-recorded or technical experts to call themselves musicians. Many teachers de-

scribed that students today are less likely to describe themselves as musicians. Many students

can be wary to even tell other people that they play an instrument, let alone play music in front of

other people in their lives. One teacher describes that after every first Guitar 1 group class, upon

teaching students three chords with a rhythm and a melody to sing along to, he makes a point to

emphasize that the students can now play the instrument. He pointedly declares that "They

should go home and show their friends the song. And they should keep the guitar outside of its

case!" This encouragement for students to share the music with their friends and family is key to

the culture of folk music education.

YouTube can expose beginning students to a wide technical range of performances and

styles, which can inspire them to share their own playing. Students can witness "ordinary peo-

ple" performing songs that they know, which can greatly inspire and empower them. They can

become encouraged to record themselves, and to work on a song to make it "recording-worthy".

In this way, YouTube not only helps expose students to increasingly democratic music traditions

but can help encourage them to become part of them. One teacher described that after she real-ized that after so many students were attempting to learn off YouTube, she abandoned method books altogether and began to work strictly out of performance books. When she made these adjustments, her turnover rate dramatically improved; her students would re-register every ses-sion. She argues that teaching students the songs that they want to learn, the songs that they al-ready know and watch and listen to on the internet, "fosters empowerment."

One possible negative aspect of YouTube, described by a teacher, is that it allows for the proliferation of prodigy performances that can intimidate some students. Both adults and chil-dren sometimes negatively compare themselves to some of the performances on YouTube, such as the occasional outstandingly difficult rendition of a popular song. According to this teacher, this exposure might cause students to become deluded about their musical goals.

> YouTube raises the bar as an audience.. You know that the performance can be done, but simultaneously it can also discourage completely and backfire. Yesterday I was practic-ing, a song that's a little bit of a virtuosic piece, and a mother came to say, 'My son is never going to be able to play like that. Maybe I should just cut off his lessons.'

Yet while YouTube can lead to some students negatively comparing their own talent to virtuosic performances, the teacher argues that the advantages of YouTube far outweigh its disadvantages. YouTube challenges the ubiquity of popular studio-recorded music that has come to provide a "legitimating" context to many unacquainted beginning students. It allows students to engage in a folk tradition of sharing and an egalitarian process of playing and adapting basic tunes.

C.   **The Technology of Listening, Tastemaking, and Popular Culture**

Another important aspect of OTSFM is that it emphasizes a personal style of teaching, and encourages many different learning and performance styles and musical goals. Teachers

must accommodate students' varying backgrounds, musical styles, and personal goals in playing music. Much of students' backgrounds involves their prior uses and exposure to music and media technologies. My discussions with the teachers about this topic intersected with my interest in whether and how media technologies could facilitate different music listening experiences, tastes, fandom, and understandings of music. I talked to the teachers about today's beginning students' tastes and music backgrounds as well as the teachers' early experiences listening to music as a form of self education. What I found was that all of the teachers shared a personal history of listening to recorded music in a variety of forms. Recorded music has played a vital role in exposing the range of possibilities of playing music to both the teachers and the students. An illumination of peoples' interactions with early media technology, and a comparison between the teachers' early experiences and today's students can help contextualize the media changes that have occurred over the last several decades.

1. **Teachers' backgrounds, media use, and tastes**

The teachers encompass a diversity of musical interests, and all of them have followed equally as diverse musical journeys that have led to their teaching and performing at OTSFM. Before and during teaching at OTSFM, many teachers toured locally or regionally, playing many different styles of music including bluegrass, folk, classical, and rock. One teacher I interviewed had a successful career in the "jingle industry" in the late 80s and 90s. Another teacher played in several nationally-touring punk bands in the 1980s and 1990s, yet he is also an expert bluegrass player and instructor. Yet one of the key concepts shared among the teachers was that they have always primarily played music for their own joy. This point is well captured in this passage:

> I don't have formal degrees in music at all. . . .I have a BFA in theater. I came to Chicago in 1988.. with a musical background on a very personal level. I started out as a listener- specifically interested in the music that I liked. It wasn't necessarily pop-based. The first real music (as in recorded media) that I went out and really tried to hear, in terms of ac- quiring, was early New Orleans-style jazz. I used to, as a teenager, go to the public li- brary and take out all these jazz records. . . .

What the teachers also share is a history of self-motivated, active listening. This form of self-ed-

ucation comes from a deep desire to discover new music that they love, and involves making a

strong effort to learn how to play that music in any way that they can. Their early exposure to

music is varied, but the teachers described attempting to discover new music, as well as to learn

new things on their instrument, in various ways. Some had parents with a great record or music

collection; others didn't. Some began learning music in the form of classical lessons, choir or

church. Many had no early training but were influenced by their parents or older siblings or fam-

ily. Many described wanting to learn instruments like the banjo or guitar when they were

younger, but didn't have access to teachers and started by learning it on their own. They would

commonly learn new songs and techniques by sharing things with sibling or friends. One teacher

described that, as a child, the advent of FM radio led to a much "wider exposure to alternative

types of music" as previously, she only had access to the top 40 AM radio. One teacher described

waiting every week as a child for a weekly television show which featured a new band. This was

his important mode for discovering new music. Another described going to the library to discov-

er new music; he would flip through the different records available, and he described that some-

times it was simply the album artwork on the covers that would be the reason he would pick up

an album and listen to it:

> When I was getting into acoustic music, I didn't know who anybody was, I would take LPs at the library. If I didn't have name recognition right away like Woody Guthry, I

> would rifle through and take out records that had pictures of guitars on the front. I led my own self astray plenty of times but I also stumbled upon some fantastic music. [Today] it's the same thing but on a much greater scale.

In short, the teachers would take advantage of any new access they had to new music or music that excited them. Transcending any particular style or musical taste, the joy of playing and the desire to expand one's musical knowledge through self-education (more to be discussed in the following subsection on technique) is an important quality shared by the music teachers. This is what I argue that they share as a folk music faculty, as few of them were eager to describe themselves as folk musicians.

2.   **The changing conception of "folk music"**

While few of the teachers felt they could offer a definition of "folk music", they did paint a picture of how the conception of "folk music" at OTSFM has expanded over the last decades. This history reflects an adaptability and sensitivity to changes, on the part of the school and well as the individual folk teachers. The general tone of the teachers' responses to the question, "what is folk music?" is that they didn't feel qualified to answer, nor were they particularly interested in defining folk music beyond the traditions and scope of music that they focus on in their performances and teaching. "It's not something I really think about," one teacher replied. Yet what the teachers were able to express is how adaptive the school has been to continually embrace new forms of music. One teacher, who has worked at the school for twenty-five years, described how the official OTSFM songbook has changed since the inception of the school. This mirrors how the traditional class offerings at OTSFM have changed and how the concept of "folk" music at OTSFM has expanded. In the early 1970s, the OTSFM songbook reflected much of the popular work of singer songwriters during the folk revival- such as Joan Baez, John

Prine, Bob Dylan. During the same time, this style of music was commonly played at a nearby

folk club in the Old Town neighborhood. Local and visiting folk artists would perform there for a

few weeks at a time. Since the 1970s, the Old Town Songbook has been revised several times,

due to copyright issues and new motivations for the inclusion of other songs. The songbook to-

day features many anonymous / traditional songs such as "Amazing Grace." While guitar tabla-

ture is easily available online for most songs, the songbook now functions as a curated anthology

of traditional music suitable for beginning guitar players. Several teachers described having ap-

preciated the older songbooks, but have come to love playing and teaching out of the newer edi-

tions as well. The songbook and curriculum changes have developed as the school has expanded

to include more obscure, traditional world styles. It is no longer centered around the popular

singer-songwriter scene as in the 1970s.

