

**MORE THAN A BAND AID:
HOW THE USE OF POPULAR MUSIC
HELPED A CITY RECOVER AFTER DISASTER**

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Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	iv
List of Illustrations	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review	6
Popular music	7
Popular culture of disaster.....	11
Disaster songs.....	12
Music use after disaster.....	15
Conclusion	21
Chapter 3: Methodology.....	23
Research approach	23
Positionality and research methods	27
Chapter 4: Music as fundraiser	37
Earthquake Relief.....	38
Televised events	40
Live events	42
Releases and remixes.....	62
Conclusion	72
Chapter 5: Music as psychosocial salve	73
Music and memory	73
Remembering the Dux.....	76
Empty spaces, missing places	84
Music and community after disaster	87
All Right?.....	93
Gap Filler.....	101
The long road to recovery.....	112
Conclusion	118
Chapter 6: Looking back, moving forward	120
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	128
References	133
Discography	136
Appendix 1: YouTube Playlist.....	139

Appendix 2: Consent form 140

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Abstract

The combination of music and disaster has been the subject of much study, especially star-studded telethons and songs that commemorate tragedy. However, there are many other ways that music can be used after disaster that provide benefits far greater than money or memorials but are not necessarily as prominent in the worldwide media landscape. Beginning in September 2010, the city of Christchurch, New Zealand, has been struck by several major earthquakes and over 11,000 aftershocks, the most destructive of which caused 185 deaths. As with many other disasters, music has been used as a method of fundraising and commemoration, but personal experience suggests many other ways that music can be used as a coping mechanism and aid to personal and community recovery. Therefore, in order to uncover the connections, context, and strategies behind its use, this thesis addresses the question: Since the earthquakes began, how has popular music been beneficial for the city and people of Christchurch?

As well as documenting a wide variety of musical ‘earthquake relief’ events and charitable releases, this research also explores some of the more intangible aspects of the music-aid relationship. Two central themes are presented – fundraising and psychosocial uses – utilising individual voices and case studies to illustrate the benefits of music use after disaster at a community or city-wide level. Together the disparate threads and story fragments weave a detailed picture of the ways in which music as shared experience, as text, as commodity, and as a tool for memory and movement has been incorporated into the fabric of the city during the recovery phase.



1: Street art, Christchurch

A YouTube playlist has been compiled to accompany this research (full text link and playlist details are in Appendix 1):

[Click here to launch: More Than A Band-Aid - thesis playlist](#)

List of Illustrations

All photographs taken by the author, in Christchurch, New Zealand, unless otherwise noted.

1: STREET ART, CHRISTCHURCH	V
2: DANCING FOR CANTERBURY – WHITIREIA STUDENTS FUNDRAISING IN CUBA MALL, WELLINGTON (MARCH 2011)	44
3: BAND TOGETHER, HAGLEY PARK (OCTOBER 2010)	57
4: WAITING (FOR PROGRESS) IN CASHEL STREET, LOOKING EAST (MAY 2012)	60
5: WAITING (FOR THE CROWDS) IN CASHEL STREET, LOOKING WEST (MAY 2012)	60
6: THE EASTERN & FRIENDS PLAY FOR THE CROWD AT ST. ALBANS PARK (MARCH 2011)	62
7: 'SAVE OUR DUX' DUCKS, MONTREAL ST FENCE (JUNE 2011)	79
8: THE LEAFY DUX DE LUX COURTYARD, LOOKING THROUGH THE SAFETY FENCE (APRIL 2014)	81
9: DUX LIVE! STREET FRONTAGE, ADDINGTON (APRIL 2014)	82
10: DUX CENTRAL, SURROUNDED BY CONSTRUCTION & EMPTY SPACE (MARCH 2016)	85
11: A HITLAB EMPLOYEE DEMONSTRATING THE CITYVIEWAR APP, CITY MALL (MAY 2012)	86
12: LINDON PUFFIN PERFORMS IN A COLOMBO ST GAP (APRIL 2011)	102
13: PEOPLE GATHER FOR THE SOUND GARDEN OPENING (OCTOBER 2013)	103
14: THE SOUND GARDEN OPENING (OCTOBER 2013)	104
15: THE PALLET PAVILION AT NIGHT (JANUARY 2013)	105
16: SHIRT TALES, DANCE-O-MAT SITE #1 (MARCH 2012)	107
17: GAP FILLER STAFF AND SUPPORTERS TEST OUT THE DANCE-O-MAT (MARCH 2012)	108
18: DUBFX GIG IN THE BEDFORD MARQUEE ON MADRAS ST (APRIL 2014)	109
19: THE DANCE-O-MAT DRYING OUT AFTER OVERNIGHT RAIN (MARCH 2016)	111
20: VIEW DURING PHONE CALL TO RNZ, ST ALBANS PARK, MARCH 2011	120
21: SIGN OF THE TIMES – COUNTING DOWN TO A STREET PARTY IN LYTTTELTON (JULY 2011)	123

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the early hours of Saturday the 4th of September, 2010, the majority of sleeping residents in Christchurch, New Zealand, were rudely awakened by a magnitude 7.1 earthquake that struck just outside the city, near the town of Darfield.¹ Although a little battered and bruised, most people carried on with their lives as best they could through the fairly constant aftershocks, thinking the worst was behind them. However, on the 22nd of February, 2011, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake² tore through the city at lunchtime with lethal force, leading to the partial or total collapse of many buildings and claiming the lives of 185 people. Although technically an aftershock of the September earthquake, the February event was closer and shallower, producing intense G-forces³ and causing much greater damage to the city and its people.

Everybody lost someone or something that day – whether it was their house or job, family members, friends, or colleagues, the city as they knew it, or just their normal way of life. The amount of damage varied from one suburb to the next but was generally worse in the eastern suburbs, where many of those not immediately forced from their houses spent weeks without power.⁴ In a recent opinion piece marking the fifth anniversary, Sumner resident and multi-sport legend, Robin Judkins, describes life after the February earthquake: “I was constantly hassled by sightseers who treated my property as a human zoo, only in this case the endangered species was uncaged and chased them off with a shovel”.⁵ It is not just tourists and opportunists who have been peering in, there have also been many research outputs and conferences devoted

¹ “Canterbury FAQ,” GeoNet, n.d. ca. 2011, <http://info.geonet.org.nz/display/home/Canterbury+FAQ>.

² Ibid.

³ “Scientists find rare mix of factors exacerbated the Christchurch quake,” GNS Science, 16 March 2011, <http://www.gns.cri.nz/Home/News-and-Events/Media-Releases/Multiple-factors>.

⁴ Kris Vavasour, “www.useless.com: Crisis Communications on Shaky Ground,” *MEDIANZ* 14 no. 1 (2014): 66.

⁵ Robin Judkins, “The Christchurch earthquake dilemma: Should we go or stay put?,” *Herald*, 19 Feb 2016, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11592112.

to or featuring some modern Canterbury tales. It is a strange and unexpected layer to life as a disaster survivor – becoming an object of fascination for tourists and researchers alike.

For many, music was a crucial part of the recovery process, helping them deal with loss and grief in a variety of ways: listening, singing, dancing, forgetting, remembering, sharing, communing, and connecting. Sometimes it was the smallest things that made the biggest impact during those dark days and months, and little moments like that can be difficult to identify by those who arrive after the event or observe from a distance. I have seen theories applied to the situation in Christchurch by academics who arrived in the city after the earthquakes, which often felt very disconnected from my own experiences. One is the five-stage Kübler-Ross model of grief (denial, anger/disbelief, bargaining, depression, guilt), which is about the anticipation of death and is based on individual response to a terminal diagnosis.⁶ Not only is it a very introspective model, it is also singular and, “although capturing the imagination of both lay and professional communities, has been widely criticised [and] empirically rejected”.⁷ I have also heard ideas for regeneration using Florida’s theories about the creative class which are based on decaying city centres and gentrification,⁸ which struggle to mesh with a demolished city centre where all the old, cheap spaces have crumbled and will be replaced (eventually) by newer, more expensive properties. When the loss is felt by, and for, an entire city, when the creatives have little to work with except rubble and empty spaces, the old models seem somewhat inadequate and new approaches are required.

At a popular music conference in 2014, a presentation by a young ethno-musicologist offered a valuable insight into a people under study. Drawing on family

⁶ Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

⁷ Christopher Hall, “Bereavement theory: recent developments in our understanding of grief and bereavement,” *Bereavement Care* 33, no. 1 (2014): 8

⁸ Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, (New York: Basic, 2002).

connections and collective cultural knowledge for her research on women's music in Lau Lagoon, she explained that people in these remote Solomon Islands communities describe most visiting ethnographers and musicologists as 'floaters'.⁹ Like coconuts on the ocean waves, these researchers float on the surface, seeing only what is presented to them and remaining largely unaware of the depth and complexity that lies beneath. The Solomon Islanders' perspective is that the shared experiences and common history that make up their culture and community cannot be truly understood through short-term research and observation, as a myriad of subtleties and nuances exist that can be easily missed or dismissed by outsiders.

The same could be said of Christchurch and its community of disaster survivors. There are contextual details and shared experiences that add layers of meaning to even the simplest of things, and a wide range of intentions, subversions, and connections that may not be apparent to the outside eye. In general, Cantabrians – especially those born and bred in Christchurch, like myself – are known for their one-eyed parochialism and fierce provincial pride¹⁰ but the dividing line may now have shifted. Christchurch is “a famously insular town,”¹¹ but these days it is not so much whether a person was born here (or what school they went to), it is whether they were here for the quakes – for the answer to that question will determine how much, if any, shared knowledge and experience exists about that life-changing time.

The experience of disaster produces a variety of responses among people and communities, which can generate many examples or angles for interpretation. Naomi Klein, for example, argues that disasters are opportunities for those in power to

⁹ Irene Karongo Hundleby, “Being in the mix: Pooling Collective Knowledge – A Collaborative Approach to Data Collection in North Malaita, Solomon Islands” (paper presented at the annual conference of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (Australia New Zealand), Dunedin, New Zealand, December 5-7, 2014).

¹⁰ Peter Barrer, ““KIA KAHA CHRISTCHURCH!” Strengthening Identity in New Zealand,” *Slovak Academy of Sciences Asian and African Studies* 21, no. 2 (2012): 247.

¹¹ George Parker and Barnaby Bennett, “Introduction,” in *Christchurch The Transitional City Pt IV*, ed. Barnaby Bennett, Eugenio Boidi, and Irene Boles (Christchurch: Free Range Press, 2012): 5.

implement agendas to their own benefit rather than that of the affected community,¹² while Rebecca Solnit prefers to focus on the sense of camaraderie among survivors and the joyous collaborations that arise after disaster.¹³ What can be said is that “[t]he post-disaster time period is a contested terrain in which various groups (victims, the media, and public officials) attempt to make sense of the event,”¹⁴ and the ways in which others interpret those events, actions and reactions is also varied and contested.¹⁵ When it comes to disaster, there is a difference between seeing and knowing, between watching and experiencing. To the residents of a disaster zone, small things take on huge significance – running water, flushing toilets, solid ground, a smiling face – and every aftershock, every setback, every battle with bureaucracy affects how they view the world around them. It is usually only the dramatic images and big moments that make it onto the news, with the struggles and joys of daily life being described simply as ‘resilience’.

There are many potential avenues for enquiry in the field of popular music and disaster, and this city has many tales to tell. There have been many excellent cover versions, parodies, and musically-themed cartoons since the earthquakes, for example, but, given the size and scope of this research project, not everything can be included. Rather than examining the stories told through music made after or about the earthquakes, the focus here is on how music has been beneficial for the people of Christchurch. Music has helped many residents get through the toughest of times, and this research brings together background details, context, and connections that add layers of meaning to the music, the ways it was used, and by whom. Using a variety of

¹² Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan, 2007)

¹³ Rebecca Solnit, *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster* (New York: Penguin, 2009).

¹⁴ Gary Webb, “The Popular Culture of Disaster: Exploring a New Dimension of Disaster Research,” in *Handbook of Disaster Research*, ed. Havidan Rodriguez, Enrico Quarantelli and Russell Dynes (New York: Springer, 2006): 437.

¹⁵ Aiko Takazawa and Kate Williams, “Communities in Disasters: Helpless or Helping?,” *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 10 (2011).

methods to examine communal and individual uses of music, this thesis addresses the question: Since the earthquakes began, how has popular music been beneficial for the city and people of Christchurch?

Before looking in depth at the use of music in Christchurch, chapter two will provide a summary on research approaches and definitions of popular music, and look at how music has been used in other large-scale disaster situations. Research shows that music is often used to raise funds for victims of disaster through charity singles, compilation albums, and live events but there are also many other uses and benefits. Songs can become monuments and memorials, reminders and motivators, they can provide comfort to the weary, and help people create a sense of space and community. Chapter three will be used to outline the research methodology, and my own background and positionality.

Chapters four and five go into detail about the uses of music in Christchurch since the earthquakes started in September 2010. The concept of disaster relief is explored through fundraising efforts that include remixed singles and compilation albums, as well as telethons and other live events. A key theme explored is that this ‘relief’ is not always financial, that there are many benefits that go beyond the money raised. These psychosocial benefits are then further explored by looking at how music can trigger memories of times past or remind us of places lost, and how music is also an agent for movement, social connection and *communitas*. Finally, before concluding, there is a pause where I, and others, reflect on actions taken or observed, and some of the musical moments treasured over the last five and a half years.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Popular music has been the subject of much research and debate, as has the concept of popular culture in general. There have been arguments made that “anything popular cannot, by definition, be cultural,”¹⁶ with contempt expressed for the notion that the “experiences and practices of ordinary people are more important analytically than Culture with a capital C”.¹⁷ Many contend that these categories have become blurred, and that the distinction is no longer accurate or relevant. However, arguments over definitions of the word ‘popular’, in terms of culture generally and music more specifically, continue. In terms of music, these arguments often take the form of genre debates, in which word choice and classifications have “links to legitimacy, power, identity, and social stratification”.¹⁸ For example, whether classical music is considered distinct from popular music even when composed or performed in ‘modern’ times,¹⁹ whether avant-garde experimental noise creators are attempting to be popular (or musical),²⁰ or whether music must enjoy a certain level of attendance or sales to be considered popular.²¹

Rather than engage in the debate about the boundaries and definitions of popular music, this research takes a rather agnostic approach to the definitions of both ‘popular’ and ‘music’, and has therefore not excluded any type of music on the grounds of style, date of composition, or level of popularity. As Connell and Gibson note, even if an artist, cultural product or practice is seen or heard by just a few, the simple fact it was enjoyed by some means it can “be interpreted as ‘popular’ in some

¹⁶ Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2013): 4.

¹⁷ McGuigan, quoted in Webb, “Popular Culture of Disaster,” 435.

¹⁸ Jennifer C. Lena, *Banding Together: How Communities Create Genres in Popular Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012): 145.

¹⁹ Robert Edwin, “POP Goes the Classical!,” *Journal of Singing* 69, no. 3 (2013): 332; Kimberly VanWeelden, “Classical Music as Popular Music: Adolescents’ Recognition of Western Art Music,” *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education* 31, no. 1 (2012): 14.

²⁰ Amy C. Beal, “Music is a Universal Human Right,” in *Sound Commitments: Avant-garde Music and the Sixties*, ed. Robert Adlington (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009): 99-120.

²¹ John Connell and Chris Gibson, *Soundtracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place* (London: Routledge, 2003).

sense”.²² Similarly, if classical music or experimental noise is performed or recorded by musicians and enjoyed by an audience then they are also, by that logic, popular music. Whatever form or style it takes, music is a large part of many people’s lives. This chapter provides information about the content and style of different research approaches to popular music before exploring the more specific angle of music and disaster, and the ways in which popular music can be beneficial for those affected.

Popular music

For some, popular music is simply a background part of daily life, yet for others, it is a key aspect of their social identity, a way of aligning themselves to a particular place or group.²³ Although it is a part of everyday life, popular music is considered by many to be “something special, something different from everyday experience”.²⁴ Since its emergence as a distinct field of study, research into popular music has involved not only the “consideration of social, psychological, visual, gestural, ritual, technical, historical, economic and linguistic elements [but also the] genre, function, style, (re-)performance, and listening attitude”.²⁵ As well as providing an “insight into the sounds of many peoples, cultures, and sub-cultures,”²⁶ popular music is also a cultural and economic product that involves “complicated trajectories of production, distribution and consumption”.²⁷ The song as object can be “analysed ‘in relation’ to other things,”²⁸ for example as a unit of stock, either individually or

²² Connell and Gibson, *Soundtracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place*, 4.

²³ David Byrne, *How Music Works* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2013); Connell and Gibson, *Soundtracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place*.

²⁴ Sarah Cohen, “Sounding out the City,” in *The Place of Music*, ed. Andrew Leyshon, David Matless, and George Revill (New York: Guildford Press, 1998): 285.

²⁵ Philip Tagg, “Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice,” *Popular Music Vol 2* (1982): 40.

²⁶ Henry Johnson, “Introduction,” in *Many Voices: Music and National Identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, ed. Henry Johnson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010): 7.

²⁷ John Connell and Chris Gibson, *Soundtracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place* (London: Routledge, 2003): 6.

²⁸ Susan J. Smith, “Performing the (sound)world,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 18, (2000): 617.

collectively: in terms of sales by independent and major record labels; the market share of different genres; and the amount of local and imported content on music radio and television.²⁹ This unit-based approach is viewed by some as having a narrow focus, with “the relationship between music, markets and consumption [being reduced] to only the ‘music consumer’ frame,”³⁰ one that ignores many important social and symbolic aspects of people’s interaction with popular music.

There is a significant body of work that treats popular music as text, looking for meaning in lyrics, musical composition, and visual imagery. This mechanistic perspective focuses on music as fixed object: the text may be interpreted or considered in a number of different ways, but the item itself remains the same as when it was produced. Some scholars, however, have identified limitations with the practice of placing all the emphasis on the text or recorded work as the object of analysis.