One teacher described that today's folk music scene has tremendously broadened, both in

the number of participants at the school as well as in the multitude of different styles of music

that are encouraged. This teacher was very involved with a nearby popular folk music club in

the 70s, which has since closed. Yet he is very pleased with what the school has become today:

> John Prine, Steve Goodman, John Denver. . . . It was all songwriting [back then]. If you
> wanted to play a ragtime piece on stage you bombed. Now, people are open to many dif-
> ferent styles. . . . Today, people's interest in folk music has gotten better in a lot of ways.
> In the 60s, there were clubs where you work there for two weeks. It was nice and a train-
> ing ground but it was also a scene. Today, people walk constantly by the school with fid-
> dles and guitars. It happened to certain degree in the 60s, but today it is more accessible.
> When I was young and playing clubs, we were drinking, there was a whole social scene.
> There were some eyes on you but. . . . Today you can get on stage to a more attentive au-
> dience.

While the teacher described that today, it is harder to make a living solely off of folk music per-

formance, he welcomes the changes because today's audiences are more attentive, and more

welcoming of different styles of music. He also believes that the school is now home to many more gifted teachers, and he sees OTSFM as a physical hub for a much wider group of musicians. Traditional and world folk music performances are more widespread. These performances are not centered in one location but occur around different parts of the city. OTSFM has become the premiere institution in Chicago for people to connect with each other regarding world or traditional styles of music- for lessons, ensembles, and information about performances throughout the city.

Individually, the teachers shared the perspective that they are maintaining certain traditions or styles of music against a much larger pop music environment. Yet even though they commonly feel that they are not in touch with the "current" pop music trends on new media, they reflect an adaptability and thoughtfulness about playing traditional music in a constantly changing context. One teacher describes:

> I don't listen to anything new. All my music, movies, are from word of mouth. I got to a point where all media was static. My brain and soul and being have more important things than to be listening to media all the time.

Simultaneously, while this teachers described himself as not knowledgeable of "pop" music, he presented a keen awareness of the kinds of popular music that is currently requested and suggested by students. Along with several other teachers, he also illustrated the fact that he is dynamically discovering new music all the time, even if it is older, traditional music that he has never heard before. This teacher's thoughts reflect how musical knowledge and tastes are constantly changing, whether it means discovering new music or older music. It also illustrates that there are many ways to discover and listen to music, and different technologies can facilitate different affective, emotional experiences. In the following subsections, the teachers' dynamism

and adaptability can be gleamed through their thoughts about pop music and the changing nature of students' tastes.

3.   **Popular music and children's tastes**

Analyzing the musical tastes of the children and young students was a rich topic among the teachers. Young students are especially likely to suggest types of music they already know that they want to learn, and the tastes of young students are more representative of today's culture of popular music. For one teacher, the most popular style of music among his teenage classes is currently hip-hop. The teacher finds that showing his group teenage students a picture of Jimi Hendrix on the wall "results in a half and half split. . . . Half know who he is, and half don't. The first half being influenced by their parents, they're usually the ones that are sort of going with it. . . ." The tastes of young people will often reflect whether their parents, family, or someone else is exposing them to music other than pop music. For even younger students, the role of the parents or family in exposing them to a wider array of music other than contemporary popular music is even more obvious. One teacher describes that many of the children in her group children classes listen to pop music "with sometimes surprisingly 'bootysmacking' lyrics." However, "Every once and a while there will be an 8 year-old kid listening to the Pixies. Curious? Usually its mom or dad. . . ." For another teacher, he can discern something about the parents' influence based on the gear the children bring to class. "I can make some good guesses about what the parents are like depending on the students. Sometimes just by the guitars. If they are coming in with their dad's guitar. A beautiful handmade Telecaster! 'Where did you get that?' 'It's my father's'." Another teacher describes: "If parents are playing music in the house, then the

kids have more broad tastes and interests than in one thing. Parents can make it or break it. That's not the case for most people. . . ."

Yet several teachers described that just because parents like a certain type of music doesn't necessarily mean that the kids will share the same interests. "It's like that old algorithm," one teacher jokes. "Half the kids will love the Beatles because their parents love then, the other will hate them because their parents love them." One teacher described an 11 year-old student whose father is a recording engineer of hip hop music. He doesn't like the type of music his father records, and he actively seeks to learn different styles of music. The teacher describes:

> He's pretty gifted. He actually works with Ableton, explaining the whole warping thing. I'm making him read music, improvise, be creative. He doesn't like reading music. . . . But he knows that its necessary. Something clicked. Students come in from lots of different directions.

The teachers constantly encounter students with different needs and backgrounds, and they have realized the importance of adaptability in the classroom from their very earliest teaching experiences. Several instructors described feeling initially "unqualified" in their early experiences of teaching, but later realized that it was a job that necessitated learning through experience. Many guitar teachers mentioned that their first challenge was to learn how to teach a class full of beginning guitar students to tune their guitars, and then to have them tuned and ready before class: "Otherwise, a whole class of people tuning their guitars could easily take up the whole hour." Learning how to best manage group folk guitar classes was adduced through experience. In addition to meeting students at the right technical level (which will be discussed in the next subsection) the teachers are constantly adapting to understand students' motivations in a changing cultural and technological context.

4.   **<u>Students' tastes, fandom and technology</u>**

It is the job of the teachers to find a middle ground in accommodating students' tastes, technical ability, and goals while also sharing the styles and traditions of music that they excel at. Unlike the Suzuki method that is focused on a fixed repertoire of music, the styles and song choices at OTSFM are constantly negotiated between the students and the teachers. The teachers' recommendations can evolve as they come to understand the students' tastes and skills. For example, one teacher describes a personal method that she employs in her private classes: she makes a deal to switch off between a private student song request and then one that she thinks they would both like and learn something from based on her understanding of the student's tastes and skills.

The teachers can help students build on their personal tastes in music by offering expert recommendations and contextualizing the songs they like within larger traditions. The teachers help students learn how to use contemporary music technology to expand their musical tastes. YouTube or Spotify alone doesn't necessarily broaden people's musical tastes on its own. Several of the teachers described that many of today's students initially enter the school not having very developed musical tastes beyond "an ipod [knowledge] of about 25 songs and thats it." Commonly, many new students have never taken the time listen to much music and figure out what they like at home. This can be because they are young or because they do not have the time or do not know how to seek out new music. Some of the teachers lament that for these people, what they know is mostly pop music. One teacher describes:

> If you look at all the genres of music, like a pie chart, the biggest slice is mainstream pop music. Most people don't have the time to go digging for a little more esoteric music, so they consume music based on what's in front of their face. Its not their fault. They don't

necessarily have bad taste, but they don't have an outlet to find anything else other than Taylor Swift and Bruno Mars, and those people. . . .

It is difficult to say that today's students know less about music than the early students at OTSFM, because today, the school encompasses a much wider range of students. However, it is fair to say that the same new media technology which can allow students to expand their musical tastes can also perpetuate popular music. Popular music is heavily promoted and advertised on platforms like iTunes and Spotify. While this media offers a great quantity of music, it can also lead to the illusion that it is representing a greater variety of music than it really is. One of the jobs of the teachers is to help students articulate their own tastes through an expanded process of discovery. OTSFM encourages a very personal style of learning in this way. YouTube and other software and websites on the internet can then become useful tools in this process, exceeding the benefit of the technology used by the student alone.

Many teachers identified themselves as arbiters of a particular tradition or the "early stuff". They see themselves as educating people on the past traditions so as to understand the present and the future. One banjo teacher describes:

I still tell my classes to go back to the source. Get your foundation first. If you play that music and write that music that's a good thing. Pop music brings students in? Yes. It's not a negative thing, but do your homework, figure out where the banjo is from. I usually tell them my learning trajectory, where everything is from. Which, who knows, is often only a couple hundred years old, no matter what new music they are learning. . . .

The teachers help contextualize past traditions according to the changing vantage points of the students. When I asked the teachers whether or how people's musical tastes have changed in a certain direction, their reaction was that musical tastes are always shifting. There are "waves". At one point a certain instrument may be popular due to a particular musician, band, or

even film. Yet "the pendulum [always] swings back". The teachers believe that many different

factors can lead to a popularity in music playing. Most commonly, a popular band or musician

can highlight a style of music or instrument. Several teachers described that currently, the band

Mumford and Sons has kept the mandolin so popular as to increase the number of group man-

dolin classes offered. Another teacher described that in the 90s, the school's guitar program grew

tremendously due to the emergence of grunge music. He was hired as an added guitar teacher to

accommodate the demand in guitar classes. He says, "People [were] purchasing electric guitars

because of Eddy Van Halen and Kurt Cobain. That was the last big [guitar] bubble... Kurt Cobain

sold the most electric guitars in history."

In additions to notable bands and musicians, other sources of trends can come from

movies, television, and video games. When the film *Oh Brother Where Art Thou* was popular-

ized in 2000, the blue grass ensembles and banjo classes became filled to capacity. Video games

have also brought students into the doors; all the guitar teachers have had at least one student

who started lessons because they enjoyed playing the video game "Guitar Hero". New music

technologies can also play a role in shifting people's tastes. Today, the interest in the guitar is

waning in comparison to the 90s, and many teachers believe it's because popular music doesn't

feature the guitar as prominently as it did back then. Today's popular music often features syn-

thesizers and digital software. Even when guitars are present, the sound of the guitar is not as

featured as it once was, and it is even rarer to hear a guitar solo in a popular song.

Technology and popular music are not the only reasons why students decide to pick up

certain instruments or styles. For example, piano teachers articulate that they always have a

handful of students who play other instruments but want to learn piano to help improve their mu-

sic theory. Some students are interested in learning the keyboard to use it as a midi controller for digital music. Many students will experiment with several different instruments. Age is also an important component, and the popular children's group classes focus on piano, fiddle, or guitar. One guitar teacher recommends the electric guitar for young kids in particular because it is easier on the fingers. He finds the electric guitar more engaging for them at vital age in which it is likely that they will give up the instrument if they are not getting anything fun out of it. Several of the piano teachers describe that there is always a young beginner who says, "Well, I really wanted to learn the drums but my mom said I first had to learn piano. . . ."

The economic environment also plays a role. During the financial crisis of 2008, Chicago's economy was hit hard. Many small businesses closed, and popular restaurants, stores, and bars emptied. However, the enrollment at OTSFM actually increased during this period. Several teachers described that it was because music playing can be a more self-sufficient and inexpensive hobby. Another teacher also expressed an optimism about acoustic music in an era of rising energy costs and environmental uncertainty. "The desire to play music will never go away, and and neither will the acoustic instrument."

Ultimately, the teachers described that most students are not able to articulate a clear reason for why they want to learn a particular instrument or style of music. Some teachers put it:

> Beginning students reasons' for coming to take their first classes is very elusive. It's very hard. Everyone has a different reason. . . .

> It's a mystical question. . . . It goes for everyone.. You can't put your finger on it. [The music] is a mystery that [you] want to figure out.

Sometimes people are drawn to a particular style because they *aren't* commonly exposed to it. Or one factor can mean two different things to different students. One teacher described that so-

cial element at OTSFM can be a motivation for some students, because they feel that communal

lessons may be less pressure. People can "settle in and not feel the pressure of a private lesson."

Yet, he continues, for others it may be more pressure. It depends on the student and teacher.

When I asked the teachers how they believed new media technology has affected peoples'

tastes, they gave two common answers: first, that music fandom is different than it once was; and

second, that increasingly, students are listening to individual songs as opposed to full albums.

One teacher feels that students today tend not to identify with a particular genre or band as they

might have done up until the 1990s, during the height of the album and record label era. Part of

this may have to do with the fact that people now discover music virtually, often through social

networks online. This has rendered obsolete physical spaces like record stores. With less of a

need for going out to physical spaces in order to discover new music, there are less places to so-

cialize about music in a live setting, which possibly leads to less identification with a particular

group of fans. One teacher recalls:

> I think of it like growing up in 70s before the Walkman. . . . The [Lake Michigan] beach
> was like a party. People played the biggest stereo and you laid your towel next to the
> stereo you preferred. Somebody played The Cure here. . . . Somebody played [Ted] Nu-
> gent over here. . . . It was a loud place. Sitting next to the ACDC crowd for example!
> Then you could talk about going to see shows. Then the Walkman came around and it
> became like a library. People would congregate with other people.. But if you don't know
> what other people around you are listening to. . . . Nobody talks to each other.

Additionally, the teachers described that students today are more likely to be aware of individual

songs as opposed to the entire records. iTunes and MP3 downloading has facilitated a singles

culture, and the physical act of listening to an album has been rendered obsolete. Several teach-

ers expressed nostalgia about the album: "The arc of a full length record is a beautiful thing. It's

totally cool to listen to single tracks too, but not a lot of young people have experienced the arc

of the whole record. . . ." One teacher describes why he prefers to direct students first to whole

record:

> I say, listen to the whole record. So you get a good foundation of that person's material,
> no matter who they are. You can learn that one song better if you can soak up their vibe,
> or mojo, or whatever.

> In today's digital age, the teachers recognized that while traditional instruments are not

always featured in today's popular music, and young students seem to listen to music in a differ-

ent way, their attitude was still one of optimism. They have seen the popularity of certain styles

and instruments wax and wane throughout history, and they all maintain a belief that trends in

music shift, often back and forth.

D.   **Practicing / Playing / Listening**

In addition to working with students' musical tastes, the teachers must also work with

students at the right technical level. They must choose material that is engaging both aesthetical-

ly and technically. It is important to challenge students technically, because they can bored when

the material is too easy and they can get frustrated if the material is way too difficult. Playing

material at the right technical level is what keeps students engaged. Many teachers described

that the choice of material at the right technical level can often determine whether students will

stick with playing the instrument.