Nevarez says there are pitfalls to having a “simplistic view of musicians as authors of meaning”, as this perspective does not allow for the input of non-instrumentalists like producers, designers and marketers – who all have a hand in the presentation of the ‘finished’ aural and physical product.³¹

Some researchers seek to understand music by focusing not on the text or lyrics but on the meaning derived by listeners, and the way they use music in their everyday lives. Tia DeNora traces the use of music in public and personal spaces, such as house parties, retail stores and aerobics classes; its use during leisure, therapy, and work; and how people create a sense of self through music.³² Describing it as a resource for daily life, DeNora says that music constructs “scenes that afford different

²⁹ Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music Culture*, 79.

³⁰ Daragh O’Reilly, Gretchen Larsen and Krzysztof Kubacki, *Music, Markets and Consumption* (Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers, 2013): 155.

³¹ Leonard Nevarez, “How Joy Division Came to Sound Like Manchester: Myth and Ways of Listening in the Neoliberal City,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 25, no. 1 (2013): 57

³² Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

kinds of agency, different sorts of pleasure and ways of being,”³³ but that the social ‘powers’ often attributed to music are incredibly difficult to articulate when removed from the context of their use.³⁴ However, just as there are those who take issue with a focus on music as text, some disagree with the priority being placed on listener use or interpretation. Shuker and others consider this user-focused approach to be restrictive also, as it ignores the role of cultural and political intermediaries – such as music critics, radio announcers, music programmers, and government policymakers – all of whom can influence the availability, perception, and reception of music.³⁵

When investigating matters of music, the relationships and interactions between artist, song, and audience often take centre stage. However, as Connell and Gibson point out, “[m]usical practices include whole constellations of social uses and meanings, with complex rituals and rules, hierarchies and systems of credibility,” creating geographies of music that are inextricably linked to “the various contexts of performance, listening and interaction in space”.³⁶ In any study involving popular music there are many factors to consider, from cultural and economic contexts, aesthetic judgements, and available tools or technology. Analysing popular music means dealing with a “bewildering series of distinct, but overlapping contexts and practices of creative and compositional knowledge and activity,”³⁷ all of which affect production, dissemination and reception. Popular music as a field of enquiry features many different disciplines and subject matters, involving cultural influences and economic tensions, tangled networks of communication, production and consumption, and the construction of individual and collective identities.

³³ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 123

³⁴ *Ibid.*, x.

³⁵ Matt Hills, “Back in the Mix: Exploring Intermediary Fandom and Popular Music Production,” in *Popular Music Fandom*, ed. Mark Duffett (New York: Routledge, 2014): 47-87; Lily Kong, “Popular Music in Geographical Analysis,” *Progress in Human Geography* 19, no. 2 (1995): 183-198; Nevarez, *Joy Division*; Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music Culture*.

³⁶ Connell and Gibson, *Soundtracks*, 3.

³⁷ Charles Fairchild, “The Medium and Materials of Popular Music: ‘Hound Dog’, Turntablism and Muzak as Situated Musical Practices,” *Popular Music* 27, no. 1 (2008): 104.

Listening to music through any medium in any space can be a social or singular experience, and even live music performances can range from a “highly participatory art form [to] a passive consumption experience”.³⁸ Just as the level of audience engagement will differ from person to person, from one gig to another, no two live performances by an artist or band will be the same, even when played on consecutive days, featuring the same setlist, in the same venue. The live music experience includes a multitude of non-audio elements that can be emotional or visual, ephemeral or tangible, providing people with a shared experience, “an affirmation of community, and... the surrender of the isolated individual to the feeling of belonging to a larger tribe”.³⁹ Concerts of any size are “complex cultural phenomena, involving a mix of music and economics, ritual and pleasure, for both performers and their audience”.⁴⁰ Each musical performance is “produced through interaction between musicians, audiences and the environment, and the experience itself cannot be separated from the music”.⁴¹ But there are yet wider circles of people and practices involved with live musical events, from tour promoters and venue operators through to hotdog sellers and security staff, with connections and co-dependencies that extend out to the instrument makers, equipment hire companies, and landlords of rehearsal spaces. The practice of making music involves much more than the act of performing music.

Music fills and transforms space, and not always in a physical sense. When hearing a particular song, it can “easily evoke a whole time and place, distant feelings and emotions, and memories of where we were, and with whom”.⁴² Musically-inclined people will speak about the soundtrack of their life, with certain songs indelibly linked to a particular time, place, person or feeling. For many, “music

³⁸ Connell and Gibson, *Soundtracks*, 3.

³⁹ Byrne, *How Music Works*, 78.

⁴⁰ Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music Culture*, 49.

⁴¹ O’Reilly, Larsen, and Kubacki, *Music, Markets and Consumption*, 204.

⁴² George H. Lewis, “Who do you love? The Dimensions of Musical Taste,” in *Popular Music and Communication*, 2nd edition, ed. James Lull (London: Sage, 1992): 135.

reheard and recalled provides a device for unfolding, for replaying [a moment] as emerging experience,”⁴³ allowing the past to come alive once more. Music has the ability to provide maps to real and imagined spaces, positioning people within a larger social environment where songs “are never just a song, but a connection, a ticket, a pass, an invitation, a node in a complex network”.⁴⁴ People can use music to invoke imaginary journeys, separate from the physical landscape that surrounds them, arriving in what Josh Kun describes as ‘audiotopias’ – personal utopian spaces of sonic architecture.⁴⁵ Losing oneself in the music enables people to find themselves somewhere else entirely without physically moving. This can be a blessing in some situations – for example, while living in a disaster zone, when any other time or place seems better than the here and now.

Popular culture of disaster

Disasters can provide inspiration for a variety of cultural products and practices, created and shared by people who experienced the event, as well as those who did not. The cultural products of disaster, including the music produced, can then be treated as artefacts to be analysed, providing researchers with clues as to the role of government, the impact on the vulnerable, and the issues seen as important by different groups.⁴⁶ Many have studied the cultural products and scene of a disaster, looking for insight into conflicts, power struggles, heroes and villains.⁴⁷ Clearly, disasters are not just social events, but cultural items and creative expressions can provide tools through which different groups reflect, frame and process the event.

⁴³ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*.

⁴⁴ Josh Kun, *Audiotopia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005): 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 21, 23.

⁴⁶ Tricia Wachtendorf, “Exploring the popular culture of disaster” (paper presented at the annual meeting for the American Sociological Association, Chicago, Illinois, August 8, 1999).

⁴⁷ Stephen Couch, “The Cultural Scene of Disasters: Conceptualizing the Field of Disasters and Popular Culture,” *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 18, no. 1 (2000): 25.

There are several aspects to consider when studying the popular culture of disaster,⁴⁸ which can range from products like board games and films, visual responses like street art and cartoons, as well as event-specific jokes and songs or albums. The first aspect is the product itself, and what meaning is contained or alluded to in the item as text or artefact. There is the relationship of the product to the real world, the time and place of its making, and whether or not it is an accurate reflection of the people, place and disaster in question. The identity of the producers and their methods of production are also key dimensions, as are the ways in which these products are distributed or consumed.⁴⁹ All of these factors are vital considerations when examining the cultural products of disaster, especially the music being made and used.

Disaster songs

Catastrophic events such as murder and disaster have long been memorialised through poetry and visual arts, and have provided inspiration for an entire subgenre of popular music based on subject matter rather than style or sound. No type of calamity appears to be off limits: “Mine disasters, school fires, epidemics, fratricide, shootouts, train, airplane and shipwrecks, as well as all manner of natural disasters from floods and tornadoes to earthquakes, [have all been] set to music and sung about”.⁵⁰ Cultures all around the world have songs about loved ones lost to disaster or battle, commemorating the incidents and passing down knowledge through subsequent generations. In the early 20th century, a popular musical style was the broadsheet ballad, in which news of notable disastrous events “visited upon unsuspecting Americans” was dispensed through song.⁵¹ The sheer variety of disaster music

⁴⁸ Ibid., 27-29; Webb, “Popular Culture of Disaster,” 434.

⁴⁹ Couch, “Cultural Scene of Disasters,” 27-29; Webb, “Popular Culture of Disaster,” 434.

⁵⁰ David Maurer, “‘Disaster’ sells... and earns Grammy Attention,” *Daily Progress (Charlottesville)*, 3 Jan 2008, http://www2.dailyprogress.com/lifestyles/cdp-lifestyles/2008/jan/03/disaster_sells__and_earns_grammy_attention_01_03_0-ar-70541/.

⁵¹ Ibid.

available reflects the multitude of genres in the wider environment, ranging from narrative ballads and dirges about historical events to more contemporary musical styles like “country and western, urban blues, folk rock, and even electronica”.⁵² People have been writing songs about disaster for hundreds of years but these days, song lyrics and performances can be shared via the Internet faster than ever, sometimes within hours of an event taking place.

In 2001, as the events of 9/11 unfolded, footage of the plane crashes and the attack on New York’s twin towers was broadcast, shared and discussed worldwide. Television networks ran live coverage and people gathered in both physical and online spaces in order to watch and grieve together. Within 24 hours people were sharing freshly penned lyrics on folksong websites for a type of disaster song Carr describes as “aural monuments [which then] become repeatable rituals of remembrance,”⁵³ and are far quicker to construct than any physical monument. Disaster songs have an important social function, and many are written from a first-person perspective, whether their creator experienced the disaster first-hand or as an electronically mediated event. This has been observed in songs written about many different disasters: ballads about the sinking of the Titanic in 1912; blues music about the 1927 Mississippi flood; in folksongs after 9/11; and in hip hop music after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.⁵⁴ Zenia Kish observed that, shortly after Hurricane Katrina, a “veritable subgenre of Katrina hip-hop” appeared, as many hip hop artists recorded songs in response to the suffering and institutional failure they observed, including *My FEMA People* by Mia X.⁵⁵ Most of these songs used “a first-person speaking voice, regardless of the artist’s origins in or lack of connection to New Orleans, lending the

⁵² Revell Carr, ““We Never Will Forget”: Disaster in American Folksong from the Nineteenth Century to September 11, 2011,” *Voices* 30 no. 3-4 (2004): 36.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 36; Zenia Kish, ““My FEMA People”: Hip-hop as Disaster Recovery in the Katrina Diaspora,” *American Quarterly* 61 no. 3 (2009): 675.

⁵⁵ Kish, “My FEMA People,” 671.

music candor and emotional urgency”.⁵⁶ In times of disaster, songs can put voice to shared emotions and frustrations and form a social connection with others.

Contemporary popular songs have also been re-recorded, re-mixed or revised after catastrophic events, either by the original artist or by others. After the 1995 bombing in Oklahoma, local radio station KATT 100.5 re-mixed Live’s song, *Lightning Crashes*, adding clips from news reports over the instrumental sections.⁵⁷ DJ Sammy and Yanou’s Candlelight remix of the Bryan Adams song, *Heaven*, was re-mixed in 2002 by KISS FM in Bakersfield, California, to commemorate the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.⁵⁸ The same Candlelight version of the song was then re-mixed again by KLUC FM in 2011, to mark the tenth anniversary of the Twin Towers attack.⁵⁹ Both versions feature the voices of young girls reading a monologue to a dearly missed ‘Daddy’, with the softly sung chorus interspersed. There are many different video versions of both the *Lightning Crashes* and *Heaven* remixes on YouTube, and comments posted by viewers illustrate how these re-mixes have become an ‘aural monument’ to a traumatic event in their lives. Even long after a disaster, the shared experience of a musical moment can be an emotional touchstone for all involved, whether the song remains the same or was specifically reworked for the occasion.

While the previous songs were unauthorized re-mixes made by radio stations, some performers have re-versioned their own material after disaster or notable deaths. Elton John’s song, *Candle in the Wind*, originally a tribute to Marilyn Monroe, was first re-dedicated in 1990 (to AIDS victim, Ryan White) before being almost

⁵⁶ Ibid., 675.

⁵⁷ Live, *Lightning Crashes (OKC Bombing Mix)* [unauthorised remix video], 1995, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMxLbCmvxrE>.

⁵⁸ “Heaven (Candlelight Mix) Reignites Radio,” 24 Sept 2002, http://www.werismyki.com/lyrpo/djsammy_heaven.html#article; “Heaven (Bryan Adams Song) – Cover Versions – DJ Sammy Version – Versions,” nd. ca. 2011, http://www.liquisearch.com/heaven_bryan_adams_song/cover_versions/dj_sammy_version/versions.

⁵⁹ “Heaven (Bryan Adams Song) – Cover Versions”.

completely re-written by Elton John and his song-writing partner, Bernie Taupin, as a tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales, after her death in 1997.⁶⁰ Even though the most recent lyrical revision has been described as heavy-handed and schmaltzy,⁶¹ the song went straight to number one in many countries, selling over 35 million copies worldwide and generating many millions of pounds in royalty payments for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.⁶² Similarly, *Halo*, a love song by Beyonce, has also been re-purposed for different occasions by the artist herself. The original lyrics, ‘Baby I can see your halo’, were first altered in tribute to Michael Jackson after his death in 2009, to ‘Michael I can see your halo’, and then after the earthquake that struck Port-au-Prince in 2010, to ‘Haiti I can see your halo’.⁶³ However, just as popular music is more than its textual elements, not all disaster music can be categorised under the heading of ‘disaster songs’, as the songs of disaster do not always contain disaster references.

Music use after disaster

Although the disaster song genre focuses on music written specifically about (or re-versioned after) a disaster, it has been observed that existing songs can take on new significance after a catastrophic event, even without alteration. In the American popular music songbook, songs from or about New Orleans feature strongly, although many now seem strangely prophetic. On reviewing some classic songs after Hurricane Katrina, some found a “haunting connection between old tunes and the current

⁶⁰ Jack Doyle, “Candle in the Wind, 1973 & 1997,” *Pop History Dig*, 26 Apr 2008, last updated 18 Aug 2013, <http://www.pophistorydig.com/topics/candle-in-the-wind1973-1997/>.

⁶¹ D.W. Dunphy, “Songs that Kill: Elton John, “Candle In The Wind 1997 (Goodbye England’s Rose)”,” *Popdose*, 16 Jun 2014, <http://popdose.com/songs-that-kill-elton-john-candle-in-the-wind-1997-goodbye-englands-rose/>.

⁶² Doyle, “Candle in the Wind”.

⁶³ Elizabeth McAlister, “Soundscapes of Disaster and Humanitarianism: Survival Singing, Relief Telethons, and the Haiti Earthquake,” *Small Axe* 16 no. 3 (2012): 33; Beyonce, *Halo (Hope for Haiti Now)* [live performance], 2010, <https://youtu.be/W7gRyoVgKKs>.

crisis”.⁶⁴ Songs such as *Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans?* and *Prayer for New Orleans* have been given new emotional layers by those who were displaced or affected by the disaster.⁶⁵ After Hurricane Katrina, a thirty year-old song by Randy Newman, *Louisiana, 1927*, became something of “a contemporary anthem, its chorus – “Louisiana, they’re trying to wash us away” – bearing new relevance”.⁶⁶ Its use and appreciation after disaster is a reminder that popular music is fluid, in that it “refuses to provide a uniform or static text”⁶⁷, and can simultaneously carry many different meanings. Popular music consists of more than its textual elements, it is also a social experience that involves performance and consumption. Sometimes, for those impacted by disaster, it is this social aspect that matters most – the acts of singing, listening and participating – rather than the song itself.

After Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding, hundreds of thousands of New Orleans residents were displaced, with many ending up in evacuee centres scattered across the country. Blumenfeld describes how the arrival of jazz musicians at a shelter in Baton Rouge was initially met with scepticism by the aid workers and media, who thought that music was not something the tired evacuees needed.⁶⁸ What happened as members of New Orleans brass band, the Hot 8, began to play showed everyone there that it was exactly what the people needed. Band leader, Bennie Pete, describes the experience as beautiful: “We just showed up, started blowing. And people began to smile and cry and dance. That’s my band! It was a healing thing”.⁶⁹ The Hot 8’s performance was captured by CNN and the band went on to feature in *When the Levees Broke*, Spike Lee’s award-winning documentary about the

⁶⁴ B. Lee Cooper, “Right Place, Wrong Time: Discography of a Disaster,” *Popular Music and Society* 31 no. 2 (2008): 263-4.

⁶⁵ Jack Sullivan, “In New Orleans, did the Music die?,” *Chronicle of Higher Education* 53 no. 3 (2006); Cooper, “Right Place, Wrong Time”.

⁶⁶ Larry Blumenfeld, “Since the Flood: Scenes from the Fight for New Orleans Jazz Culture,” in *Pop When the World Falls Apart*, ed. Eric Weisbard (Durham, Duke University Press, 2012): 166.

⁶⁷ Connell and Gibson, *Soundtracks*, 3.

⁶⁸ Blumenfeld, “Since the Flood”.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Blumenfeld, “Since the Flood,” 153.

devastation of New Orleans. The film title is a reference to a classic blues song from the late 1920s, *When the Levee Breaks*, which describes the devastation caused by the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, and has been covered by many artists, including Led Zeppelin.

One of the most public and high profile uses of music after disaster is for fundraising purposes, with concerts, telethons, and song or album releases following many major catastrophic events. Global media and world-famous musicians have successfully combined to raise awareness of, and funds for, many different crises and disasters. From *Band Aid* and *Live Aid* in the mid-1980s through to the *Hope for Haiti Now* telethon in 2010, these star-studded events have attracted both praise and criticism. These musical fundraisers were first seen as an opportunity to combine “the pleasure and passion of rock music [with] compassion and solidarity,”⁷⁰ however more recent interpretations consider these events as celebrity humanitarianism that perpetuate harmful stereotypes of starving Africans and helpless Haitians in order to turn compassion into cash.⁷¹

The *Hope for Haiti Now* telethon followed the predictable formula for celebrity-driven disaster fundraisers, which consists of emotional musical numbers, pre-recorded field items, live crosses, and regular appeals for donations.⁷² As with the *Live Aid* event in 1985, the complexities of the Haitian disaster were not reflected in the simplistic narratives employed by the scriptwriters, fundraisers and media outlets. Just as the houses and buildings of Port-au-Prince were flattened by the earthquake, the telethon flattened the earthquake into a single event, ignoring the international

⁷⁰ Iain Chambers, *Popular Culture: The Metropolitan Experience* (London: Methuen, 1986): 188.