> I think there's a real connection to the things that make it sound like the person could also
> do that. There's a rough edge, a simplicity, not to diminish the music or make it seem less
> than it is in terms of its virtuosity, that you hear somebody play something that you think:
> 'I could do that! That sounds like something I could do!' When I hear Hendrix, I think I
> could never do that. That feels very far away in terms of virtuosity. I think people are
> drawn to this style of music.. And this is a question that I ask on the first night of my
> classes... I usually make a joke: 'How come you wanna play this old acoustic music?'
> More and more students are saying, 'I like the earthiness of it'. One person to one instru-
> ment. That you could do it all yourself. That your thumb is your own rhythm section. It's

about an individual doing, creating something themselves in the moment and it doesn't have to be the same way every time.

Other teachers describe that many students come to OTSFM because they don't feel pressured to practice according to any regiment and can play music for their own enjoyment. This is especially true as the philosophy of music education as "enrichment" at OTSFM has arisen. However, some teachers lamented that "Music lessons are always at the bottom of the list." Many young students at OTSFM today are not always pressed to put in much time practicing their instruments as often as other extracurricular activities.

The teachers had much to say on the subject of technicality in contemporary times. As much as the teachers aim to adapt to the individual students' technical levels, it is also their job to help improve the students' techniques at playing. The subject of technicality at a music instrument is complex, and can vary among instruments and styles. For example, "literacy" means different things regarding different instruments. One piano teacher described that piano literacy includes a basic ability to read sheet music on the staff, which can take anywhere from several months to a few years to learn. On the other hand, the reading of chords and tablature for stringed instruments is more straightforward and can be picked up relatively quickly (different levels of technique involve how those chords are interpreted). One component of music literacy is the ability to read music, but this is not the only component of playing an instrument, nor is it necessarily required.

Literacy in playing an instrument also includes technique, which is a form of embodied knowledge that comes through practice. Technical literacy is undoubtedly related to the amount of time that students are willing to invest in terms of a practice schedule, as well the formation of

long-term goals. Technicality very much concerns *how* students practice, and whether they are addressing new material or whether they are ritualistically practicing foundational skills. Technical literacy is also related to the students' ability to play different types of the same instrument (different pianos or guitars) as well as their ability to play in different contexts; solo playing is very different from playing in a group, and playing in front of people is very different than playing alone. In this way, spontaneity and improvisation are necessary components of folk music playing that can be practiced and honed. Another important component to folk playing is developing a more acute "ear" through active listening, transcription, and a practice of trial and error. Almost all of the teachers lamented that the necessary skill of trying to figure out songs based on music listening is being lost, as students' first impulse is to locate detailed transcriptions or sheet music online.

All of these aspects of technicality and technical literacy at the instrument have been affected by the culture of new media. First, students are practicing on different instruments altogether. This is especially true for the piano, where the piano teachers described that upwards of 75% of students play electronic keyboards at home. The piano teachers describe these as two fundamentally different instruments. Keyboards will almost always have a different touch sensitivity than the piano (although every particular piano is different anyways). Often, young students who practice on keyboards don't develop a dynamic range, ending up playing everything either very piano or very forte.

Of course, cheap access to keyboards is not entirely negative; families can purchase one for their house who would otherwise not be able to afford a piano. Small keyboards also often serve as a "gateway" instrument for many students to purchase a piano or stage piano after they

know that it will be something they will continue. New instruments also afford new technical skills. The piano teachers described encouraging students to explore their keyboards in new ways, such as building basic songs with a beat, harmony, and melody by utilizing different functions on the machine. Additionally, there are an increasing number of students and professionals who come to piano lessons in order to learn how to use the keyboard as a midi controller for electronic music-making.

The main concern of the teachers regarding literacy involves the way that students are attempting to learn music off the internet. For one thing, it can sometimes lead to students primarily playing alone. If there is never anybody present in the room to correct hand positions or other techniques, they can develop incorrect techniques. Another concern is that the abundance of material on the internet makes it too easy for students to emulate songs, without practicing the important skill of developing their ear through transcribing and figuring out a tune through trial and error. The transmissive culture of locating tablature and sheet music on the internet removes the impetus for trying to analyze and figure out music based on listening to it, which is an extremely valuable aspect of folk musicianship. One piano teacher articulates:

> What's lost is pitch sensitivity and an ear for hearing chord progressions, being able to transcribe complex chords. . . . Any good musicians should be able to do that. I wouldn't have gotten to this point if not for years and years of being forced to transcribe songs. Now that that necessity has been circumvented by the ease and the use of the internet, it has definitely slowed down the way people learn. It's like that analogy, if you're doing it by yourself, driving a car, you'll remember how you got there better than if you were a passenger. Very few students in my [many] years here are willing to do that kind of work. They say: 'It's way to intimidating or hard,' or 'I don't have time for this.' What if you didn't have other options?

The role of active listening in the teachers' personal histories has been discussed earlier in this thesis, and it very much has to do with developing the important technique of "ear training". It is

not necessary to "play by ear" to develop an ear training. Ear training involves listening, trying

to figure out some notes or chords, listening again, and adjusting those notes or chords repeated-

ly. This is a process that involves making many mistakes. It is based on trial and error in which

the musician will attempt different ways of playing something in order to get it to resemble what

they are listening to. One teacher describes that her self-education on the instrument meant hav-

ing to lift the needle of the record player over and over and over in order to hear certain sections

of a song, while she was trying to figure it out on the piano. Another teacher would slow down

complicated banjo tunes by turning down the speed on his record player by half. While the

slower speed allowed him to more easily transcribe the notes, it would also slow down the pitch

into a different key; he would then have to re-transcribe the song by modulating it into the origi-

nal key. The same teacher describes that he got his first computer in 2005, and got the software

ProTools with it. It was at the same time that he was learning to play and teach the notably quick

and complex style of folk musician Tommy Jarrell. Learning Jarrell's style of improvising ne-

cessitated slowing tracks down and deconstructing the playing into its most basic units.

> The feature [on ProTools] is called time expansion. I have been using that since
> 2005. . . . To learn the fast fiddle tunes and then teach them to my class. Now I hear
> there's these "apps" that can do it, geared toward the consumer. But once I find my own
> basic technologies that work for me I milk them for years. I get to know it. *There's* some-
> thing to be said about a ritual!

New technology can help students easily pause and play back sections of a song. People can eas-

ily slow down songs on a computer or smart phone without changing the pitch of the individual

notes.

In contrast, the teachers described that the internet has cultivated a mentality of searching

for tablature and transcriptions in place of trying to figure out songs on one's own. Not only

does this deprive students of developing an ear training, it also takes away from the experience of learning how to play songs in multiple ways and variations; the culture of written tablature privileges one, or only a few, versions of a song. Ear training is not based on exaction but on approximation; learning to play the right chords to a song, for example, can be even more important than reading their exact voicings. Students can discover their own personal style in playing renditions of other songs in this way. There are also joys associated with ear training. Teachers discussed sharing different voicing or fingerings with other colleagues. One teacher described that for years he commonly taught a certain Jimi Hendrix song in a very complex way only to discover, through witnessing him play guitar on YouTube, that it was played in a much simpler way than he thought. Trying to figure out songs by listening to them is like trying to unlock a mystery, and it can also help students articulate their own personal voice through music.

The transmissive culture of learning, fostered by the immediacy and availability of materials on the internet, has affected students' conception of the practice ritual. Most of the teachers' main criticism of contemporary culture was that most incoming students do not anticipate the sense of time that is necessary to practice and learn an instrument. This is especially true of motivated adult beginners, who come into classes with the idea that they must learn to master the instrument immediately. Several teachers described that when they don't meet these unrealistic expectations, they get frustrated with themselves and may quit altogether. They are also more likely to describe that they "don't feel like they are improving" because they are rigidly monitoring their playing in too small amount of time. One teacher joked that he always gets a little nervous when a new adult student enters the classroom with a Venti Starbucks cup. (There is a Starbucks across the street from both locations of OTSFM). "I never know what their expecta-

tions are going to be," he says, alluding to the idea that they might expect to speed up a process of learning that requires time, patience, and practice. "I'd prefer it if they came in with a beer," he laughed, "which some do as well."

The same motivated students often have a problem tolerating the mistakes they make while playing. Several teachers described having to educate students that mistakes are not just apart of playing, they are *central* to playing. If students are not making mistakes, it means that they are not challenging themselves enough. Another teacher described that she is constantly witnessing students who apologize all the time for making mistakes.

> It's a deep hunch [of mine] that the more comfortable we become, the less willing we have become to work hard and try new things. The less willing we are to make mistakes. Someone else is already doing it better. How many kids do you have that apologize all the time? I would love to be a fly on a wall a hundred years ago and see a piano class that was working and see those people's attitudes. . . .

Making mistakes is part of the trial and error which is necessary to improve. Another teacher sees the issue as one of patience. He finds that many young people today do not have the patience to immerse themselves in music. He recalls:

> A friend was at my house and we were listening to records. A younger guy walked by and said 'Hey man, what are you guys doing? You're just sitting there, looking at the wall.' We're like, 'Man, we're listening to records. And we're talking about it as we listen to it.' He thought that was so . . . not strange, but he just never did that. iTunes has a switch and you just click click click. There's no immersion into anything. It might as well be texting. It might as well be in your car. That's the attention switch. Like a clip of nine seconds and that's it.

In many regards, the job of the teachers is to educate students about time. Most importantly, it often means teaching students how to slow down one's tempo, one's speed. It is extremely common for students to play music too quickly to keep them from improving their rhythm or mistakes, and it is often more difficult for students to play slowly than it is to rush through songs.

Teaching students to develop and sustain a practice ritual also involves time. The instructors'

years of teaching at OTSFM has afforded them a unique insight into the factors that contribute to

student retention, and so often a transmissive approach to learning an instrument, the idea that

knowledge how to play an instrument can be transmitted directly and immediately, quickly burns

students out.

One group lesson teacher described there is a natural "hierarchy" of the folk circle of mu-

sic players. He sees a trend in today's players sometimes trying to circumvent the time it takes to

move through the circle. "In the traditional circle of musicians playing music together, anybody

can join, but the beginners sit on the outside of the circle until they develop the technical skills to

move closer to the center. You don't just sit in the middle of the circle in the beginning." When

students don't commonly play in front of other people, they can lack a sense of the social

rhythms of the particular music.

Another element crucial to technique and literacy at playing an instrument is the ability to

perform in front of other people. This is an invaluable aspect of OTSFM; the school allows stu-

dents a space to perform in front of others, and for many students it is the only space that they

will ever get to perform in. Many teachers described that today's students are less likely to per-

form in front of others, even friends and family. One teacher described:

> A lot of people won't perform. . . . they are in lessons just for their own enjoyment, their
> own hobby. They are shy. I have so many students who won't sing. I wish they had more
> outlet to share with their friends. I don't know how to create that space. Old town is
> working on it. Sometimes I talk to the parents [of my young students] about this. Some
> kids are even shy about practicing in front of their family. Its a real deep thing not just
> limited to music. . . .

It is difficult to prove a direct correlation between new media and the decline of everyday music performance. Some teachers believe it is because students set higher standards for themselves. They compare themselves to prodigies on YouTube. One teacher gave the example of an experiment about a researcher who went to fifty elementary schools, asking students if they could sing. Everyone raised their hands. He repeated the experiment to college-age students and "he was lucky if he even got one person to raise their hand." The teacher says, that in her opinion:

> It's being forced to watch the unattainable ideal all the time at the push at the button. It can mess with you. It can make you feel inadequate. You become twisted about your own voice. . . . If we didn't have instant entertainment, we probably would be performing a lot more often. A hundred fifty years ago, music was everyday. Oral history, story-telling, no one thought twice about singing. It was just something you did for fun. Performance versus private play. . . .This is deeply intertwined.

Performance is less emphasized by the parents of young students. This teacher described that often, parents bring their children to classes because it's either a tradition in their household or quite often an experiment. Or they've read somewhere that "music is good for you." But often the parents don't think about the performance aspect of playing as much as the mental aspect of it.

Yet as much as teachers lamented that technicality, listening, and patience has been challenged over the last decades, they maintain that the ethos of the school remains the same.

> [Ultimately], the act of students grabbing on to an instrument has not changed. Whether you have technology or not it just comes down to one thing, and that one thing is having to practice your lesson, and thats all it comes down to.

Access to music and music educational tools that the internet and new media affords allows for a greater number of people to participate at any level that they want to. If it fosters enthusiasm

about music and inspires students to want to try to play an instrument, then it is worth it. The

general opinions about the influence of the internet can be summed up by one teacher's thoughts:

> Where are we headed? Well, in no other [artistic] field is mediocrity tolerated and rewarded in music. The internet both celebrates and exasperates that in good and bad ways. I sort of feel like we are diluting our culture in a negative way when we turn on the TV and there are three shows that turn music into sports; that doesn't teach people what art is about. But, the internet is the Wild West and you can choose to find or not find whatever you want . . . It levels the playing field . . . I don't think we are going to fall into a cesspool with a lack of culture. [New media technology] like Garageband makes it easier for people to make music . . . At first when Garageband first started, I thought, great, now any schmuck can make music with a C chord. But the positive spin is getting people to get more empowered to play modern music, not stuffy music that they haven't had the benefit of learning to love yet. It's about expressing themselves through play. It's play time.

V: DISCUSSION

Organizing themes that emerged from the teachers' various comments into these categories was a dynamic process. The categories began as "running theoretical discussions" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 p. 31) that were repeated in the interviews. I articulated the organization of the categories throughout the process of collecting and incorporating more data. Upon completing my analysis, I then reflected on how these different areas of media use and live classroom experiences can be generalized to illuminate different facets of liveness and mediatization that exist at OTSFM. I thought about how the categories, as substantive codes, "may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into theory" (Glaser, 2008). What the categories shared were different ways that the teachers at OTSFM contextualize music and traditions to students. I discerned three different types of contexts reflected in the analysis: the historical context, social context, and physical context. These contexts, which serve as "higher-level concepts", or theoretical codes, as part of the CCM method, can be understood as helping to shape people's live music playing experiences in relation to their media use

The first context to live music playing at OTSFM that I will describe is a historical, archival context. One of the aims of the folk music teachers at OTSFM is to contextualize how music is understood, where it comes from, and how it relates to other music. As the music industry is always changing, so does the specific role that the teachers play in supplementing and expanding the students' musical knowledge. Technologies like YouTube can be used as tools to help expand a historical context of music, but teachers also work against other technologies that may seem to decontextualize the contemporary music listening experience, like mass MP3 shar-

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ing or iTunes collecting. The teachers demonstrate how to navigate mediated musical history, and this ability, the teachers emphasize, will enrich the students' performance experience, help them make connections and associations in their understanding of traditions, and widen the range of what they can play.