⁷¹ William Easterley, “Celebrity Musicians Can’t Feed the World,” *Slate*, 29 Apr 2014, http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/feed_the_world/2014/04/live_aid_band_aid_usa_for_africa_did_pop_stars_and_hit_songs_help_ethiopia.html; McAlister, “Soundscapes of Disaster and Humanitarianism”.

⁷² McAlister, “Soundscapes of Disaster and Humanitarianism”.

debt, inequitable trade deals, poverty, and corruption that contributed to the widespread destruction and high death toll.⁷³

Telethons are designed to tug the heartstrings of the viewer; to encourage nostalgic associations and imagined personal connections through celebrities, music, and images; and provide an opportunity for benevolent Westerners to counter their excessive consumption with conspicuous giving.⁷⁴ Songs are chosen for their perceived emotional connection to the moment or event, and the finale is often performed by someone from the affected area. In *A Concert for Hurricane Relief*, organised after Hurricane Katrina, this was New Orleans native, Dr. John, and in *Hope for Haiti Now*, it was co-organiser and ‘supercelebrity’ Haitian musician, Wyclef Jean, whose involvement fostered imagined connections between the audience, celebrities and Haitian survivors.⁷⁵

Although the binary narratives of ‘us’ and ‘them’, of corporate interests versus individual needs, of place and authenticity, are often present in discussions about music and disaster, as with every aspect of music and place discussed so far, these are neither discrete categories nor impermeable barriers. As a Haitian musician living and working in the US, Wyclef Jean is simultaneously insider and outsider to both Haitians and Americans.⁷⁶ His performance in the telethon mediated several different orientations and positions, as it moved from the Jamaican Rastafari song *By the Rivers of Babylon* to a slow and evocative original composition, *Yele*, in the Kreyol language of Haiti, before the band burst into Rara, an exhilarating, carnivalesque style of Haitian funeral music.

⁷³ Ibid.; Anthony Oliver-Smith, “Haiti and the Historical Construction of Disaster,” *NACLA Report on the Americas: Fault Lines* 43, no 4 (July/August 2010).

⁷⁴ McAlister, “Soundscapes of Disaster and Humanitarianism,” 34.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Wyclef Jean used the global stage to send an inside message to the Haitian diaspora by calling on the strong sonic association of Rara music, and by singing in both English and Kreyol, he was able to speak “Haitian to Haitian and American to American [in] a moment of ‘dual addressivity’”.⁷⁷ This can be seen as a ‘sonic intervention’, an attempt to break through the “cultural anesthesia that had characterized the rest of the telethon”.⁷⁸ The loud, anarchic, and very Haitian sounds of Rara provided a bold counterpoint to the finely honed Westernised sentimentality of the other musical numbers that night. Yet this break from the standard disaster script was carefully managed and rehearsed, playing against – but still within – the conventions of the telethon genre.

There are always risks with live television, even when everyone involved is united for a common cause, like fundraising for disaster victims. A few years earlier, in 2005, an unscripted disruption to a similar telethon event added fuel to the debate about institutional failure and media stereotyping of Katrina’s many black victims, and helped propel the issue into the national spotlight.⁷⁹ Kanye West’s rant about inequality and the racially-based portrayal of disaster victims seemed unprepared, rambling from one idea to the next, pointing out how guilt about disaster fatigue inspired his own large monetary donation, and ending on the now notorious statement: ‘George Bush doesn’t care about black people’. The telethon producer quickly cut to another presenter after that statement but, while the incident was edited out of subsequent broadcasts, the message had already been sent.⁸⁰

Kanye West may not have been at his most eloquent that night but he and many other mainstream hip hop artists used their music to champion post-Katrina

⁷⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Kish, “My FEMA People”.

⁸⁰ “Top 10 Outrageous Kanye West Moments: Kanye Goes Off-Script,” *Time*, n.d. http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1922188_1922187_1922183,00.html.

New Orleans “as a political cause with broader import”.⁸¹ Even though artists like Kanye, Chuck D, and Mos Def had no direct connection to the place of disaster, the victimization of the African-American community of New Orleans and the Gulf region provided storylines that were familiar to many. Their identification with the victims was more about social place than physical space; the ‘us’ and ‘them’ based on hierarchies of power rather than geographic location. Kish describes Katrina hip hop as having a “plurality of speaking positions,”⁸² as individual stories were folded into critiques of the wider human catastrophe, blending local geographical and socioeconomic knowledge into musical responses that “became a cultural force of identification and activism”.⁸³ By uncoupling place from physical location, other perspectives can be seen as still providing an ‘inside’ viewpoint to a situation.

In a time of heightened stress, music can be a catalyst for sharing and expressing emotions, connecting people and communities, and helping them make sense of what has happened.⁸⁴ Such was the case after the earthquake that struck Haiti in January, 2010, where survivors sang until the sun went down, alone or in groups, and then started singing again when the sun came up.⁸⁵ Haitians dealt with the stress of the quake by transforming it into song, “construct[ing] a frame of meaning in which to understand and act”.⁸⁶ One survivor put it this way: “When everything is destroyed, all you have left is your culture... It can change, but can’t be destroyed”.⁸⁷ Music is of vital importance to Haitian people, and after the earthquake survivors used music, particularly religious hymns, to orient themselves and transform the experience,

⁸¹ Kish, “My FEMA People,” 678.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 673

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 671.

⁸⁴ Carr, “We Never Will forget”; Webb, “Popular Culture of Disaster”.

⁸⁵ McAlister, “Soundscapes of Disaster and Humanitarianism”; Sue Montgomery, “Finding Inspiration in Disaster; Music, Art, Writing Flourish,” *Gazette (Montreal)*, 12 Jan 2011, accessed 6 Sep 2012 via Factiva.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth McAlister, “Voices of the Haiti Earthquake: Singing, Telethons, and Neoliberal Humanitarian Relief” (paper presented at the Music and Crisis Post-graduate Conference, UCLA Santa Barbara, California, April 14-15 2012), 5.

⁸⁷ As cited in Montgomery, “Finding Inspiration in Disaster”.

“creating their own audiospheres,”⁸⁸ and reclaiming the rubble-strewn streets through song. McAlister notes that many non-Haitian observers and media outlets were confused by “the imperative for song” displayed by survivors, and struggled to make sense of it.⁸⁹ The emotional reasons for, and benefits of, music performed and shared at street or community level after disaster may not always be apparent to those who are not familiar with a people or place.

Most would not have noticed, but McAlister says the majority of Haitians, who practice the Afro-Creole religion of Vodou, were being outsung by the evangelical minority.⁹⁰ The evangelical congregations of Haiti are well-connected and well-funded, and their singing featured heavily in foreign journalists’ broadcasts.⁹¹ Feeling vulnerable and stifled by the evangelicals camping nearby who were trying to drown out the Vodou music with their Protestant hymns, the Vodou congregations turned to familiar Catholic tunes like *Ave Maria*, in what has been likened to the “age-old tactics of covert practices developed during slavery and post-slavery repression”.⁹² McAlister watched as the people of Haiti sang to rebalance themselves, to bring life back into the city of Port-au-Prince and to reclaim physical and cultural space but these uses and motivations would not have been noticed by most of those reporting and watching.

Conclusion

When looking at the confluence of music and disaster, there are a number of approaches and outputs involved. Disaster songs tell stories about historic and recent events, but there is more to music after disaster than the new or reworked songs that fall in this category. After a disaster, music can be used in many ways: to provide

⁸⁸ McAlister, “Soundscapes of Disaster and Humanitarianism,” 38.

⁸⁹ Ibid., “Voices of the Haiti Earthquake,” 5.

⁹⁰ McAlister, “Soundscapes of Disaster and Humanitarianism,” 26.

⁹¹ Ibid., 25.

⁹² Ibid., 26.

solace; to raise funds; to memorialise people, events, and places; to criticise those in power; to provide a soundtrack for movement and gatherings; and to create and reclaim space. Not being physically present for the disaster in question does not hinder researchers, musicians, and media from getting involved or having opinions but it does influence their perspective and level of insight, as will the level or depth of their connection to the people and place of disaster.

Just like popular music, telethons and disaster scenes can be read and discussed in many different ways, depending on the perspective of those involved. Elizabeth McAlister, an American scholar with personal attachment, experience, and insight into Haiti, watched the disaster unfold from afar via the media and digital communication technologies along with her Haitian husband and their children.⁹³ There were subtleties and nuances evident in the types and uses of music by different groups of Haitians in response to the disaster, differences that have their roots in centuries of social, economic, and religious practices. Not everyone will have noticed these moments but, even though McAlister was on the outside of the disaster scene looking in, as an observer and interpreter of the situation, she was watching and speaking as someone with inside knowledge. However, McAlister was still physically and culturally distant: she saw but did not experience those needs and she does not carry the same physical or emotional scarring as those who lived through the event and its aftermath.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 22.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research owes much to the work of a few key writers, in terms of content, style, and research approach. Sara Cohen,⁹⁴ whose research on life and music in Liverpool, England, reveals much about the relationships between music, place, and people; Tia DeNora,⁹⁵ whose examination of the role that music plays in public and private daily life illustrates the value in documenting the details of meaning afforded to songs and musical styles, and the different uses of, and identities shaped by music; and to Sarah Pink,⁹⁶ whose descriptions and use of sensory ethnography have guided and informed many stages of the process. Also to Elizabeth McAlister,⁹⁷ whose analysis of the motivations behind the use of music after disaster shows that concepts like identity and social position are fluid and layered, and that musical moments have meanings that may not be apparent to all observers; and to Vicki Anderson,⁹⁸ whose heartfelt and beautifully written accounts of life and music in Christchurch, especially since the earthquakes began, express what many in the city could not put into words themselves.

Research approach

It is not only in the subject of popular music that dichotomies are debated, they are also present in descriptions of the research process, in terms of dividing lines between observation and theory, researcher and researched, and whether the research and writing processes can be neatly separated.⁹⁹ Unlike Cohen, who moved from Oxford to Liverpool in the 1980s as a postgraduate student in order to study the city

⁹⁴ Cohen, "Sounding out the City"; *ibid.*, *Decline, Renewal and the City*.

⁹⁵ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*.

⁹⁶ Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (London: Sage, 2009).

⁹⁷ McAlister, "Soundscapes of Disaster and Humanitarianism"; *ibid.*, "Voices of the Haiti Earthquake".

⁹⁸ Vicki Anderson, "Rock and Roll Mother," *Press* [blog], <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/opinion/blogs/rock-and-roll-mother> (and countless print articles from *The Press*).

⁹⁹ Juliana Mansvelt and Lawrence D. Berg, "Writing Qualitative Geographies, Constructing Meaningful Geographical Knowledges," in *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, ed. Iain Hay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 340.

and its music culture,¹⁰⁰ or McAlister, an expert on Vodou and Rara music in Haiti who lives and works in Connecticut as a professor at Wesleyan University,¹⁰¹ the city under study in this case is my own hometown, the place I was born and where I have lived for most of my life. Although I was already participating in and researching the local music scene, the earthquakes and subsequent events that disrupted my life, as well as the lives of my family, friends, and the entire city, have opened up new avenues of life experience and research. My observations, therefore, are very much influenced by my familiarity with and affection for this place, as well as the stresses of life as homeowner, rate-payer, parent and educator, so my position as researcher and researched, as observer and interpreter, reflects this complexity.

Whether a researcher is considered as an insider or outsider, by themselves or others, can have an effect on many aspects of observational research. While researching one's own city and culture, it can be difficult to "wear [the] 'community' and 'researcher' hats at the same time," and any ease of access afforded by familiarity must be "balanced against the potential for bias in the interpretation and reporting" of the research data.¹⁰² There are also dangers in over-familiarity, in that there may be "too much participation at the expense of observation,"¹⁰³ however, the embedded and embodied nature of researching one's own culture and environment provides contextual understanding that may not be available to those who have chosen to immerse themselves in a place of interest, even after a period of extended observation.

¹⁰⁰ Cohen, *Decline, Renewal and the City*, 1.

¹⁰¹ "Elizabeth McAlister," Wesleyan University, n.d. last updated 10 Jan 2016, <http://emcalister.faculty.wesleyan.edu/>.

¹⁰² Hilary P.M. Winchester and Matthew W. Rofo, "Qualitative Research and its Place in Human Geography," in *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, ed. Iain Hay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 12.

¹⁰³ Evans, quoted in Robin A. Kearns, "Seeing with Clarity: Undertaking Observational Research," in *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, ed. Iain Hay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 249.

This ethnographic research takes what could be described as a feminist or post-structuralist approach to human geography,¹⁰⁴ in that it recognises a variety of positions and realities, and focuses on lived experience. Drawing on qualitative methods such as interview, archival research, participant-observation and other techniques that have been described variously as “observant listening and participant sensing,”¹⁰⁵ “uncontrolled observation,”¹⁰⁶ and “multisensorial embodied engagement with others,”¹⁰⁷ my aim is to provide a rich description of how different people used music in ways that were of benefit to them or the wider community. This research offers a wide-ranging account of individual and collective actions, celebrating the participatory nature of music, and providing what Lena describes as a ‘thick’ history of music,¹⁰⁸ by incorporating a number of different voices, stories, and experiences that may otherwise go unnoticed. To borrow a musical analogy from Winchester and Rofe:

Reality is like an orchestra: post-structural approaches differentiate the instruments and their sounds... the minor instruments too have a tune to play and a thread that forms a distinct but usually unheard part of the whole. It is [these] voices... that, when released from their silencing, enable a more holistic understanding of society to be articulated.¹⁰⁹

As conductor of the various instruments performing this symphony, it is my role to bring certain voices and melodies to centre-stage at the appropriate moment, and to shine the spotlight on some performers of note.

¹⁰⁴ Joost Van Loon, “Ethnography: A Critical Turn in Cultural Studies,” in *Handbook of Ethnography*, ed. Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland and Lyn Lofland (London: Sage, 2001): 277; Winchester and Rofe, “Qualitative Research and its Place,” 21.

¹⁰⁵ Wood and Smith, quoted in Winchester and Rofe, “Qualitative Research and its Place,” 13.

¹⁰⁶ Kearns, “Seeing with Clarity,” 243.

¹⁰⁷ Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, 25.

¹⁰⁸ Lena, *Banding Together*, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Winchester and Rofe, “Qualitative Research and its Place,” 23.

The difficulties in capturing and representing the elusive and ephemeral aspects of life, those ‘unspeakable geographies’ involving performance and emotion,¹¹⁰ have led to some of the more experimental techniques identified in the previous paragraph. Techniques such as ‘participant sensing’ and ‘embodied engagement’ could be said to describe the embodied aspects of an auto-ethnographer’s daily life: experiencing events and surroundings through every sense and taking notice of what impacts on, or matters to, yourself and others around you.

As is often the case in qualitative research, positionality is key to recognising “personal subjectivity and possible sources of bias”¹¹¹ arising from the personal or professional background of the researcher. Bourdieu warns there is however, a danger in excess reflexivity, especially the rather self-indulgent process of “observing oneself observing, observing the observer in [their] work of observing”.¹¹² While very much grounded in, and guided by, my own personal experiences through this tumultuous time, these events are presented mostly in the third-person narrative style. This is not an attempt to disguise my own hand in shaping the narrative, but is done in the knowledge that this text is a re-staging of those events, a constructed story that evokes and reflects on the experiences of many.¹¹³ Although the selection processes are subjective, this research seeks to present an objective account of events as told through a variety of voices. Objectivity is not only found “through distance, impartiality, and universality but [also] through contextuality, partiality, and positionality”.¹¹⁴ This research is the result of direct involvement during interesting times, of primary observation of individual and communal behaviour, and of secondary observations – interpreting the observations of others.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹¹² Quoted in Winchester and Rofe, “Qualitative Research and its Place,” 16.

¹¹³ Mansvelt and Berg, “Writing Qualitative Geographies,” 341-345.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 341.

¹¹⁵ Kearns, “Seeing with Clarity,” 244.

Positionality and research methods

Due to the varied nature of work patterns and leisure activities over a period of many years, gaining access to people and events of interest over the last five years has not proven difficult. In fact, casual work in hospitality venues and the event industry has afforded me access to many more musical events than my bank account could ever have achieved alone. Most of the large-scale music gigs in Christchurch are held at the city's indoor arena,¹¹⁶ a venue managed by Vbase,¹¹⁷ and many of those events have been attended in my working capacity as a 'host'. This catch-all title covers all the frontline staff (excluding food & beverage) who are dealing with audience members. We are the smiling but nameless people who take tickets at the main door or gate, show people to their seats, the toilets, the bar or the door, and monitor the crowd for intoxication or disruptive behaviour in order to enhance the experience for everyone else. In this role, I have observed many thousands of people attending many different types of events at the arena since the earthquakes – from The Wiggles to Metallica, from *X Factor Australia* winner, Reece Mastin to opera superstar, Placido Domingo. While the uniform clothing I was wearing set me apart from those attending the event, it also served to render me largely invisible, in that I was no different to any of the other similarly uniformed and anonymous workers.

Another casual job a few years earlier gave me my introduction to the creative crowd that lives and gathers in the port town of Lyttelton. The Loons was both a licensed venue and a circus theatre troupe of the same name. My work at the venue involved a variety of roles including publicity, bar work, and the occasional stint on a follow-spot, and provided the starting point for many good friendships. Getting to

¹¹⁶ There is one large indoor performance arena in Christchurch which is capable of holding crowds of up to 9000, depending on layout. Due to changes in the naming rights sponsor, the venue has gone by various names since its construction in 1998, when it was known as the WestpacTrust Centre. At the time of the events included here, the sponsor was Canterbury Building Society (CBS), and is now the Horncastle Arena, sponsored by Horncastle Homes.