Secondly, OTSFM provides a live social context. The live community, based around people's desire to play and share music, is the key to OTSFM's lasting popularity. The social community at OTSFM is unique due to its egalitarian, open structure and inclusive participation. OTSFM celebrates a plurality of music practices and works to challenge traditional hierarchies that exist in the music industry, conservatory, or fan culture. The social community at OTSFM affirms students' identities as musicians. When the students feel like members of a music community, they are likelier to sustain their music practice.

The last context I will describe is the live physical context, in which students can embody the traditional music playing practices in front of other players. The physical is inseparable from the other two contexts. The ritualistic, physical embodiment of playing an instrument is connected to any oral tradition in which students acquire knowledge, not through transmission, but through ritualistic practice. The teachers at OTSFM work to impart a conception of long-term practice as the necessary means to learn an instrument or musical tradition. Simultaneously, the teachers work to impart an ability to vary songs and navigate material through new and spontaneous forms of playing.

A.   <u>**Historical Context**</u>

If it can be said that one of my initial hypotheses was that OTSFM's new music students today come from a more mediated musical environment which must affect their approach to live music, what I found was that the teachers did not come from a position that involved any different kind of direct (live) access to music. The teachers discovered folk music and taught themselves how to play songs from mediated recordings, radio, television. They developed their live folk practices and performances only after being inspired by mediated recordings, supporting the important role of recordings in the process of learning older musical traditions.

Media plays an important role in how the teachers help students to develop a musicianship. In helping students to discover new music and access educational material, the teachers model a way to navigate through the abundance of media history in order to broaden one's repertoire and make new musical connections. The "point of navigation" is always shifting as popular music and tastes are constantly changing. It is the job of the folk music teachers to provide a sense of historical or traditional context for the styles of music or the instrument that students want to learn, which often includes helping contextualize the music against the backdrop of the current popular music.

Knowledge of musical traditions and a sense of contextualization of how live music is situated historically or geographically can enhance the live performance of it. This is firmly believed by the many teachers who want to expose their students to the earliest origins of a tradition, or "going to the source", as one teacher put it. Other teachers believe that it is important to draw connections between contemporary aesthetics and techniques with older songs or traditions

because it can help students articulate their personal tastes, produce original material, and improvise.

The teachers not only help contextualize traditions and styles, but they also help demonstrate how to read and navigate mediated sources and incorporate ideas from mediated music into live practice and playing. There are multiple ways to learn songs, and the teachers serve as models for the folk style of learning through listening, practicing, and transcribing oral material. It is an over-simplification to say that new media such as the internet increasingly decontextualize music- which is sometimes the case, such as in the commonly described "singles" culture of iTunes and mp3s. Technology is also used to contextualize music. For example, the teachers describe how they use YouTube videos to encourage students to engage in a mimetic style of learning and sharing as well as to broaden their tastes through experimentation.

To conclude, folk music culture has manifested a live space in which to share and perform democratic music traditions, after they are discovered and accessed through recorded content. It is a constructed live space that emerged out of the wake of the aura of the recording industry. The popular music and technological context is constantly changing as well as the teachers' particular modes of reading and navigating the world of music; in the midst of this constant change, folk music culture functions as a positioning of agency in relation to a constantly shifting context.

B.   **Social Context**

As part of helping students take part in musical traditions, the school offers a lively social atmosphere. A longstanding but welcoming community has formed at OTSFM based on people's enjoyment of teaching, expressing and sharing music. For many students, the school pro-

vides the only live context in which they can socialize about music. The school also celebrates a plurality of social and cultural practices of listening, playing, and appreciating music, helping to affirm students' identities as musicians and contribute to their lasting practice.

Today the social context to music is largely comprised of virtual interaction through social media. This differs from the majority of musical history, in which people would often have to come together to form an audience to performances. The internet has also supplanted social contexts that evolved alongside the development of the recording, such as the record store, where people could come together to discover, purchase, and listen to new music. The live social space at OTSFM functions differently than virtual online spaces; foremost, students and faculty take the time to travel to the same space every week. Their shared time together becomes significant in a different way than virtual conversations, in which people can continually participate in social exchange on their own time. Rather, students realize the importance of coming together during a discreet time each week to share their love of music.

The social space is also unique from other spaces in that it actively opposes commercial forces as well an emphasis of a naturalized, hierarchical "right" way to play and listen to music. What was noticeably absent from the teachers' perspectives about folk music was the concept of "authenticity"; while beginning students were more likely to question the legitimacy and authenticity of a song, none of the teachers employed that term at all in their interviews. This is likely due to two important factors: the democratic culture at OTSFM dismantles any notion of one "natural" way of listening, practicing, or playing, but rather emphasizes how these practices are culturally situated. Even while the school's main focus is to provide a live, social space in which people can share music, all of the teachers readily admitted the significance of mediated, record-

ed music. Rather, the teachers' aim is to expand students' conceptualizations of these practices through exposure to other cultural forms of music. Secondly, OTSFM's non-profit status and anti-commercial stance contributes to its unique social context. With less commercial forces at play in determining the music that is produced at OTSFM, the concept of "authenticity" loses relevance. Instead, OTSFM prioritizes a democratic, egalitarian social setting. The social atmosphere at OTSFM helps encourage students to develop individual practices and to take their music playing as seriously as they want to. In this way, OTSFM's emphasis of a pluralistic, culturally-expansive context in which to play live music is markedly different from virtual spaces and continues to be so.

The social context to music is what allows people to situate their personal experiences playing music within larger musical traditions and environments. Recalling Holt's emphasis on how a "performance" is discursively delineated, the live social context allows for students to make sense of "how, when and among whom the music is created, performed and heard" (Holt 2010). The social context is important in legitimating students' identities as musicians. Playing for other people and sharing ideas is often crucial to the development of musicians who have had little exposure to live music performances or who have never attended conservatories or other music education programs. For these people, recorded music, and often mass-recorded music, is their main exposure to musicianship. The social context can play an important role in their motivation to continue to develop a musicianship beyond the scope of the introductory classes. Talking about music socially is also important, as discourse contributes greatly to making meaning of the music that is being played.

In this way, the school's deliberate attempt to reorient the discourse and motivations of music playing away from the concept of authenticity contributes greatly to its unique live social space; while the concept of "authenticity" has come to play an important role in the history of rock and popular music, OTSFM demonstrates that it is just one culturally-situated position which is not inherent to the social experience of music. My analysis of the live social environment at OTSFM supports the argument that just as much as media and media technology can shape people's understanding of music, so can social and cultural practices. At OTSFM, the teachers and students constantly adapt technology use to current social practices, and often their social practices determine how and what technology will be used.

C.   **Physical, Embodied Context**

The last context to live performance (which is deeply connected and inseparable from the other two context) is the physical context in which students embody the physical practice of playing an instrument. Traditionally, performances have been unique events in time and space. Recorded music divorced the necessity for performers and the audience to share a singular space and time. Yet OTSFM provides a space where people can perform music in front of other people who have never done so, in addition to serving as the audience to other students and teachers. Learning to play music requires playing in different environments and for different audiences. Music playing is a multi-modal experience. In addition to offering different physical spaces, OTSFM offers a temporal space in which students can learn to practice over time, which requires ritual, variation, and making mistakes.

Although all teachers reflected a faith about the future of folk music performance and education in spite of any technological/environmental/economic instabilities, some teachers did

express concern about today's students' notion of the time it takes to practice in order to learn an instrument. Many new students come to class with high expectations of themselves to learn the instrument quickly, and they get frustrated when the reality of their progress does not meet those initial expectations. One reason could be that exposure to polished studio recordings alone rarely reveals the practice over time that it takes musicians to reach the skill level displayed in the recorded version. Additionally, readily available transcriptions and material online can allow beginning musicians to circumvent a process of ear training. In this way, many students come to expect a musicianship that is quickly transmittable. These expectations reveal a cultural perspective of learning discordant with the spatial and temporal dimensions of ritualistic, embodied practice over time.

Two elements of the practice ritual that OTSFM fosters are spontaneity and variation. Variation is important in learning how to play different versions and variations of the same songs. "Legitimate" songs are not necessarily studio recordings; to be a legitimate musician does not require being recorded at all. Rather, the folk context destabilizes any notion of the official version of any song or music. Often students come to the classroom with the idea that there is one "true" way to play a song, and they compare performances to the studio-recorded version as they remember it. This exemplifies how technology plays a role in students' sense of spontaneity and variation. The mass-reproduced studio version has developed its own persuasive aura, which makes it difficult for some students to approach playing versions of songs in new ways. The main aim of many teachers is to work to demonstrate how tunes can be varied- often through different rhythms, different finger positions, different ways of expressing chords, and embellishments of melodies and harmonies. The rhythm guitar classes were developed at the school for

that specific reason. An important aspect of the live playing/learning experience, then, becomes the variation of rhythms and interpretations.

Spontaneity involves improvisation, playing music in different contexts and among different people, as well as taking risks and making mistakes. Spontaneity is integral to both practice and performance. Mistakes are a necessary component of any practice that will help improve anybody's playing; many young students are too often afraid of making mistakes. Playing an instrument requires a practice ritual over time in which to develop technique, and a steady practice necessitates trial and error, making mistakes. Spontaneity and variation are two examples of conscious and deliberate insertion of human presence into a mediated, technological context, the definition of liveness offered by Paul Sanden (2013).

The teachers' discussions about technique and practice also assert that the body can be a learned cultural artifact. Literacy at playing an instrument is different from textual literacy, and often, beginning students are uncomfortable with an embodied knowledge of the instrument, which can be based on form, technique, and muscle memory. The teachers' stories reflect that there is a cultural uneasiness about embodied knowledge; often, the teachers have to reaffirm that the students do indeed know how to play songs on the instrument even when students feel that they "don't know" what they are doing.

The development of a practice ritual over time is an important focus of the teachers, as often the students expect a more immediate knowledge acquisition. The "folk circle" that one teacher described is both a live manifestation and a metaphor for the time it takes to practice a technique and tradition. The traditional folk circle is egalitarian; anyone is welcome to join and sit in the circle to play music together. But the more experienced players sit closer to the inside

of the circle while the beginners sit around the perimeter. Through developing a technique over time, the musicians achieve more freedom to vary the way that they play.

D.   **The Live Experience at OTSFM**

A sense of context contributes to an awareness of how music is situated in the world- traditionally, socially, physically- and how the music is situated in time and space. "Liveness" is deeply connected to traditional context (even if music is rebellious or iconoclastic), social practices, and physical, multimodal embodiment. To play music according to any tradition is deeply-rooted in reference to the past- whether to performances, textual documentation, or music recordings. Exposure to certain traditions can enhance and inform the experience of playing music live. Rather than reflect an absence of any reference to recorded/mediated music, the teachers at OTSFM demonstrate a form of active reading of media content; they draw connections between various styles and traditions, and they demonstrate multiple ways of learning songs, including the important skills of developing pitch and dynamic sensitivity. What drives their desire to navigate recorded traditional content is their love of music and their strong desire to constantly learn and share music, techniques, or styles. The "liveness" that the teachers demonstrate is in part formed by a constant active reading of mediated material and how it can connect to the meaning, aesthetic, and ritualistic embodiment of current practices. While these contexts are not mutually exclusive, and certainly overlap, I hope they can illuminate how "live" performances are contextualized, and can be enhanced and enriched through an active involvement in the process of contextualization.

VI: CONCLUSION

I began this research project with an interest in how media technology may affect peo-

ple's approach to the performance and education of live music playing. This interest came from

my experience as a musician, piano teacher, and communications scholar with a focus on the top-

ic of how new media technology has changed how music is discovered, accessed, and dis-

tributed. Developments over the last two decades such as the personal computer, the internet,

MP3 sharing, and social media platforms have increased access to a wide variety of music. Digi-

tal software synthesizers and audio workstations have equally revolutionized what kind of music

and sound is being produced. Yet as a communications scholar, I also knew that technology has

long shaped how people listen to music— whether it meant browsing what albums were avail-

able at the public library or listening to what was played through the walls of an older sister's

bedroom.

This research supports the significance of the array of social practices that help shape

how people experience and perform music; OTSFM is a unique, live space which challenges the

notion of "authenticity" as it is often understood in the cultural studies of rock and popular mu-

sic. The three contexts of "live" music playing at OTSFM that I observed in the process of writ-

ing this thesis are different ways that the folk music community dynamically constructs a live

space in relation to technological mediation. OTSFM creates a space for these live embodied,

traditional and social practices by helping offer a context for them amidst a constantly changing

technological environment.

While these are important components of live music playing at OTSFM, I do not mean to

offer these distinctions between contexts as an exhaustive or definitive model for approaching

"liveness". This work is limited and the topic can be greatly expanded. Further studies could be pursued at OTSFM, such as a study with a greater focus on the performances as well as an inquiry into the thoughts and experiences of the students themselves. The topic of liveness should also be explored in a variety of other contexts and institutions. Additionally, talking to people about their opinions and experiences is only one approach; the topic could be expanded through ethnographic methods including observation, for example. This research can prove useful for further exploration in the fields of communication, rhetoric, cultural studies, and sound studies. The topic of liveness should also be approached artistically as well as scientifically. It is a subject that straddles the domains of both research and art, calling into question what it means to capture live, ephemeral experiences into writing and documentation. Ultimately, I hope that this research contributes to the ongoing dialogue about technological reproduction and its effects on people's perception and experience of art and cultural performance.

A.   **OTSFM: Challenging authenticity with a plurality of rhythms**

One of the unique components of this research is that OTSFM, as an object of study, stands out from commonly-studied music communities by cultural studies and sound scholars. The anti-commercial, egalitarian folk culture at OTSFM undercuts the significance of the notion of "authenticity", which has become a common way that rock and pop music communities measure their proximity to commercial forces. OTSFM also presents an important approach to challenging the "aura" of the popular artist, performance or studio recording through the emphasis on varying different versions of songs.

My analysis supports the argument that mass-reproduced cultural artifacts- like the popular studio recording- have come to develop an aura unto themselves (Hansen, 2008). This "simulated aura" is derived through reproduction, popularity, repeatability, and greater media presence. The cultural practices at OTSFM help dismantle the authority of both types of auras: the "aura" of the unique, singular performance or artist as well as the simulated "aura" of the studio recording. In the place of distinctions created the "aura" and "authenticity", the teachers at OTSFM emphasize the active reading of media, contextualization of material, practice ritual, spontaneity, and variation. These activities help compose the live, human presence in playing music in a highly mediated landscape, and are important components to understanding "liveness" in the digital age.