¹¹⁷ Vbase is the company that owns and manages the city's event venues and major sporting grounds like AMI Stadium, and is 100% owned by the Christchurch City Council.

know musicians like Adam McGrath and Jess Shanks from The Eastern made it a lot easier to approach them, and others among their circle, when I was making a radio documentary programme for a stage one Cultural Studies paper at the University of Canterbury (UC) in early 2009. This programme, *Harbour SouNZ*,¹¹⁸ was later re-edited and shortened before airing on Radio New Zealand (RNZ) National's show, *Spectrum*, in November that same year. Since first meeting Adam and Jess back in 2008, I have become a huge fan of their work (as has my husband), buying each EP or album on release and attending many, many shows. The Eastern, along with Lindon Puffin, Delaney Davidson, and Marlon Williams, have been part of the soundtrack to my life for a number of years now, so my attendance at their post-quake performances was the continuation of existing fandom and friendship.

I have had a professional interest in the use of music in public spaces for many years now. After initially volunteering on student radio station, rdu, in the early 1990s, then training and working in commercial radio, I spent almost ten years working for a private media company that supplied the music playing in many of New Zealand's 'big box' retail stores, supermarkets, and malls. For many years, any trip to a client's store involved watching the other shoppers and observing the way they interacted with the music, smiling when they sang along and inwardly cheering when I caught someone grooving down the aisle in time to the beat. This research builds on my existing interest in music for public spaces, and utilises my ingrained people-watching habits that have been honed over years of creating characters for theatrical endeavours and then further enhanced by experience in crowd observation during my time on the staff at Vbase. These factors have given me a keen eye and an enhanced understanding of crowd mood and behaviour at music events.

¹¹⁸ Kris Vavasour (producer), "Harbour SouNZ," Radio New Zealand National, *Spectrum*, 15 Nov 2009, <http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/spectrum/20091115>.

The two large earthquake events of 2010 and 2011 happened as I was undertaking part-time Honours study at UC – disrupting the end of my first year and postponing the start of my second year. Having been forced from our family home due to damage caused by the September earthquake,¹¹⁹ over the last few years, research has been fitted around work commitments, insurance matters, the demolition and subsequent rebuilding of our house, and the general, everyday difficulties of life in a disaster zone, with all the stresses that entails. During this time, and especially in the brief window between discharging our existing mortgage and being encumbered with its larger successor, I attended more music gigs than at any other time in my adult life. I needed companionship, and I needed to be somewhere filled with music and people with friendly faces, somewhere that – once inside the doors – could be anywhere. Music was my happy place, with new and favourite musicians providing solace, entertainment, and an opportunity to escape, even if only briefly.

This has therefore not been a research project in which there has been a clearly defined research phase followed by a separate writing phase. If thinking of research as “the whole process from defining a question to analysis and interpretation,”¹²⁰ this project has been more like a game of snakes and ladders, with changes of focus and question sending the research process back several squares more than once. At other times, *Inception*-like layers of related journal articles or media reports have provided a boost up the ladder, only to land on a hazard of some kind (e.g. work commitments, incompetent builders, aftershock cluster) and miss a few turns. This is what the research process feels like when the subject matter is the lived experience of yourself, your friends, your community, and those lives are playing out in a seismically-active disaster zone.

¹¹⁹ Disclosure: our family received a Red Cross relocation grant, the only grant applied for and received from any of the earthquake-related charities covered in this research.

¹²⁰ Winchester and Rofe, “Qualitative Research and its Place,” 5.

Thanks in almost equal parts to an appreciation in late 2010 that media accounts might prove useful for future research and to my lax newspaper recycling habits of early 2011, when the February 22nd earthquake hit, I already had the beginnings of a substantial personal news archive. Initially, the front sections of each edition of *The Press*, the city's only daily newspaper, were kept (in ever-growing piles of boxes) until the main musical theme was decided upon. At this point, the newspapers were scoured for articles on music, musicians, fundraising events, as well as a variety of other themes around community and rebuilding issues, which were then cut out and stuck into A4-size scrapbooks. This practice has continued with almost every edition of *The Press* since then, and has been supplemented with online newspaper and magazine archives, broadcast news items and interviews, and writings on blogs, social media and websites. This easily-accessible archival material – which now spans four physical volumes of over 150 pages each, and many internet browser folders of bookmarks – has proven invaluable when seeking people's thoughts and comments about different events and the emotions experienced or activities attempted at different times over the last five years. Rather than asking questions years after the fact and relying on potentially faulty memories, emotions and reactions have all been captured as they happened or shortly afterwards.

Most of the comments and opinions included in this research were found in published form, with comments from musicians and commentators taken from new and traditional media outlets ranging from interviews with reporters or documentary film-makers, organisational and news websites, blog posts, social media comments, books, and my own radio documentary programme, *Entertaining Shakeytown*,¹²¹ which aired in 2011. There is no shortage of publicly available comment on the earthquakes, and many of the musicians and organisers who feature in the following chapters are often sought out for or share their thoughts about the rebuild and recovery

¹²¹ Kris Vavasour (producer), "Entertaining Shakeytown," Radio New Zealand National, *Spectrum*, 4 Sep 2011, <http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/spectrum/20110904>.

of the city, or are held up as shining examples of post-quake creativity and regeneration opportunities. There have also been many journal articles published on geotechnical and engineering aspects of the disaster, local and national government responses, community engagement and resilience, and the media coverage of the earthquakes. However, once engaged in the writing phase of the research process, a gap was identified in the available information about the engaging and seemingly successful *All Right?* campaign. Although the yearly Wellbeing survey results receive media coverage, and there was print and online media content about the individual campaign events, there was very little information around the motivations underpinning the strategies or tactics employed in the campaign as a whole. To fill this gap, an interview was undertaken with someone who has been working on the campaign since the beginning.

There are two other research projects I have also been involved with that have influenced my thinking and broadened my perspective on the earthquake experiences of the wider city population. Even though none of the data collected in those projects has been used in this research, the hundreds of problems and frustrations that have been shared with me have left a lasting impression. The first was a survey conducted for one of my honours papers in September and October 2011, on the use of media during and after the immediate crisis period by residents of Christchurch and surrounding areas.¹²² In answers to a variety of open-ended questions, respondents documented their experiences of being stranded far from home and unable to contact family members, of desperately trying to find information, of living without power or potable (drinking quality) water, of feeling frustrated by insurance procedures, let down by technology, cut off from online life, and misled by politicians. Almost 350 people completed the survey, with many taking full advantage of the opportunity to vent their frustrations about processes, organisations, individuals and the media.

¹²² Vavasour, “www.useless.com”.

In the second, and much longer project, I was one of three initial interviewers for the UC Quake Box project.¹²³ This started as a three month summer scholarship in late 2011, and continued as paid employment for several months after that. After the interviewing and transcribing protocols had been developed and the technological hitches sorted, this converted shipping container / recording studio was parked, first in Re:Start Mall and then at Eastgate Mall in Linwood, to interview local residents about their earthquake experiences. My role was to listen as they told their stories, using gentle prompts or questions to elicit additional information, and to provide a sympathetic ear and a shoulder to cry on when it all got too much, as it did for some. There have been over 730 recordings made with this project, and although the Quake Box itself is currently on hiatus, many of the stories told within its tiny footprint are now available online.¹²⁴ This experience was, at times, both eye-opening and emotionally draining, as an incredibly varied collection of experiences were remembered and relived in my presence, in a very small recording booth with unforgiving lighting.

As a researcher examining my own social environment, I am constantly re-negotiating and re-evaluating the many identities and positions I occupy and encounter along the way. Although I am musical, I am not a musician, so although I consider myself to be an insider within the local music scene as fan and regular gig-goer, I am outside the circle of music performers. I am not a stranger to performance however, thanks to decades of involvement with amateur theatre and more recent attempts at belly dancing, which have both provided social connections and creative outlets. About ten years ago, while working as bar manager for one of the World Buskers Festival venues, I met a young woman named Coralie Winn, who was also part of the Buskers crew for that event, and a member of the experimental Free

¹²³ "UC Quake Box," New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour, n.d. ca. 2013, <http://www.nzilbb.canterbury.ac.nz/QuakeBox.shtml>.

¹²⁴ "Quake Box Videos," CEISMIC, n.d. <http://www.ceismic.org.nz/search?q=QuakeBox%20Videos#page1>.

Theatre collective. She would later go on to found Gap Filler with her partner, Ryan Reynolds and help create the Pallet Pavilion and the Dance-O-Mat, two venues I would spend considerable time at after the earthquakes.

As a natural extension of many years of participation and volunteering in the creative sector, I was one of the many Christchurch residents who gave time to the Pallet Pavilion project. As a member of the Tribal Diva belly dance troupe, I was also one of hundreds of people and groups who performed at the Pavilion while it was open, and one of many thousands who have danced at the Dance-O-Mat. All of these aspects of my personal identity – event worker, homeowner, parent, audience member, performer, volunteer, interviewer, student, educator, and researcher – have been in play at one time or another. Over the last five years, a multitude of events have been attended and activities entered into with total conviction (and sometimes with more than a little reckless abandon), not because it provided research material and opportunities for participant-observation or other research techniques, but because this was simply life being lived.

The Dux de Lux is a treasured Christchurch music venue and social space for many, and has been part of my life for perhaps a few years longer than it should have been, given my age now and the legal drinking age as it was in the 1990s. I remember going there for the first New Year's Eve I enjoyed with my then-boyfriend (now husband), alternating between the packed bar indoors and the packed marquee outside, while music permeated the night air from all directions. This was pre-cellphone days, so when my partner and I got separated early on, there was no way to get in contact and reconnect but this did nothing to dampen the spirits. Christchurch is a small city, and there was always someone familiar to catch up with at the Dux – and we did eventually reunite before heading home.

Like many others after the earthquakes, I was distraught at the damage wrought on the old building, and watched the dispute between the Dux management and the Arts Centre Trust Board play out in the media. Given the number of people among my circle of friends who enjoy music, and especially live music, as much as I do, word of the Save Our Dux Facebook group reached me not long after it was started. So I joined out of genuine interest in a favourite shared space, although I didn't really contribute to the discussions but used the group more as a source of info on progress made towards repairs or reopening. Towards the end of 2012, when activity in the group had died down substantially, most of the discussion content was copied and archived to my computer for future reference. This proved to be a good move, as some time later when I went back to the group, many of the comments and posts made by Dux management had been deleted.

The examples and stories contained in the following chapters are not an exhaustive catalogue of the musical responses to the earthquakes but those selected show the sheer breadth and depth of the contributions made to the recovery process by music and musicians. Much of the research on the role of music in fundraising after disaster appears to focus on star-studded telethons and large-scale concerts, ignoring the voices of the many lesser-known artists who also contribute through time and energy, often on many separate occasions, in different locations and with a variety of fellow performers. Those who attend these charity events will pay at the door or throw coins into a bucket (or both) but there is also a significant contribution made by the artists involved, as they also contribute financially – usually by foregoing payment – and have probably also incurred costs in order to play.

Although I did not participate in or attend every event depicted, I have utilised the accounts of others, often drawing on multiple sources to reconstruct the storyline and fill in the background of the performers and their connections and motivations, where possible. It is not possible, however, to calculate the amount of money raised

by musical events in New Zealand for the people of Christchurch, as the charitable funds do not detail where the money came or how much individual donations were, only the total amount donated and to which purpose the funds were allocated. Where known, the ticket price or the method of collecting donations has been included, as well as the intended destination of the funds raised.

When considering cultural products, popularity can become a numbers game (for example, analysing sales figures or audience ratings), which reduces cultural items to “the status of objects to be bought and sold... [ignoring] the social nature of their consumption”.¹²⁵ When the bonds of community have been stretched to breaking point, it is the social aspects of cultural products like music, that become incredibly important. These uses and benefits are not always easily identifiable from the outside, or to outsiders, as the many layers of meaning, interpretations, and reactions, rely on a substantial amount of background knowledge about people, places and events. After a disaster, there are many cultural products made that will float to the surface for inspection, and much of it will be available (or at least discussed) on the internet and accessible to anyone.

The popular culture of disaster does not always appear in tangible or lasting form. From dark humour to street corner performances, from protest signs to voicebreaks on radio, the popular culture of disaster is not always a product that can be bought, sold, or counted – it is often something that can only be experienced. When examining the use of popular music after disaster, the songs that are written, remixed and performed are just one part of the equation. The uses that existing music is put to by non-musicians to make sense of chaos, to ease the pain of loss, to bring joy, and to reclaim the spaces and places around them – these are the moments where the biggest benefits can be found, but only if you know where to look.

¹²⁵ Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music Culture*, 4.

This should not be seen as diminishing the importance of the financial contributions raised by musicians and others involved in producing telethons or large-scale music concerts. But the fundraising events and musical numbers that are broadcast or otherwise distributed around the world are just the cream of the crop – in that they rise to the surface and are easy to skim off. These mega-events and hit songs form just the tip of a much larger musical iceberg, and there is a huge range of events and a wide cross-section of the music community involved in smaller fundraising efforts that often go unrecognised.

Chapter 4: Music as fundraiser

In the period immediately after a disaster, the thoughts of many turn towards ways of helping the affected area and its people. Given that not everyone has the skills necessary to be physically useful or the ability to travel to the location of the disaster, many look for ways to donate or raise funds. This chapter explores the concept of disaster relief and illustrates how a wide variety of musicians donated time, songs, or personal items for charitable purposes. There were a variety of musical events organised to raise funds by both New Zealand and international artists, and although there were several events held overseas, it is the events that took place within New Zealand that have been focused on for this research.

Several artists that were due to play, or had just played, in Christchurch had their performance and travel plans disrupted by the earthquake of February 22nd, 2011. As well as noting the repercussions to schedules of musicians, their efforts to help and ultimately fulfil their plans of performing in Christchurch, have also been documented. While there was a multitude of live events taking place in the weeks and months after the February quake, there were also several fundraising singles and album releases that eventuated to raise funds for worthy causes, including one album that was recorded and released within just a few weeks, in the middle of all the chaos and destruction.

Connections between musicians, place, and disaster are explored through some of the live performances and recorded output created after the earthquakes. Other aspects like the emotional benefits of live or recorded music, and the relationship of individual songs to both people and place is also considered. A wide range of reasons and motivations behind artists' involvement with various projects have been uncovered, which adds further layers of depth to the relationships between musicians, place, and disaster.

Earthquake Relief

The phrase ‘earthquake relief’ (or ‘disaster relief’) is generally used to describe monetary donations collected for the benefit of victims of a catastrophic event. Donations are often solicited through star-studded, televised fundraising events which, through their simplified depictions of often complex situations, help to perpetuate the discourse that disasters are “a short-term problem that can largely be remedied by collecting money and supporting relief aid”.¹²⁶ Whether staging a telethon or music concert, these charity media events use celebrity involvement to increase visibility and media coverage of the event, and to encourage engagement and giving among the public.¹²⁷ In becoming involved in charitable causes, celebrities and musicians not only lend their exclusivity and ‘X-factor’ to the event, they in turn receive positive publicity that can enhance their own career or reputation.¹²⁸ Some of these findings can be seen in the events that took place for Christchurch earthquake relief, especially the use of well-known musicians and star power to raise awareness and funds.

Given the transient and interconnected nature of the occupation (and associated lifestyle), musicians often find themselves with some kind of link to a disaster zone – through bandmates, crew, travels, or personal experience of a similar situation – any of which can lead to a desire to help. Christchurch music journalist, Vicki Anderson, says the music community is “connected by invisible strands, [and] when one of its number is in trouble, [it] rallies together”.¹²⁹ As with many previous disasters, the devastation caused by earthquakes in Christchurch became a cause supported by musicians near and far. The local and international music community

¹²⁶ Olivier Driessens, Stijn Joye, and Daniel Biltreyst, “The X-factor of charity: a critical analysis of celebrities’ involvement in the 2010 Flemish and Dutch Haiti relief shows,” *Media, Culture & Society* 34, no. 6 (2012): 721.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 716.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 713.

¹²⁹ Vicki Anderson, “A light in the darkness,” *Press*, 18 Mar 2011, sec. GO 2.

reached out to the city and its residents in a variety of ways: by staging large public performances and intimate sing-alongs; producing fundraising singles and albums; and by donating costumes or instruments for auction. For example, Richard O'Brien, creator of the cult classic, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, donated the jacket and guitar he used on stage during the show's 2010 season at Christchurch's Isaac Theatre Royal to the Red Cross for auction.¹³⁰ Musicians of all styles and stature donated ticket revenue, merchandise profits, time, and music to raise funds for the broken city and its equally shattered residents.

Research on charitable giving and the use of musicians or celebrities in disaster fundraising tends to focus on large-scale media events like aid concerts and telethons. These have been described as formulaic events that utilise mass media, celebrity involvement, and popular music to maximise monetary donations for disaster relief,¹³¹ and have been criticised for "turning compassion into *charitainment*, that is, an (overly) entertaining and light version of charity",¹³² with events that often overshadow the disaster itself. However, musical charity takes place in many forms after disaster, and the benefits the flow from these events cannot always be defined simply in terms of viewer numbers or donation tallies, nor can they be measured objectively. This is not to say that fundraising is unimportant but it should be remembered that, depending on the perspective of the recipient, the 'relief' they receive (or consider to be of most value) may not be financial.

There were four major charitable funds created in response to the Christchurch earthquakes, to which most of the money raised through musical events was donated. There was the Red Cross Earthquake Appeal (which raised \$125

¹³⁰ "For sale – no strings attached," *Press*, 11 Dec 2010, A5.

¹³¹ McAlister, "Soundscapes of Disaster," 27.

¹³² Driessens, Joye, and Biltreyst, "The X-factor of charity," 710 (emphasis in original).

million);¹³³ the government-organised Christchurch Earthquake Appeal (nearly \$100 million);¹³⁴ the Salvation Army Canterbury Earthquake Appeal (\$18.5 million);¹³⁵ and the Christchurch Earthquake Mayoral Relief Fund (\$7.4 million).¹³⁶ Targeted funds such as these allow ordinary people to assist with relief efforts after disaster without the need for specialist training or physical presence, thus “fulfilling their moral obligation to respond [and providing] a way for a global public to respond supportively during an overwhelming tragedy”.¹³⁷ Backed by government or global agencies, these funds are also easily identifiable recipients for the money collected at fundraising events, with no further thought required from the public or event organisers as to how it is spent.

Televised events

There were two televised earthquake fundraisers for Christchurch but only one was actually conceived as a media event. In response to the February earthquake, New Zealand television personality, Brooke Howard-Smith, organised a twelve-hour telethon, *Rise Up Christchurch*.¹³⁸ This event, held exactly three months after the devastating earthquake, was hosted by state-funded broadcaster, Maori TV, and featured a plethora of local and international celebrities. Heavyweight boxer Shane Cameron, actors Anna Pacquin and Martin Henderson, HRH Prince Edward, and short films from Sir Peter Jackson and Sir Ian McKellen all featured in the event.¹³⁹ The

¹³³ Red Cross, “New Zealand Red Cross 2011 Christchurch Earthquake Appeal to close,” 27 Nov 2011, <https://www.redcross.org.nz/yk-files/831da57551851361b62cf48034040e94/Christchurch-Earthquake-Appeal-Closure-November-2012.pdf>.

¹³⁴ Christchurch Appeal Trust, “Annual Report 2014/15,” Sept 2015, [http://christchurchappealtrust.org.nz/vwluResources/Annual%20Report%202014-15%20-%20Full%20Report/\\$file/CEAT_2014-15%20Annual%20Report_web.pdf](http://christchurchappealtrust.org.nz/vwluResources/Annual%20Report%202014-15%20-%20Full%20Report/$file/CEAT_2014-15%20Annual%20Report_web.pdf).

¹³⁵ Michael Wright and Georgina Stylianou, “Call to get \$90m left in relief funds to needy,” *Press*, 19 Jun 2012, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/7125669/Call-to-get-90m-left-in-relief-funds-to-needy>.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ McAlister, “Soundscapes of Disaster,” 28.

¹³⁸ Paul Harper, “Revamped telethon to help Christchurch,” *Herald*, 20 May 2011, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10726875.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

telethon raised over \$2.5 million dollars, and donated auction items included a signed guitar from rock band the Foo Fighters (which sold for \$15,000), a signed guitar from Katy Perry (\$5000), a pair of limited edition Gucci shoes from Lady Gaga (\$4300), and four sneakers from Usher (\$925).¹⁴⁰ The global star power of this event was high, with artists, entertainers and royalty all lending their ‘X-factor’ in order to raise the profile (and donation tally), and potentially benefitting from the association with the cause, by projecting a caring and helpful image. It is not only celebrities who look for the reflected glories of charitable behaviour – dairy giant Fonterra gave \$500,000 towards production costs associated with the telethon as well as a one million dollar donation, while transport company Mainfreight pledged \$250,000.¹⁴¹

The other television event was the *Band Together* concert in Christchurch’s Hagley Park in October 2010 – the content, contributors, and atmosphere of which will be covered in more detail later in this chapter. Although the eight-hour, two-stage event was a little telethon-esque by the time it took place, it was initially planned as a simple gig for weary residents. The TV3 broadcast, the radio simulcast on MoreFM, online streaming via the TV3 website, and the co-ordinated fundraising efforts that brought in over \$1.5 million dollars in cash and donated goods or services, were all afterthoughts.¹⁴² However, the majority of musical fundraising activities were not media events nor were they all large in scale – they took place in town halls, community centres, parks, and pubs, and were witnessed only by those who attended, with donations more likely to be anonymous coins in a bucket than publically declared million-dollar pledges.

¹⁴⁰ NZPA, “Rise Up Christchurch telethon raises more than \$2.5m,” *Stuff*, 22 May 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-earthquake/5038282/Rise-Up-Christchurch-telethon-raises-more-than-2-5m>; NZPA, “Foo Fighters guitar raises \$15k for quake relief,” *3News*, 23 May 2011, <http://www.3news.co.nz/nznews/foo-fighters-guitar-raises-15k-for-quake-relief-2011052305#axzz3xXtCrAyM>.

¹⁴¹ NZPA, “Foo Fighters guitar raises \$15k”.

¹⁴² Paul Ellis, “Band Together,” n.d., ca 2010, <http://pauellispublicity.co.nz/portfolio/band-together/>.

Live events

Whether events were organised specifically to raise funds or donations were collected at pre-planned events, the live music scene provided significant contributions to a variety of charities and earthquake-related causes. The *Eventfinda* website lists 100 New Zealand earthquake fundraisers from March to June 2011, of which nearly half are musical.¹⁴³ The events ranged from touring early music orchestra, The Lautten Compagney, who took donations for the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal at a special performance of their *Handel with Care* concert, to children's entertainers, The Wiggles, who donated all remaining tickets to their upcoming Christchurch shows to local residents. There were several multi-artist benefit concerts such as *Taranaki 4 Canterbury* at the TSB Bowl of Brooklands in New Plymouth (March 2011), *Quake Day Out (From Rodney With Love)* at the Western Reserve in Orewa (April 2011), and *Rotorua Rocks for Christchurch* at the Energy Events Centre in Rotorua (June 2011). These events had ticket prices ranging from \$10 to \$35, and proceeds from all three went to the Red Cross Earthquake Appeal. The acts varied from amateur performers to household names and the *Taranaki 4 Canterbury* concert featured a strong Christchurch line-up, with performances from Anika Moa, the Eastern, OpShop, and the Dukes.¹⁴⁴

One fundraising event made the most of a timely visit by an international star. *Britain's Got Talent* winner, Paul Potts, was in New Zealand ahead of a tour starting in mid-April when he was approached by classical/crossover singer and friend, Lizzie Marvally, to appear at a fundraising concert she was helping to organise. *To Christchurch With Love* was held at Auckland's Bruce Mason Centre on April 2nd,¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Eventfinda, "Christchurch earthquake relief fundraising events," n.d., ca 2011, www.eventfinda.co.nz/tour/2011/christchurch-earthquake-relief-fundraising-events.

¹⁴⁴ "Taranaki 4 Canterbury," n.d. ca 2011, <http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2011/mar/new-plymouth/taranaki-canterbury>.

¹⁴⁵ "To Christchurch with Love," n.d. ca 2011, <http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2011/apr/takapuna/to-christchurch-with-love>.

and Potts joined fellow opera singers Marvelly, Dame Malvina Major, and Tim Beveridge, along with classic New Zealand entertainers Ray Woolf, Suzanne Lynch, Rikki Morris, and Gray Bartlett. The evening drew heavily on celebrity involvement and included elements of telethon, with items for auction and appearances by “some of New Zealand’s favourite television personalities”, like actors Shane Cortese and Robyn Malcom.¹⁴⁶ Tickets for this gala event were \$99 each, or \$300 with pre- and post-show functions, and all proceeds went to the Red Cross Earthquake Appeal.¹⁴⁷

Immediately after the disaster struck, many musicians and venues around the country began organising fundraising events for the people of Christchurch. A group of ska and reggae artists put on a benefit gig, *Stand Rocksteady for Christchurch*, at The Thirsty Dog bar in Auckland, with a \$10 entry fee that went to the Red Cross.¹⁴⁸ Alt-country pair, Tami Neilson and Lauren Thomson, were touring their *Chanteuses and Shotguns* show, and were supposed to play at the Harbourlight bar in Lyttelton on March 4th. After the earthquakes put paid to that, they instead organised a special fundraiser at Osborne Street Bar & Kitchen in Auckland, with the \$15 door charge going to the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal.¹⁴⁹ Wellington bar Bodega hosted *Rock Relief for Christchurch* which featured seven local bands, with the Red Cross appeal benefitting from the \$15 door charge.¹⁵⁰ Also in Wellington, Cuba Street bars and venues worked together to create *Cuba 4 Chch*, a multi-venue, multi-artist event with a \$10 entry ‘passport’ that awarded access to all venues on the night. Many Wellington-based performers were involved, and Christchurch noise merchants,

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ “Paul Potts to headline Christchurch Earthquake gig,” *Stuff*, 7 Mar 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/music/4739999/Paul-Potts-to-headline-Christchurch-earthquake-gig>.

¹⁴⁸ “Stand Rocksteady for Christchurch,” n.d. ca 2011, <http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2011/mar/newton/stand-rocksteady-for-christchurch>.

¹⁴⁹ “Chanteuses & Shotguns Christchurch Fundraiser,” n.d. ca. 2011, <http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2011/mar/newmarket/chanteuses-shotguns-christchurch-fundraiser>.

¹⁵⁰ “Rock Relief for Christchurch,” n.d. ca. 2011, <http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2011/apr/wellington/rock-relief-for-christchurch>.

Bang! Bang! Eche!, were flown up to perform at the event, with all proceeds from the passports and donation buckets going to the Red Cross.¹⁵¹



2: Dancing for Canterbury – Whitireia students fundraising in Cuba Mall, Wellington (March 2011)

After the earthquake struck, one band altered their schedule to fit in a new gig in a completely different country. Los Angeles based rockers, the Foo Fighters, were planning their *Wasting Light* album tour and reacted swiftly to news of disasters on both sides of the Tasman Sea. The Foo Fighters had friends from Los Angeles, members of Queens of the Stone Age and The Melvins, who were either in, or travelling to, Christchurch at the time of the earthquake and so the band were being sent updates and first-hand reports as the action unfolded.¹⁵² Foo Fighters’ bass player, Nate Mendel, says the band wanted to show their support, “to offer some comfort to the people of Christchurch that there are people standing in their corner”.¹⁵³ As lead singer, Dave Grohl, sees it, “this is the least we can do, I mean, we just come out and play a gig – we do that five nights a week, you know?”.¹⁵⁴ Despite the band wanting

¹⁵¹ “Cuba 4 Chch,” n.d. ca. 2011, <http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2011/mar/wellington/cuba-chch>.

¹⁵² David Farrier, “Foo Fighters chat about Christchurch charity gig,” 22 Mar 2011, <http://www.3news.co.nz/tvshows/campbelllive/foo-fighters-chat-about-christchurch-charity-gig-2011032215#axzz3xTcRAyM>.

¹⁵³ Quoted in Vicki Anderson, “Band win a mum’s heart,” *Press*, 23 Apr 2011, A3.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in Farrier, “Foo Fighters chat”.

to perform in Christchurch itself, damage to venues and infrastructure at the time made hosting an event of any size a logistical nightmare, and the band members were told that it was not possible.¹⁵⁵ Tickets to their concert at the Auckland Town Hall were priced at \$175 and \$250, with proceeds going to the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal.¹⁵⁶ The Foo Fighters played their Christchurch fundraising concert on March 22nd, before heading to Australia to officially start their tour in Sydney on the 24th. The band then travelled to Brisbane on March 27th for a concert to raise funds for victims of flooding in Queensland.¹⁵⁷

The Foo Fighters are from Los Angeles and, although Mendel has previously experienced earthquakes first-hand, he says they were “nothing like what the people in Christchurch went through”.¹⁵⁸ A few days after the February earthquake, Grohl posted a video urging people to donate to the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal and said that he and the band hoped “to bring a little bit of happiness back into your lives”.¹⁵⁹ During their Auckland show they dedicated their song, *My Hero*, to the shaken city and to one young victim in particular. This kind act brought a small amount of sunshine into what was a very dark time for one Christchurch family. Isaac Thompson, a keen musician and Foo Fighters fan, was working as a production technician at Canterbury Television (CTV) when he was killed in the CTV building collapse on February 22nd.¹⁶⁰ As his coffin – shaped like a Fender guitar – was carried out of the church after his funeral, *My Hero* was the song playing. His mother, Rebecca, who was among those who travelled up to Auckland from Christchurch for

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ “Foo Fighters – Earthquake Benefit Show”.

¹⁵⁷ “Foo Fighters – Earthquake Benefit Show,” n.d. ca. 2011, <http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2011/mar/auckland-cbd/foo-fighters-earthquake-benefit-show>.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Anderson, “Band win a mum’s heart”.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in 3News, “Foo Fighters’ Grohl’s message to Christchurch,” *3News*, 4 Mar 2011, <http://www.3news.co.nz/entertainment/video-foo-fighters-grohls-message-to-christchurch-2011030412#axzz3xXtCrAyM>.

¹⁶⁰ Anderson, “Band win a mum’s heart”.

the concert, said she appreciated the dedication and that the band members were heroes in her eyes.¹⁶¹

It was not until February 2015 that the Foo Fighters finally made it down to the (still) broken city of Christchurch. From the stage at AMI Stadium, in front of 27,000 people, Grohl described a drive he had taken earlier that day, following the river Avon until he “ended up in neighbourhoods with houses and no people”.¹⁶² The emptiness of these ‘ghost suburbs’, where residents have been forcibly moved on, can be jarring to visitors, but Grohl said that by the time he reached the ocean, he was glad to be performing for “this city with these beautiful people”. Generous with their time and energy, the band have promised to come back and put on a free show next time they visit, “in the park or by the beach. It might not be until 2027, but we’ll do it”.¹⁶³ Given the band’s good nature and their willingness to help after disaster, the people of Christchurch should expect that promise to be kept one day.

The Foo Fighters’ fellow Los Angeles rockers, Queens of the Stone Age (QotSA), were originally due to perform in Christchurch on February 24, 2011, and were in Wellington when the earthquake hit. It was three years before they were able to schedule another visit to the city, this time while touring with Nine Inch Nails (NIN). QotSA frontman, Josh Homme, insisted on including Christchurch in the tour, saying “I come from earthquake territory too, I get it. We don’t want to just play, we want to help in some way, too”.¹⁶⁴ The double-bill concert in March 2014 was the

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² Vicki Anderson, “Foo Fighters concert ‘best Wednesday night in Chch ever’,” *Stuff*, 19 Feb 2015, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/music/gig-reviews/66378450/Foo-Fighters-concert-best-Wednesday-night-in-Chch-ever>.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in “Frontman insists on Chch gig,” *Press*, 10 Oct 2013, A4.

final leg of their Australasian tour, after which proceeds from T-shirt sales on tour were donated to an (undisclosed) earthquake charity.¹⁶⁵

When the Melvins played at AL's Bar in Christchurch on February 21 2011, venue owner, Al Park, remembered thinking they would be hard act to follow.¹⁶⁶ The Melvins were at Christchurch airport on the 22nd, which was evacuated when the earthquake struck and then closed, disrupting the band's travel plans and forcing them to rearrange their Wellington and Auckland shows.¹⁶⁷ After finishing the New Zealand leg of the tour, the Melvins toured Australia before travelling to Japan, where they were caught in the magnitude 9.0 Tokoku earthquake that struck on the afternoon of their final Tokyo show.¹⁶⁸ Frontman, Buzz Osborne, was quoted as saying, "What are the odds of us being in TWO major earthquakes on TWO continents in about TWO weeks? In the billions?"¹⁶⁹ Osborne, a self-described 'quake coward', would have been relieved to get home to Los Angeles after a tour that was punctuated at either end by destructive earthquakes. Park says the Melvins turned out to be "a great last act" for AL's bar – there would be no more gigs at the popular bar as the building was later demolished.¹⁷⁰

Booked to play at AL's bar on the night of the 22nd was American artiste, Amanda Palmer, who was in Napier at the time the earthquake struck, getting ready to

¹⁶⁵ Tom Cardy, "Queens of the Stone Age join Wellington rockfest," *Dominion Post*, 21 Jan 2014, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/culture/9630315/Queens-of-the-Stone-Age-join-Wellington-rockfest>.

¹⁶⁶ Vicki Anderson, "End comes for popular AL's Bar," *Press*, 15 Aug 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/5443146/End-comes-for-popular-ALs-Bar>.

¹⁶⁷ "The Melvins + High On Fire Tour Update," *Under The Radar*, 22 Feb 2011, <http://www.undertheradar.co.nz/utr/more/NID/3131/The-Melvins--High-On-Fire-Tour-Update.utr>.

¹⁶⁸ Randall Roberts, "First New Zealand, now Japan: The Melvins experience second earthquake in as many months [Updated]," 11 Mar 2011, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/music_blog/2011/03/first-new-zealand-now-japan-the-melvins-experience-second-earthquake-in-as-many-months.html.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* (emphasis in original)

¹⁷⁰ Anderson, "End comes for popular AL's Bar".

fly down to Christchurch for the gig.¹⁷¹ Palmer never made it to the city that day, and instead spent the afternoon tweeting earthquake updates and posting information and photos to her blog from Napier, feeling grateful her flight was not an hour earlier or she would have been in the middle of the chaos. While reflecting on her recent good fortune at narrowly avoiding disasters (Iceland's volcanic ash cloud, the Queensland floods, and now the Christchurch earthquake), Palmer was nonetheless devastated she couldn't get down to do her planned show. If travel to Christchurch had been at all possible, Palmer said she "would have done SOMETHING in the middle of a VERY SAFE field so we could have all been together", but promised to keep people updated about "ticket refunds, re-scheduling, and what I can do to make you feel better".¹⁷² At the end of her blog post, Palmer provided a link to the Red Cross website for those who wanted to donate, as "those guys are always a safe bet", as well as links to information, assistance, the Google people-finder, and details of the #eqnz hashtag. The comments section was then opened up for locals and others to share their thoughts and links to other local aid organizations that may be of use, providing virtual and human links in a time of need.

Nearly a year after her cancelled gig at AL's Bar, Amanda Palmer finally made it to Christchurch in January 2012, as one half of the Dresden Dolls, with Brian Viglione on drums. This time there was none of the intimate, standing-room-only atmosphere provided by a small inner city bar, instead the show was booked in the large, seated auditorium of the Aurora Centre. One benefit of the increase in venue size is the potential for a larger audience, which might increase the amount of money going to the Earthquake Relief Fund. However, money is not a driving force for Palmer, and many of the audience at the Aurora Centre gig were put on the door list for free entry during the few days she spent in the city before the show. Palmer says

¹⁷¹ Amanda Palmer, "Christchurch canceled [sic] due to massive earthquake", 22 Feb 2011, <http://blog.amandapalmer.net/christchurch-canceled-due-to-massive-earthquake/>.