A second conclusion affirms the significance of social and cultural practices, in addition to technology, in shaping people's perceptions and expectations of multimodal knowledge acquisition. In many ways, the teachers at OTSFM are teaching students how to experience time in new ways. One of the main components of music pedagogy is teaching students about varying rhythms and tempos. Yet just as important is the emphasis that learning an instrument or participating in a tradition is not something that can be gained simply through transmitting knowledge but something that must be practiced through time. Many teachers mused how changes in culture and technology have led many students to expect to acquire the knowledge to play an instrument or tradition immediately. They also discussed how virtual, online interaction allows students to participate in communication on their own time, without necessarily sharing the same time as others. Unlike virtual interaction on social media in which people are much more able to participate and respond to others on their own time schedule, the social interaction at Old Town

takes place during discreet weekly time periods, which takes dedication and effort among the students. The interaction cannot be experienced or reproduced on the students' own time. Both technology as well as cultural practices play a role in people's different perceptions of time. The pervasive use of new media technology as educational tools, such as researching tablature online, plays a role in how people learn as well as how they expect to learn. But, the embodied practices at OTSFM also help shape people's understanding of what it means to learn an instrument: that the knowledge must be acquired over time, and must be supported with an understanding of how to read the past. A social practice is also essential in sharing and learning rhythmic variations and new possibilities of the music. In conclusion, a live democratic folk culture, far from simply cultivating a worship of the past, may serve to destabilize new manifestations of authority, legit-imacy or authenticity that have emerged from new media technology and pop culture, and one of the most important ways it does this is by fostering a plurality of rhythms and rhythmic varia-tions.

B.   **Limitations and Further Research**

I believe that this study proposes many ideas that can be expanded into further research in various fields. Yet the project is also limited in several aspects. First, my interviews could be benefited by more questions concerning the experience of the live performances at OTSFM. My lack of asking more questions about the final performances reveals my own bias in focusing on technological side of the dichotomy of mediatization and liveness, rather than live practices, and the difficulty of studying the concept of "liveness" as it is complicated for people to describe and agree on what that means.

Second, while there is always an interpretive element to this type of work, my methods section could be clearer in articulating how I employed the constant comparative method to delineate themes in my analysis. I also feel that, while the literature review is poignant, it lacks some relevant theoretical material. This subject straddles several different discourses, and there are many relevant theoretical discussions that I omitted. Much work has been published on multimodality, sound theory, digital technology and the music industry in the years since I started this project. This is partly due to the fact that this topic is a very timely one, yet the fact that many more resources became available after beginning my research also means that theoretical perspectives that helped shaped my analysis were not exactly the same ones that inspired me to begin this project.

The study of liveness and mediatization at OTSFM could be expanded in several important ways. First, I believe the topic could be greatly expanded by talking to students and at OTSFM. Initially, I considered focusing my interviews on children who are students at OTSFM, because I believe their early experiences taking music classes at the school could reveal important information regarding cultural biases about music, listening, performance, and technology. However, as this study was rather new of its kind, I chose to interview longstanding teachers because I felt that their opinions could help offer a structure which could subsequently shape or inform interviews of adult and child students. I also feel that a study that focuses on the relationship between practice and performance could illuminate new information on the topic of liveness. Additionally, a study of large-scale quantitative analysis of enrollment statistics at OTSFM, as they might relate to technological developments and pop cultural events, would be useful in conjunction with the qualitative analysis of interviews. Theoretically, the topic of live-

ness is still an important area of inquiry, and one avenue is to continue to look at how it is re-

vived by the folk arts institutions such as OTSFM.

I also believe that these concepts could apply to the study other live practices, specifically

the study of composition, pedagogy, and rhetoric. I became acquainted with theoretical founda-

tions of rhetoric subsequent to beginning this research. I believe that the historical context, the

social context, and the physical, multimodal context could be applicable to the ongoing study of

the relationships between speaking, reading, and writing and how these practices are changed

and challenged by digital technology. For example, attention span in order to read and write is

arguably challenged by the fast-paced nature of television cuts, action films, and internet head-

lines. Young peoples' preferred styles of learning are changing. The use of effective "technolo-

gy in the classroom" is a topic that is currently studied and debated among many composition

and communication scholars. While it is often easy to get caught up by the features of new edu-

cational technology, keeping these important components of live performance in mind can be

helpful regarding the implementation of new technology in the classroom.

I hope that this thesis may provide a preliminary scope of ideas which may inspire further

research. Ultimately, the attributes of liveness go beyond the spaces of the classroom or the per-

formance hall. Liveness involves of all of people's "offline" habits in an increasingly virtual en-

vironment. As digital technology continues to play a bigger role in people's lives, understanding

the meaning of "live" expression is increasingly important not just in the study of music or peda-

gogy, but in the enrichment of all personal and cultural experience.

C.   **Concluding Remarks**

I believe the topic of how "live" experiences are changing over time is a timely one. Qualitative, descriptive analyses of people's thoughts who are actively engaged in different communities is necessary in illuminating how live contexts are perceived over time. The teachers' words alone offer a unique insight into contemporary music culture, due to their work with many music students at the school over several decades. I hope that this study may offer a small contribution to the growing fields of communication, sound studies, and rhetoric, serving to attest to the importance of interdisciplinary research.

My motivation as a researcher and theorist is similar to my motivation to play live music: I want to be drawn into it, and I want to be changed by it. Much of my ideas about liveness have transformed throughout this extended project. One of my most important conclusions is that our experience of popular media, which is constantly shaped by developments in production and re-production, conflates simple binaries between the live and the mediated, the original and the re-production. Ultimately, the critical inquiry into how technological developments affect the way that we that experience live, human expression is an ongoing one. I hope that this study of folk music education at OTSFM offers insight into how we can nurture a culture of expression within and beyond mass-reproduced pop culture, one that is democratic and that supports multiple temporalities that go beyond the mode of the spectacle, the index, the instantaneous transmission.

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APPENDIX

Open Ended Survey Question to Teachers at the Old Town School of Folk Music:

What classes/instruments do you teach at OTSFM?

For how long have you been teaching at Old Town School?

What age range do you teach?

What music do you yourself play and listen to?

Can you describe what it means to play folk music, to you?

What are your favorite things about working at the school and what are some of the challenges?

What are your goals as a teacher?

Can you describe what it was like to teach your first classes when you first began teaching at Old Town School? What were the students like? What were your expectations? What kind of music did you teach?

Can you describe some of the views that your young beginners have of folk music?

Are there any technological developments in the last five years that you have adopted in your practice as a teaching artist?

Do you use YouTube? How? What do you think is the influence of YouTube on your students?

Can you describe how your approach to teaching has changed and developed over the years? (Do you teach different material, what have you learned about successful tactics?)

Over the years, how has your experience teaching at Old Town School been affected by what is deemed popular music? (How do you define popular music, do you incorporate that music into your lessons?)

As popular music has changed over the years, has your experience teaching been affected, and how? Do your students come to class with a different listening base?

How has the internet and music downloaded affected your work as a teacher? How does it help? How does it present challenges?

How does mobile technology affect your work as a teacher?

Describe the instances where mobile or recording technology enters the classroom, or in the students' practice at home.

Where do you think folk music, and folk music education is headed?

VITA

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