¹⁷² Ibid., caps in original.

she hates to see people priced out of events and, although she tries to keep prices down to \$25 in the United States, she has limited control elsewhere and has seen ticket prices in New Zealand rise to around \$60.¹⁷³ Palmer was frustrated, as not only did she think the place look like a warzone with piles of rubble on the ground, but her impression was that “people here are broke. I’d rather eat it and lose a little bit of money and bring music to everyone who wanted it”.¹⁷⁴ News that other touring bands or artists were bypassing the city out of fear or due to the state of the economy only strengthened her resolve to do what she could in the short time she was visiting.

During their stay, Palmer and Viglione teamed up with Hera, an Icelandic-born singer who lives in Christchurch – not only for their evening concert but also to perform what Palmer calls a ‘ninja gig’ (a free, short-notice event) for the ‘Occupy Christchurch’ protesters in a section of Hagley Park.¹⁷⁵ The Occupy Movement started in September 2011 as ‘Occupy Wall Street’ in Manhattan, New York, a protest against the “corrosive power of major banks and multinational corporations [and] the richest 1% of people that are writing the rules of an unfair global economy”.¹⁷⁶ The protests spread around the world and by October, camps had been set up in six New Zealand cities,¹⁷⁷ including one in a small section of Hagley Park. Numbers were not high at the Christchurch camp and the atmosphere was relatively low-key with none of the violent protests or arrests seen elsewhere.¹⁷⁸ Palmer had performed at other Occupy sites around the world, and wanted to support the cause and the protesters because she felt they needed a boost – something that was true about the city as a whole. Although ostensibly a fundraising event, the Dresden Dolls concert later that evening was as

¹⁷³ Amanda Palmer, “Playing the Violent Femmes & Meeting PJ,” 24 Jan 2012, <http://blog.amandapalmer.net/playing-the-violent-femmes-meeting-pj/>.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ “Artist backs protesters,” *Press*, 20 Jan 2012, A2.

¹⁷⁶ “About,” Occupy Wall Street, n.d. ca. 2011, <http://occupywallst.org/about/>.

¹⁷⁷ “‘Occupy’ movement reaches New Zealand,” *Herald*, 15 Oct 2011, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10759149.

¹⁷⁸ Nicole Mathewson, “Occupy Christchurch marks 100 days,” *Press*, 24 Jan 2012, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/6302070/Occupy-Christchurch-marks-100-days>.

much about raising the roof as it was about raising funds, about boosting the spirit as well as the coffers. Palmer described the audience at the Aurora Centre as having a “ghostly restlessness... but they seem[ed] to come alive fast. And good lord, they need laughter, energy and escape more than anyone around here”.¹⁷⁹ Living in a rubble-strewn wasteland does indeed make any escape – even a temporary, musically-inspired one – something to treasure.

One artist who did experience the full, violent impact of the Christchurch earthquake is Will Martin – a Wellington-born, Los Angeles-based operatic tenor who became the youngest man to top the UK Classical Charts with his debut album in 2008.¹⁸⁰ Martin was booked to perform for the first time in Christchurch at the Isaac Theatre Royal in late February and had already arrived in the city. On February 22nd, he made an early finish to an interview at the local television station, CTV, in order to have lunch with a former teacher, now headmaster at Medbury School.¹⁸¹ This decision meant he was not in the CTV building when it collapsed, killing 115 people. Martin kept a promise he made that day, and returned to the city in October 2011 to perform a fundraising concert at Medbury School, with proceeds going to the Red Cross Earthquake Appeal.¹⁸²

While most fundraising events gave their donations to the two highest-profile funds – the Red Cross Earthquake Appeal and the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal – several artists selected specific causes or organisations to support. Irish singer, Mary Coughlan, was originally booked to perform as part of the Jazz and Blues Festival in May 2011 but, like most events scheduled around that time, the festival was cancelled due to the general levels of damage and ongoing earthquakes. Coughlan instead agreed to perform, without payment, for a fundraising concert in April 2011, with all

¹⁷⁹ Palmer, “Playing the Violent Femmes & Meeting PJ” .

¹⁸⁰ “Profile,” Will Martin, n.d. ca. 2010 <http://www.willmartin.co.nz/profile>.

¹⁸¹ Charley Mann, “RWC singer fulfills pledge,” *Press*, 27 Oct 2011, A3.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

proceeds going to the Christchurch City Mission. The sold-out event at the Aurora Centre raised over \$10,000 through ticket sales, and audience members were also asked to bring non-perishable food items so the Mission's bank balance and cupboards could both be replenished in a time of great need.¹⁸³

Some artists returned to their hometown to perform in support of their communities. Former choirboy, James Reid, took to the stage at his old school in November 2011 for a concert to raise funds for the restoration of Christ Church Cathedral. The Christ's College school hall heard rock songs with a classical twist and a few rocky hymns as the Cathedral Choir teamed up with Reid's band, the Feelers.¹⁸⁴ The Feelers formed in Christchurch in 1993, not long after Reid left school, and over a fifteen year period the multi award-winning band produced four number-one albums in a row – a New Zealand record.¹⁸⁵ Reid, who has fond memories of his time in the Christ Church Cathedral choir, considers the Cathedral to be “the heart of our city and it seems fitting that through music we can help to rebuild it”.¹⁸⁶ Tickets for the event ranged from \$30 for school students to \$60 for a VIP experience, which included the chance to mingle with the band and choir after the concert.¹⁸⁷ However, while it appears there is a will, there is not yet a way – five years after the Cathedral was damaged, the Anglican church and heritage advocates are still at loggerheads over whether to demolish and rebuild, or stabilise and repair the iconic building.¹⁸⁸

Although rebuild progress in some areas has been slow, there are some successful building projects that have enjoyed musical support. Flight of the

¹⁸³ Vicki Anderson, “Coughlan sings for the needy's supper,” *Press*, 29 Apr 2011, A6

¹⁸⁴ “Once more, choristers, with Feelers,” *Press*, 7 Nov 2011, A8; ““The Feelers” in concert – with Cathedral Choir,” Cathedral Grammar, <http://www.cathedralgrammar.school.nz/news/6521-the-feelers-in-concert-with-cathedral-choir>.

¹⁸⁵ “The Band,” The Feelers, n.d. ca. 2014, <http://thefeelers.co.nz/theband>.

¹⁸⁶ ““The Feelers” in concert”.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁸ Michael Wright, “Anglican Church to consider reinstating Christ Church Cathedral,” *Press*, 23 Dec 2015, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/business/the-rebuild/75408052/Anglican-Church-to-consider-reinstating-Christ-Church-Cathedral>.

Conchords (FotC) threw their Grammy Award-winning weight behind a children's respite care centre and a grand old theatre. More than 9000 people attended the FotC concert at the CBS Arena in June 2012, and profits were split between the Cholmondeley Children's Centre in Governor's Bay and the Isaac Theatre Royal in the central city.¹⁸⁹ The original Cholmondeley homestead, that housed over 25,000 local children over the course of 86 years, was demolished after the earthquakes rendered it structurally unsafe.¹⁹⁰ After nearly four years operating from temporary premises, Cholmondeley returned home to Governor's Bay and a brand new, purpose-built facility in October 2015.¹⁹¹ The Isaac Theatre Royal, built in 1908 with a French Renaissance-style interior, was saved from complete collapse by earthquake strengthening work carried out in 1999/2000.¹⁹² However, damage was extensive and the theatre was carefully deconstructed and then rebuilt with all its key heritage features repaired and reinstated before re-opening in November 2014.

Christchurch musicians have been faced with many obstacles since the earthquakes, with a lot of former venues and rehearsal spaces either damaged or demolished. An approach to Billy Bragg's management company was made by Jeff Fulton, of the Christchurch Music Industry Trust (CHART), which led to a fundraising concert at the Aurora Centre in October 2012. Funds were donated to CHART's Beatbox project,¹⁹³ a box-like, modular rehearsal space for Christchurch musicians, and a major construction project for a small organisation. British folk/punk singer-songwriter, Billy Bragg, who has been a regular visitor to these shores over his 30-year career, was in the early stages of organising a New Zealand tour when the

¹⁸⁹ "Business time at last for Canty fans," *Press*, 27 Jun 2012, A1.

¹⁹⁰ Georgina Stylianou, "'Cracked' children's home set to fall," *Press*, 21 Nov 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/christchurch-earthquake-2011/6002389/Cracked-childrens-home-set-to-fall>.

¹⁹¹ Jody O'Callaghan, "Cholmondeley Children's Centre returns home to Governor's Bay," 9 Oct 2015, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/72876844/Cholmondeley-Childrens-Centre-returns-home-to-Governors-Bay>.

¹⁹² "Theatre History, 2011 Earthquakes," Isaac Theatre Royal, n.d. ca 2012

¹⁹³ Vicki Anderson, "Bragging Rights," *Press*, 10 Aug 2012, sec. GO 11

request came through and said the timing could not have been better.¹⁹⁴ The difficulties of the post-quake music scene quickly became apparent for Bragg when trying to find a suitable venue for his show, but he said he preferred to come do a gig and “actually connect with the community in a deeper way [rather] than just sending a cheque”.¹⁹⁵ Bragg’s eventual choice of venue, the 700-seat Aurora Centre at Burnside High School, has been heavily booked since the earthquakes as it was one of the few functional performance venues in the city for quite some time.

Some musicians took a very hands-on approach to fundraising after the earthquakes, with one musical Christchurch family creating, touring with, and finally auctioning some specially made instruments. The Heart Strings guitar project created beauty out of destruction by using timber from some of Christchurch’s destroyed historic buildings to create seven unique guitars, each named after the main building source. Hand-crafted by Bruce Pickering, with help from his son, Jason, the guitars’ contours represent the rivers of the city and the jarring changes to the landscape, while also honouring the city’s lost heritage.¹⁹⁶ The Heart Strings guitars were taken on an acoustic tour of New Zealand with Christchurch musician and former *Stars in their Eyes* winner, Mandy Pickering, before being displayed at Te Papa (the national museum in Wellington) and then auctioned.¹⁹⁷ Jason and Mandy Pickering lost their home to the earthquakes and created the Heart Strings project as a positive way to help support the rebuilding of Christchurch’s music and arts communities,¹⁹⁸ with the money raised at auction to be managed and distributed by Creative New Zealand.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ “Lindon Puffin vs Billy Bragg [extended version],” *NZ Musician* Aug/Sept 2012, http://www.nzmusician.co.nz/index.php/ps_pagename/article/pi_articleid/2892/Lindon-Puffin-vs-Billy-Bragg-extended-version.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Vicki Anderson, “Sweet sounds keep memories of lost buildings alive,” *Press*, 5 Dec 2011, A4.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, “Guitars tug at heart strings,” *Press*, 9 Feb 2012, A5.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, “Touch your Heart Strings,” *Press*, 20 Jan 2012, sec. GO 9.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, “Guitars tug at heart strings”.

Personal connections between internationally-acclaimed musicians and those directly involved with the situation in Christchurch made for some uplifting musical moments. In the quest to design a new campus, the inner-city secondary school, Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti,²⁰⁰ engaged with international organisation, Architecture for Humanity.²⁰¹ The design group has connections with Grammy Award-winning artist, Imogen Heap, and she agreed to take time out of an international tour in April 2011 to perform a fundraising concert for the school, in Christchurch. A festival in Auckland she had been due to play at was cancelled and Heap felt that “Christchurch could probably do with a little musical distraction”.²⁰² Her intimate solo performance at the Aurora Centre was described as a magical example of how the power of music can overcome hard times, providing the opportunity “to crack smiles rather than concrete, to transform shaking into rocking, and, most importantly of all, to wring meaning and hope from tragedy and heartache”.²⁰³ The school has been operating from a split campus in different suburbs but recently secured a central city site and hoped to have the new building operational for the 2017 school year.²⁰⁴ However, negotiations with the developer were not successfully concluded, and the school is now back to the drawing board, looking for a new site.²⁰⁵ The design and build process is estimated to take at least two years, which means that it will be at least 2018 before the school is back in its original neighbourhood.

There was also magic and emotion aplenty when opera superstar, Placido Domingo, took to the stage of the CBS Canterbury Arena. Domingo cancelled a

²⁰⁰ After merging with primary school, Discovery One, the combined school is now known as Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery.

²⁰¹ Vicki Anderson, “Heap to perform,” *Press*, 23 Apr 2011, A11.

²⁰² Quoted in “Songs for Christchurch,” *Press*, 5 Oct 2012, sec. GO 12.

²⁰³ Steve Carter, “Earthquake benefit brings out artistic excellence,” *Press*, 28 Apr 2011, A3.

²⁰⁴ Jody O’Callaghan, “Urban Christchurch school returns to the CBD,” *Press*, 11 Sep 2015, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/71989095/urban-christchurch-school-returns-to-the-cbd.html>.

²⁰⁵ Jody O’Callaghan and Liz McDonald, “New central Christchurch site for merger school Ao Tawhiti falls through,” *Press*, 17 Feb 2016, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/76973958/new-central-christchurch-site-for-merger-school-ao-tawhiti-falls-through.html>

previous engagement and agreed to perform for the city as he had personal experience with the ravages of disaster, losing four family members in the 1985 Mexico City earthquake.²⁰⁶ There were personal links to Christchurch too – Domingo is the patron of Christchurch-based Southern Opera, a company founded by long-term friend and former singing colleague, Christopher Doig. In October 2011, Domingo performed alongside Welsh mezzo-soprano, Katherine Jenkins, to raise funds for two Christchurch artistic institutions, the Court Theatre (the city’s only professional theatre company) and the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra (CSO).²⁰⁷ However, the CSO was unable to perform in its own benefit concert, having already confirmed a tour to Japan for Asia Orchestra Week when the Domingo concert was announced in August.²⁰⁸ With the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO) also unavailable due to prior commitments, Doig turned to the NZSO’s National Youth Orchestra (NYO), whose members (aged between 13 and late-20s) had to gain permission from parents and educators to assemble and rehearse during school and university term time.²⁰⁹

At a rehearsal on the afternoon of the concert, Doig was emotional as he described how important it was “to have a hero here reinvesting in the spirit of this city”. In reply, Domingo said that he wished he was here for a normal concert but was happy that he could, in some way, “help to ease the pain and... make beautiful music and to try for a little while to [help people] forget”.²¹⁰ While the sentiment was most likely being expressed to the wider city, those would prove to be particularly poignant words for Doig – whose invitation to perform Domingo had accepted. Eschewing a more comfortable (but more removed) seat in a corporate box, Doig was seated in the front row at the concert, looking proud but frail as he received a standing ovation from those in attendance. The concert raised more than \$300,000 for the CSO and the Court

²⁰⁶ Christopher Moore, “Operatic superstar to perform for city,” *Press*, 17 Aug 2011, A1.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, “Singing still about passion for caring Domingo,” *Press*, 1 Oct 2011, A9.

²⁰⁸ “Youth orchestra plays vital role,” *Press*, 18 Aug 2011, A2.

²⁰⁹ Keith Lynch and Christopher Moore, “Young musicians stun opera legend,” *Press*, 6 Oct 2011, A1.

²¹⁰ Quoted in Lynch and Moore, “Young musicians stun opera legend”.

Theatre, and no doubt ‘eased the pain’ for many of the over 8,000 in attendance – including Doig, who by then was riddled with tumours from terminal stage four bowel cancer.²¹¹ Attending the concert he helped create would be Doig’s final public act: he died one week later.

By far the biggest musical event organised for Christchurch earthquake relief was also one of the first. Created in response to the initial earthquake in September 2010, *Band Together* was conceived by Jason Kerrison, lead singer of the band, OpShop, who grew up in Christchurch and wanted to do something positive for the city.²¹² Kerrison, along with event promoter, Paul Ellis, put the event together in just seven weeks, organising more than 30 acts to perform at a free concert in Christchurch’s Hagley Park.²¹³

Many of the performers involved with *Band Together* live, or previously lived, in the city: 1960s pop icons Ray Columbus and Dinah Lee both grew up in Christchurch; rock bands OpShop, the Dukes, Clap Clap Riot, and the Feelers all formed in Christchurch; and the bill also included several locally-based acts like Anika Moa, the Bats, the Eastern, and the Exponents, who re-formed especially for the concert.²¹⁴ Other artists had connections to the city through friends or family, or just wanted to help the only way they knew how – by performing. There was a wide range of music on offer that day which provided something for everyone, from alt-country to pop, electronica to hip hop. There was also a kapa haka group, a dance troupe, an opera star, and some interesting collaborations, such as then-Mayor, Bob Parker, who joined the Bats on rhythm guitar for their classic song, *North by North*.

²¹¹ “Cancer is just another project for Doig,” *Press*, 6 Jun 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/5103360/Cancer-is-just-another-project-for-Doig>.

²¹² “Jason Kerrison,” *Press*, 29 Mar 2014, sec. YW 15.

²¹³ Vicki Anderson, “Band Together,” *Press*, 25 Oct 2010, supplemental 1.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, “The bands,” *Press*, 23 Oct 2010, supplemental E4.



3: Band Together, Hagley Park (October 2010)

The free, nine hour event was attended by approximately 140,000 people,²¹⁵ and there were many more watching on TV3 thanks to funding from the government broadcast funding agency, New Zealand on Air (NZoA).²¹⁶ This broadcast, the live web-streaming on the TV3 website, and the simulcast on More FM, enabled the rest of New Zealand to enjoy the concert and prompted them to donate money to the cause through the Red Cross. Although, as Kerrison says, “it wasn’t about the money, rather about making sure [Christchurch] people had time to forget their worries”.²¹⁷ For singer, Dane Rumble, the “gig was all about giving something back,” and he thought it was interesting how smoothly everything came together when money was taken out of the equation.²¹⁸ Everybody involved, including equipment suppliers, technicians, and stage crew, all donated their time and efforts, and their considerable expertise, to ensure this event was a success for a city that desperately needed entertaining.

There is a long history in Christchurch of holding well-attended, free public concerts in this section of North Hagley Park. The Christchurch City Council (CCC)

²¹⁵ Ibid., “Band Together”.

²¹⁶ NZ on Air, “You can’t stop the music,” no date, <http://www.nzonair.govt.nz/features/christchurch-on-screen-and-in-song/you-cant-stop-the-music/>.

²¹⁷ Quoted in “Jason Kerrison,” *Press*, sec. YW 15.

²¹⁸ Quoted in Anderson, “Band Together”.

has been running its popular Summertimes festival since 1983, and many events take place in the exact spot where *Band Together* was held. Summertimes often attracts crowds of more than 120,000 to its closing event, Classical Sparks,²¹⁹ which features the CSO and a large fireworks finale. However, knowing this did not make planning the event any less stressful for Kerrison, who sat by himself for over half an hour in Hagley Park the night beforehand, wondering if anyone would even turn up.²²⁰ Having watched the event grow from an idea to an email conversation to “the biggest setup the council had ever been involved with,” was humbling for Kerrison, who said the efforts of all those involved was overwhelming.²²¹ Kerrison, who has been called “the Bono of Band Together,”²²² was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2011 Queen’s Birthday honours for services to music, in recognition of both his music career and his role in organising this successful event.²²³

As with other large-scale disaster benefit concerts, a local act was chosen to close the show. The band formerly known as the Dance Exponents played their first gig at the Hillsborough Hotel in Christchurch in 1981, and quickly became local favourites – not just in Christchurch but around the country.²²⁴ Famous for what Sweetman describes as the “question-mark songs,”²²⁵ such as *Who Loves Who the Most?*, *Why Does Love do This to Me?*, and *What Ever Happened to Tracey?*, the

²¹⁹ “Sparks,” Christchurch City Libraries, n.d. ca. 2016, <http://my.christchurchcitylibraries.com/classical-sparks/>.

²²⁰ Anderson, “Band Together”.

²²¹ “100,000 band together for earthquake relief,” *Press*, 23 Oct 2010, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/music/4267535/100-000-band-together-for-earthquake-relief>.

²²² Anderson, “The Bands”.

²²³ “Queen’s Birthday Honours for 5 Knights and 2 Dames,” *RadioNZ*, 6 Jun 2011, <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/77043/queen-s-birthday-honours-for-5-knights-and-2-dames>.

²²⁴ Shane Gilchrist, “Luck still holding out,” *Daily Times (Otago)*, 24 Mar, 2012, <http://www.odt.co.nz/entertainment/music/202469/luck-still-holding-out>.

²²⁵ Simon Sweetman, “New Zealand’s Best Songwriter,” 18 Feb, 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/blogs/blog-on-the-tracks/4672532/New-Zealands-best-songwriter>.

Exponents also penned *Christchurch (In Cashel St I Wait)*, which was probably the best-known song from or about the city prior to the arrival of Scribe.²²⁶

The Exponents chose *Christchurch (In Cashel St I Wait)* as their final number, which saw every musician join them on stage and the crowd get to their feet, singing along with gusto. A local favourite since its release in 1985, the verses may have been a bit of a mumble for some, but the chorus rang out loud and clear across the park:

*Christchurch,
In Cashel Street I wait,
Together we will be,
Together, together, together,
One day, one day, one day,
One day, one day, one daaaaaay!*²²⁷

At that moment, part of an impromptu community sing-along of over 100,000 people, the crowd was filled with hope and faith that those words would continue ringing true. Life would go on, we would gather together in Cashel Street and wait for normality to return.

Lead singer, Jordan Luck, said playing that particular song at the *Band Together* concert “seemed to bring a happiness, a positivity, a unity to [those] gathered”.²²⁸ For many of those in attendance, it was rather like being at a gig in the band’s 80s heyday because, then as now, “the crowd always knew when it was their time to sing,”²²⁹ and did so at the top of their lungs. Bassist, Dave Gent, admitted that even though the song is usually not very enjoyable to play due to its demanding, metronomic rhythm, it was quite an emotional experience to perform it at *Band Together*, where the lyrics had added meaning given the circumstances.²³⁰ Later the

²²⁶ Mitchell, “Flat City Sounds,” 189.

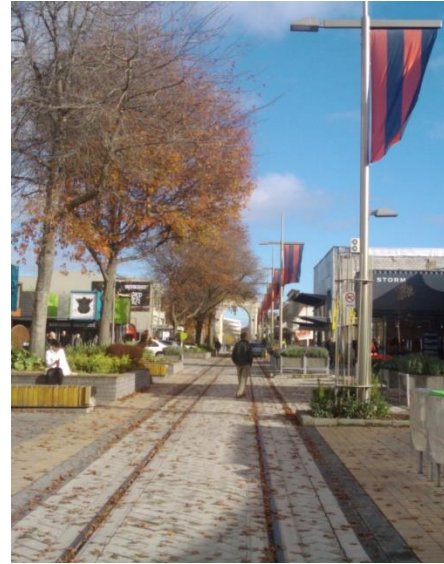
²²⁷ David Gent, Brian Jones, and Jordan Luck, “Christchurch (In Cashel St. I wait),” *Expectations* [album], 1985, Mushroom Records (lyrics written as sung).

²²⁸ Quoted in Russell Baillie, “The Exponents: 10 Best Music Moments,” *Herald*, 19 Nov, 2015, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=11547842.

²²⁹ Mark Bell, “The Exponents – The Insider’s Guide to Luck,” *NZ Musician*, Dec/Jan 2006, http://www.nzmusician.co.nz/index.php/ps_pagename/article/pi_articleid/733.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

following year, the opening of the Re:Start container mall added an extra layer of poignancy to the song lyrics. Denied access to most of the city's CBD, that one small part of Cashel Street now populated with colourful shipping containers was almost the only place in central Christchurch where people *could* wait.



4 (above left): Waiting (for progress) in Cashel Street, looking east (May 2012)
5 (above right): Waiting (for the crowds) in Cashel Street, looking west (May 2012)

The enormity of the task Kerrison and Ellis achieved with *Band Together* was highlighted after the February earthquake, a time when many multi-artist fundraising concerts were being organised around the country. One such concert promoted itself as “Auckland’s largest Christchurch Earthquake Benefit Concert”, and was to be held at the ASB Showgrounds.²³¹ Organiser, John Paul Moss, of events company, The Funk Factory, said there had been a groundswell of support in the Auckland music industry and “everybody wants to come together and put on the highest quality event with the sole purpose of raising funds” for the people of Christchurch.²³² The event started as a Facebook page that attracted 70,000 hits and 15,000 ‘confirmed’ attendees, and Moss had secured some event elements at no cost, such as the venue and security services. The benefit concert was to be held on five main stages and the

²³¹ “Press Release: Auckland’s largest Christchurch Earthquake Benefit Concert,” *Scoop*, 11 Mar 2011, <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU1103/S00257/aucklands-largest-christchurch-earthquake-benefit-concert.htm>.

²³² *Ibid.*

first line-up announcement featured 48 artists including King Kapisi and Annie Crummer, with promises of big headline acts to follow.

This benefit concert was planned like a large-scale music festival complete with state-of-the-art lighting rig, lasers, a circus with more than 30 performers and international market stalls. There were corporate event partners, a website, and a multi-media promotional campaign was supposedly in place. The first round of tickets went on sale for \$40 and the press release hinted that gate sales would be twice that amount, even though many of the listed acts were relative unknowns. No doubt the organisers were encouraged by the success of the Band Together concert, the level of online interest, and the donation of some key services, but a traditional approach to event management and an apparent focus on money seem to have come at a cost. Despite the initial optimism, ticket sales did not meet expectations and just days before it was due to take place, the concert was cancelled. Moss said “the event was at a risk of making a loss instead of raising money,”²³³ and admitted the project may have been too ambitious for the timeframe involved. Ultimately, the event was attempting to be too much for too many – the scale, processes, and ticket prices were more like those of a major festival with international headliners and months of lead-in rather than a charity event with many lesser-known bands and a tight, three to four week timeframe.

In Christchurch, during the days immediately after the February 22nd earthquake, Adam McGrath and Jess Shanks from The Eastern, along with a number of fellow Lyttelton-based musicians including Lindon Puffin, Delaney Davidson and Marlon Williams, took a completely different approach to that of the large-scale events being staged elsewhere. In both Lyttelton and Christchurch, where many buildings were damaged, destroyed, or simply untrustworthy, this band of minstrels

²³³ Quoted in “Christchurch Earthquake Benefit Concert in Auckland Cancelled,” *Amplifier*, no date, www.amplifier.co.nz/news/68821/christchurch-earthquake-benefit-concert-in-auckland-cancelled.html.

would get together to play on street corners and in suburban parks. As McGrath recalls, “We just wanted to play music, you know? That’s what we do, that’s our work. If you’re a builder, you build and we’re players, and we play”.²³⁴ McGrath would have you believe that “musicians are mostly useless, most of the time,”²³⁵ and certainly no good to anyone with a shovel or hammer in their hands, but what they did have to offer was their music. So they played anywhere and everywhere – backyards, parks, private residences – seeking only enough donations to cover the cost of diesel for the mini generator that powered their small amplifier.



6: The Eastern & friends play for the crowd at St. Albans Park (March 2011)

Piles of drying liquefaction can be seen in the foreground

Releases and remixes

In order to help with rebuilding their community, this same group of musicians then gathered together their friends and a few songs – one or two each, some old and some new – and set about making a fundraising album. This was easier said than done as their usual recording studios had been lost to the quakes and many of the musicians were without vital gear or instruments. Ben Edwards, who ran The Sitting Room studio in Lyttelton, had to borrow recording equipment which was then

²³⁴ Quoted in Vavasour, “Entertaining Shakeytown”.

²³⁵ Ibid.

set up in McGrath's lounge,²³⁶ where most of the album's songs were recorded. Lindon Puffin recorded his two songs for the album in a friend's garden shed, on gear borrowed from the Rock Shop.²³⁷ In a case of triumph over adversity, the self-titled Harbour Union album was released at the reopening of Lyttelton's Wunderbar at the end of April 2011, and sold enough CDs at various gigs to make the New Zealand top-20 album charts in May.²³⁸ The bands and performers involved – The Eastern, Delaney Davidson, Lindon Puffin, Unfaithful Ways, Tiny Lies, Al Park, and Runaround Sue – act as a collective when it comes to disbursing the money raised, and choose which projects or events benefit from the album sales. Most are grass roots projects or small scale events, for example, the first \$400 raised went on providing bumper cars for children at the Christchurch City Mission's family fun day, where the bands also performed.²³⁹

This loose coalition of Lyttelton-based musicians then organised a national tour which kicked off with a fundraising concert at the Aurora Centre in September 2011. The main beneficiary was the Rise Up Stacey Trust,²⁴⁰ which was formed to help former *Christchurch Press* employee, Stacey Herbert, who had both legs amputated after being trapped in the *Press* building which collapsed in the February 22nd earthquake.²⁴¹ Despite a mix-up over the capacity of the venue which saw the 'sold out' tag appear prematurely on the event's online booking page,²⁴² several hundred people attended the concert, and most either bought the album or dropped coins in the many buckets to raise over \$2000 for Herbert's rehabilitation.²⁴³ Along with charity concerts and donation of profits from merchandise sales, the release of fundraising songs and albums was another key aspect of the music community's

²³⁶ Vicki Anderson, "Delight as albums leap on to charts," *Press*, 7 May 2011, A17.

²³⁷ Vavasour, "Entertaining Shakeytown".

²³⁸ Anderson, "Delight as albums leap on to charts".

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ James Borrowdale, "Lyttelton in harmony," *Press*, 16 Sep 2011, sec. Go 12.

²⁴¹ Vicki Anderson, "Chch musicians in finals," *Press*, 8 Sep 2011, A2.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Borrowdale, "Lyttelton in harmony".

efforts to help the city and people of Christchurch – and the Harbour Union album was first off the blocks. This rapid response – a mere six weeks after the February 22nd earthquake – is all the more impressive considering the circumstances and environment in which the album was made.

In July 2011, the Canterbury Development Corporation (CDC), the economic development agency of the CCC, launched the ‘Love Christchurch’ campaign to encourage support for local businesses and instil hope among city residents. The billboards, posters and advertising featured seven local business people and community leaders showing their support for the city.²⁴⁴ In October the same year, a compilation of songs by Canterbury artists, also called ‘Love Christchurch’ and utilising the same angular love-heart and typography as the CDC campaign, was released with the aim of raising funds to help rebuild facilities for Christchurch musicians.²⁴⁵ Spearheaded by the New Zealand Music Commission, in association with CHART and the REAL NZ Festival, and supported by the NZ2011 Lottery Fund, the CD was initially available at Auckland’s Queens Wharf and The Cloud – two of the official Rugby World Cup (RWC) public venues, or ‘fanzones’. CHART Chairman, Neil Cox, said the timing and choice of launch venue “aims to give our unique voice a platform to showcase itself to the world during this massive festival of sport”.²⁴⁶ The CD featured 19 tracks donated by Christchurch acts and could be purchased for a donation of \$10, \$15, or \$20 a copy, initially only at the two Auckland RWC venues and then online at music retailer, Amplifier.co.nz.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ “Love Christchurch campaign to give hope,” *Sunday News*, 3 Jul 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sunday-news/latest-edition/5224648/Love-Christchurch-campaign-to-give-hope>.

²⁴⁵ NZ Music Commission, “Love Christchurch – a seismic selection of music from Christchurch,” 7 Oct 2011, <http://nzmusic.org.nz/news/artist/love-christchurch-a-seismic-selection-of-music-fro/>.

²⁴⁶ Quoted in *ibid*.

²⁴⁷ Vicki Anderson, “Music goes online to raise funds for rehearsal space,” *Press*, 13 Oct 2011, A9.

The city of Christchurch was to have hosted seven RWC tournament matches but damage to the city's stadium and a lack of accommodation options saw the five pool games and two quarter-finals re-allocated to other cities.²⁴⁸ Even though there were to be no RWC games in the city, Christchurch musician, David Thorpe, wanted to encourage the city's support for the tournament and the All Blacks. Under the band name, The Swarm, Thorpe and friends recorded what they described as a 'morale-boosting' song, *Back the Blacks*, with 75 percent of profits being donated to the Christchurch Mayoral Quake fund.²⁴⁹ The Swarm were invited to perform the song at the Christchurch RWC fanzone in Hagley Park on the opening day of the tournament, and also performed several lunchtime concerts at local schools.²⁵⁰

A few weeks after the February 22nd earthquake, a discussion among a group of people gathered in Melbourne led to the production of a 21-track fundraising album, *Songs for Christchurch*.²⁵¹ A collective of people from Melbourne, San Francisco, Wellington and Christchurch, including members of Architecture for Humanity and Free Range Press, worked on the project for months, gathering songs and support.²⁵² Musician, Jessie Moss, who was part of the organising team, says that fundraising albums like this provide a quick and meaningful way for those who live outside the city to show support for the city's struggle. The project had three main goals: "to raise money for community projects in Christchurch, to promote Christchurch and New Zealand artists to overseas audiences and to put on a free live concert in Christchurch's CBD".²⁵³ Royalties were to be shared between four community-focused organisations: Architecture for Humanity (in particular, the

²⁴⁸ Marcus Wild, "Christchurch loses Rugby World Cup games," 16 Mar 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/rugby-world-cup/4773298/Christchurch-loses-Rugby-World-Cup-games>.

²⁴⁹ Vicki Anderson, "Chch musos launch song backing All Blacks bid for Cup," *Press*, 11 Aug 2011, A2.

²⁵⁰ Georgina Stylianou, "Band boosting morale," *Press*, 24 Sep 2011, A7.

²⁵¹ Anderson, "Songs for Christchurch".

²⁵² *Ibid.*; "Songs for Christchurch," Project Freerange, n.d. ca. 2013, <http://www.projectfreerange.com/songs-for-christchurch/>.

²⁵³ Vicki Anderson, "Songs for Christchurch launch," 22 Feb 2013, sec. GO 10.

rebuild of Ao Tawhiti), Gap Filler, Life in Vacant Spaces (LiVS), and the Festival of Transitional Architecture (FESTA).²⁵⁴ The production costs were raised through a fundraising campaign on crowdfunding site, PledgeMe, with donations totalling \$7700. Project director, Barnaby Bennett, estimated that the artists involved had donated music worth about \$250,000 in intellectual copyrights, and many also donated items for pledge rewards.²⁵⁵

Songs for Christchurch was released in 2013, with a concert in Christchurch's Re:START mall²⁵⁶ on the second anniversary of the February 22nd earthquake. Alongside tracks from New Zealand artists like the Black Seeds, Tim Finn, FotC, Ladi6, the Eastern, and Delaney Davidson, the album also features international stars Imogen Heap and Amanda Palmer. As The Eastern's Adam McGrath puts it: "You can't rely on the power structures... you can't necessarily rely on the government, on the insurance companies... but you can rely on your fellow humans".²⁵⁷ It seems you can definitely rely on musicians to step up when disaster relief is on the agenda. In his album review of *Songs for Christchurch*, Mike Alexander notes that musicians are becoming the "go-to people when there is a desperate need to raise awareness and money for a worthy cause," and that money spent on this album provides a better return than a Christchurch insurance policy.²⁵⁸ He goes on to suggest that insurance agencies could learn a considerable amount about goodwill and integrity from the musicians involved in this project,²⁵⁹ something that the many residents still locked in

²⁵⁴ Ibid.; "Songs for Christchurch," Project Freerange.

²⁵⁵ Anderson, "Songs for Christchurch".

²⁵⁶ Re:START is the popular shopping area constructed with shipping containers, in what was formerly known as City Mall in Cashel Street, in the central city.

²⁵⁷ Quoted in Anderson, "Songs for Christchurch".

²⁵⁸ Mike Alexander, "Album review: Songs for Christchurch – various," *Stuff*, 4 March 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/music/album-reviews/8378324/Album-review-Songs-for-Christchurch-Variou>.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

protracted battles with their insurance company or EQC²⁶⁰ would be likely to agree with.

Some artists were very quick to remix or re-release material in the name of earthquake relief. Christchurch hip hop artist, Maitreya, released an EP of remixes of his hometown anthem, *Chur to the Chur*,²⁶¹ featuring King Kapisi and Che Fu, on February 28th – a mere six days after the event.²⁶² This version of the song had been performed at the *Band Together* concert, and a video featuring footage from that performance was uploaded to You Tube on March 7th.²⁶³ All proceeds from sales of the song on iTunes, Bandcamp, and Amplifier went to the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal.

Opshop's Jason Kerrison was heavily involved in organising the *Band Together* concert after the first earthquake but the destructive force of the February 22nd earthquake and the severe, ongoing aftershocks meant that staging a large-scale public event was not a viable option at this time. Opshop pledged to donate all profits from their most recent single, *Love Will Always Win*, to the Christchurch Earthquake Appeal.²⁶⁴ Opshop had been about to release the music video for the song but, given that the video contained shots of scared crowds running down city streets, the band decided to defer this out of respect for the people of Christchurch. Instead, they invited people to send them video clips of support for Christchurch in order to create a user-generated video for the song. A Vimeo group, 'Message for Christchurch,'²⁶⁵ was

²⁶⁰ EQC is the Earthquake Commission, a government agency that provides residential insurance cover for natural disasters. See www.eqc.govt.nz.

²⁶¹ 'Chur' is New Zealand slang for 'cheers' or 'cool' and also a shortening of Christchurch, hence 'Chur to the Chur'. See <http://robyngallagher.com/2007/07/03/che-che-bro-chur-mate/>.

²⁶² Maitreya, "Chur to the Chur (EP)," Bandcamp, n.d. ca. 2011, <https://maitreya.bandcamp.com/album/chur-to-the-chur-ep>.

²⁶³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-daXCgbh4ck>.

²⁶⁴ Che Baker, "Opshop's tribute to the people," *Press*, 5 Mar 2011, A9.

²⁶⁵ <http://www.vimeo.com/groups/messageforchristchurch>

created and film production company, Zoomslide, came on board.²⁶⁶ However, Kerrison's second foray into earthquake relief was not nearly as meaningful or successful as his first.

While it was a nice idea at the time, it seems that little effort went into promoting or following up on the crowd-sourced video concept. Kerrison wanted to include footage of Christchurch residents doing helpful, positive things for each other, such as "a barbeque for their neighbours without power, or students shovelling dirt".²⁶⁷ While these types of events were certainly happening around the city, filming them and then uploading the footage for a music video was not high on people's priority list at a time when many were without power. The request seems to have been quickly forgotten by most people including, it seems, by the band itself, for there is no record that this crowd-sourced video was ever made. There were only fourteen video files uploaded to the Vimeo group at the time (one of those being the song itself), and the only music video available online for the song is the original version.

In September 2011, the Bank of New Zealand (BNZ) announced it had partnered with Christchurch hip hop artist, Scribe, to remake his smash hit, *Not Many*, for charity.²⁶⁸ Diane Maxwell, Head of Brand and Corporate Affairs for BNZ, said the bank wanted to do something to celebrate resilience and support the spirit of the people of Christchurch.²⁶⁹ Back in 2003, *Not Many* debuted at number five on the New Zealand music charts, where it spent twelve weeks at number one and was crowned 'Single of the Year'.²⁷⁰ The punchy chorus heralded Scribe as a force to be reckoned with and the song created a massive imprint on New Zealand popular culture

²⁶⁶ "Opshop donate all sales of new single "Love will always win"," *Scoop*, 4 Mar 2011, <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU1103/S00094/opshop-donate-all-sales-of-new-single-love-will-alway-win.htm>.

²⁶⁷ Baker, "Opshop's tribute".

²⁶⁸ "Scribe takes hit remake into quake redzone," *Press*, 9 Sep 2011, A5.

²⁶⁹ BNZ, "Making of Not Many Cities," *YouTube* [video], 6 Sep 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krsvfkYsPzw>.

²⁷⁰ Simon Sweetman, *On Song* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2012), 164.

with the line: ‘*How many dudes you know roll like this? Not many, if any*’. As music critic, Simon Sweetman, explains, “the hook line of the chorus [is now] a conversational aside that is practically unavoidable when discussing amounts... The words ‘not many’ are now truck-and-trailer-ed with ‘if any’. If you do not say them, you are thinking them”.²⁷¹ Like many tracks on the album *The Crusader*, the song, *Not Many*, contains shout-outs (references) to the artist’s hometown and makes it clear he is proud of the people, his ‘hood and the Canterbury province.²⁷² The strong links between artist and hometown, and the fact it is an enduringly catchy song, made it ideal for a charity remake.

Reworded and reworked as *Not Many Cities*, the catchy chorus now welcomes people to Christchurch rather than *The Crusader* album and, instead of proclaiming the skills of the DJ, it casts the city as hero, asking: ‘*How many cities you know roll like this?*’.²⁷³ The line about bass vibrations shaking like an earthquake has been altered to pay homage to a city ‘*where the streets vibrate every night from the earthquake*’.²⁷⁴ The video was widely shared through social media, and entered the music charts at number 36,²⁷⁵ but not all reception was positive. Parts of the video were shot in the city’s Red Zone – the central business district that was cordoned off from public access due to safety concerns – which was a moving experience for Scribe, who had not been back to the city since burying a family member killed in the February earthquake.²⁷⁶ This special access proved a sticking point for some residents though, with letters to the editor and online commentary expressing frustration that

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 167.

²⁷² *Ibid.*; Tony Mitchell, “Flat city sounds redux: A musical ‘countercartography’ of Christchurch,” in *Home, Land and Sea*, ed. Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), 189; Kirsten Zemke, “New Zealand hip hop stands up,” in *Home, Land and Sea*, ed. Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (Auckland: Pearson, 2011), 106.

²⁷³ BNZ/Scribe, “Not Many Cities,” *YouTube* [video], 6 Sep 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRcCzdHzZUG>.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ “Not Many Cities – Scribe – Top 40 singles,” *music.net.nz*, Sep 2011, <http://www.muzic.net.nz/charts/s65313/scribe-not-many-cities>.

²⁷⁶ Paul Harper, “Scribe’s tribute to Christchurch’s resilience,” *Herald*, 8 Sep 2011, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10750116.

celebrities were allowed into the Red Zone to shoot a video while those directly affected were not allowed in to retrieve essential items from residences and business premises. Although promotional material and news stories described the song as a moving tribute that “celebrates the strength, the courage, the pride and the incredible spirit of the people of Christchurch,”²⁷⁷ critics were not as enamoured, with Sweetman calling it “well-meaning if not exactly well-realised”.²⁷⁸ While the remake did provide a much-loved anthem with another lease on life and the Christchurch Plunket Society with much-needed funds, the corporate element was never far from the surface.

In the ‘Making of’ video, BNZ brand expert, Diane Maxwell, states that the song and music video is “not about making an ad for the bank... we just wanted to get behind it”.²⁷⁹ Yet, the project was initiated by the BNZ, and the video featured some of the bank’s Christchurch clients like Canterbury Cheesemongers, NZ Wool Services, and the Court Theatre – who have all previously featured in BNZ promotional videos. The Canterbury Crusaders, part of the Super Rugby competition that BNZ is a major sponsor of, also feature in the music video, and the recipient of money from sales of the song on iTunes and Amplifier, Plunket, is also sponsored by BNZ. While none of this diminishes the good intentions behind the idea nor detracts from the sense of strength and optimism portrayed, it does flatten the vibe somewhat. With the video for *Not Many Cities* switching between Scribe travelling around the broken inner city on the back of a ute and lingering shots of carefully selected people, businesses, and places, at times it comes across like just another BNZ promotional video – albeit with more emotion and a better soundtrack than usual.

This was not the first time Scribe had reworked *Not Many* for the earthquake relief cause although, second time around, there was more at stake. In September 2010, three weeks after the first earthquake struck the city, Scribe performed

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Sweetman, *On Song*, 169.

²⁷⁹ Quoted in BNZ, “Making of...”

alongside fellow hip hop, rap, and R&B artists in a fundraising concert in Auckland called *I Love Christchurch*.²⁸⁰ For this occasion, his signature tune was tweaked just a little, with the line, ‘*It’s all good when you come to my hood*’, becoming ‘*It’s not good, an earthquake hit my hood*’.²⁸¹ However, by the time the BNZ remake was underway the following year, Scribe’s hometown was not the only thing that had taken a hit, as his public image had also been damaged, but in this case it was by his own actions.

When four of Scribe’s music awards appeared on the auction site, Trade Me, in January 2011, the artist was forced to admit to drug and alcohol addictions that lead to him pawning the trophies in October 2008.²⁸² With tongue firmly planted in cheek, TV3 demonstrate the ingrained nature of the song’s lyrics in the collective New Zealand psyche with their headline: “How many awards has Scribe got? Not many, if any”.²⁸³ The opportunity to remake his smash hit for this very public crisis provided a chance to distract people from his own personal crisis, and to help repair his damaged image along with his broken hometown. Sweetman describes *Not Many* as the song that was “both the making and breaking of Scribe... the high-water mark that he has, thus far, not been able to better”.²⁸⁴ On first release, both song and artist were confrontational, challenging the audience to sit up and take notice but with each subsequent reuse or repurpose they have lost much of their bravado and swagger.

²⁸⁰ Ali Ikram, “Scribe, Savage perform in ‘I Love Christchurch’ fundraiser,” 3News, 27 Sep 2010, <http://www.3news.co.nz/tvshows/nightline/scribe-savage-perform-in-i-love-christchurch-fundraiser-2010092722#axzz3x4YhiDVH>.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² Martin Van Beynen, “Scribe comes clean on his addictions,” *Press*, 29 Jan 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/music/4595976/Scribe-comes-clean-on-his-addictions>.

²⁸³ “How many awards has Scribe got? Not many, if any,” 3News, 20 Jan 2011, <http://www.3news.co.nz/entertainment/how-many-awards-has-scribe-got-not-manyif-any-2011012015#axzz3uov93Hc2>.

²⁸⁴ Sweetman, *On Song*, 169.

Conclusion

There are many different musical fundraising projects that have taken place for the benefit of Christchurch since the earthquakes began, and just as many reasons why the artists themselves got involved. While it is true there are often positive benefits for the artists' image or reputation, for the most part, this is not why musicians organise or get involved with these events and releases. Musicians are travellers, and will often find themselves in, near, or remembering the place where disaster has struck. Musicians are connected – with each other, with their fans, their crew, and the ancillary workers and industries that support and rely on their creative output – all of which increase the chance of a direct link to a disaster zone. There is often a genuine desire to do what they can to help the affected, and for most musicians, what they can do – from anywhere – is to play or provide music for the cause. Several 'A-list' international acts, and many local artists as well, donated possessions, their performance time, or existing tracks not just once, but many times, and assisted in a variety of ways with different disaster-related events and releases.

The wide range of fundraising events and charity releases held for the people of Christchurch show that 'charitainment' after disaster exists at many levels, and that telethons and superstars are only the tip of the iceberg. The sheer number of musical fundraisers held around the country in bars, pubs, and public parks, allowed musicians of all statures and levels of influence to contribute to the earthquake relief cause, often via the four high-profile charitable funds outlined earlier. When the events were held in the city itself, or when people from Christchurch travelled to see gigs in other parts of the country, there was an extra element to the relief provided. For people who are directly affected by a disaster, it is not always about the music or the money – it is more about the comfort, connection and distraction on offer, the sense of community, and some much-needed nourishment for the soul.

Chapter 5: Music as psychosocial salve

When considering the uses and benefits of music at any time, but especially after disaster, it pays to take a broad view. There are many, sometimes unexpected, ways in which identity, happiness, memory, and a person's sense of place and spatial awareness are affected by and connected with particular songs. This can be a deliberate action, in which people "engage in this appropriation process... knowing how certain music works on them from past experience. But at other times, music may take [them] unaware".²⁸⁵ The spontaneity of a magical musical moment can be a very emotional and sometimes healing thing to experience, and when that moment is shared, it can lead to a sense of *communitas* – an elusive concept that is difficult to achieve on command.

In good times and bad, music can be used to create or change a mood, and to occupy or recreate space. Often it does not seem to matter what the music is, as long as there is music of some kind. This section looks at the ways that, after disaster, the sharing of both live and recorded music offers a reason to gather with friends, to spend time with loved ones, and an opportunity to take part in what, at any other time, would have been a very normal and everyday activity. Attention then turns to the role of music in enhancing individual and community wellbeing, and the ways it is making a positive impact on the physical and mental landscape of the city. Two key organisations – *All Right?* and Gap Filler – and their musical activities are profiled, providing an account of two very different approaches to the use of music to improve community wellbeing.

Music and memory

Music provides a soundtrack to daily life, creating a map of meaning to the world around us, or presenting a reminder of the world as it once was. DeNora says that when people hear a song that was once heard in, and remains associated with, a

²⁸⁵ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 162.

particular time and place, it “provides a device for unfolding, for replaying, the temporal structure of that moment, [which] is why, for so many people, the past ‘comes alive’ to its soundtrack”.²⁸⁶ When a community is frequently and collectively casting their minds back to a time before a catastrophic change, a sense of community identity can be seen in the use of, and reaction to, particular songs. Music allows people to “locate themselves in different imaginary geographics at one and the same time,”²⁸⁷ creating spaces for people to retreat into, small ‘audiotopias’ that are “built, imagined, and sustained through sound, noise, and music”.²⁸⁸ The use of musical escape holes is prevalent after disaster, as many once-familiar spaces have changed beyond recognition or are no longer able to be physically visited, but can be easily imagined or remembered through music.

After the earthquakes started, and particularly after the February earthquake, musicians and residents were finding and reminding themselves of what had been lost through the words and images contained in music, video, and collective memory banks. For Lindon Puffin, many songs became “accidentally relevant” after the earthquakes, as a multitude of lyrics took on new significance in the face of disaster.²⁸⁹ The two songs Puffin re-recorded for the Harbour Union album, *Human Enough* and *Even Keel*, both contain references to locations and mental states that are simultaneously familiar yet altered, with extra layers of meaning now added to lyrics originally written in a very different time and place.

Human Enough:

*Look around, little town by the sea
Painted boats, duffle coats, lucky me [...]
And others would do the sensible thing
But you said, this is where we belong [...]
Between the weak and the strong
And I just hope we're human enough
To learn when to let go*

²⁸⁶ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 67.

²⁸⁷ Cohen, *Decline, Renewal and the City*, 93.

²⁸⁸ Kun, *Audiotopia*, 21.

²⁸⁹ Vavasour, *Entertaining Shakeytown*.

*And when to hold on...*²⁹⁰

Even Keel:

*It's the moment on your own
When everything speeds away
Leaving you in that place
Where the only thing left to say
Is that if only you knew then what you know now
Would it shake that dream where you were trying to run
But your legs won't move and help won't come...*²⁹¹

The happiness found in a small town, the tension between staying or going, the pain of letting go, the clarity of hindsight, and the fear of being trapped and helpless – all of these things existed before the earthquakes but have now been violently thrust to the surface and shown in stark relief. For those who experienced the physical and emotional upheaval of the near-continuous seismic activity between September 2011 and December 2012, the feelings and mental images inspired or recalled by those lyrics are very different now than when the songs were first written.

Sometimes it is the accompanying visual imagery of a song that takes on new significance. There are plenty of music videos that capture the Christchurch of decades past, including these, compiled by a local music blogger:²⁹² The Bats' *Block of Wood* and *Claudine*; The Shallows, *Suzanne Said*; Moana and the Moahunters, *Rebel in Me*; and All Fall Down's *Black Gratten*, which were all filmed in the 1980s or early '90s. These videos provide many 'flashback' moments to the city as it was twenty or thirty years ago. However, one post-earthquake release captures a moment in time which became significant only after the fact, creating an accidental musical time capsule. The song, *Space and Place*, was released in February 2013, but had

²⁹⁰ Lindon Puffin, "Human Enough," *Harbour Union* [album], 2011, Social End Product.

²⁹¹ Ibid., "Even Keel" *Harbour Union* [album], 2011, Social End Product.

²⁹² Paul 'Goodsort', "Re-Live the 'old' Christchurch in Music Videos," Mostly Within Human Hearing Range, 7 Nov 2011, <http://humanhearingrange.blogspot.co.nz/2011/11/re-live-old-christchurch-in-music.html>; and "More Music Videos Set in Pre-Quake(s) Christchurch," 3 Dec 2011, <http://humanhearingrange.blogspot.co.nz/2011/12/more-music-videos-set-in-pre-quakes.html>.

been recorded, and had the video filmed, not long before the earthquakes²⁹³. The song was inspired by the feelings experienced when returning home after a long absence, and celebrates the importance of the home town as “a place that knows you as well as you know it”.²⁹⁴ The chorus features the line, ‘*streets of common ground, I remember, I remember*,’²⁹⁵ but it is the video, showcasing many of the Christchurch places and spaces only recently lost to the earthquakes, that tugs at people’s heartstrings.

The video for *Space and Place* sweeps through the central city at night, with key heritage buildings like the Christ Church Cathedral, and the Catholic Basilica lit up against the night sky (both are still damaged and inaccessible). Producer and engineer, Rob Mayes, describes the video as “a love letter to something we all lost [with] the song and its lyrics [becoming] even more potent, poignant, and unexpectedly prescient post quake”.²⁹⁶ The Arts Centre features prominently in the footage, including the back alleys and archways that hosted all manner of night-time activities – sanctioned or otherwise – as does many people’s favourite hangout, the Dux de Lux (the Dux). While the repair and restoration of some parts of the Arts Centre is currently well advanced, the Student Union building that once housed this inner-city social institution is not slated for reopening until 2019,²⁹⁷ and whether the Dux will be welcomed back remains to be seen.

Remembering the Dux

The clash between the Arts Centre management and the owners of the Dux, who leased the building from the Arts Centre Trust, was indicative of disagreements

²⁹³ Vicki Anderson, “A Love Letter to Christchurch,” *Press*, 22 Feb 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/christchurch-music/8335491/A-love-letter-to-Christchurch>.

²⁹⁴ Anderson, “A Love Letter to Christchurch”.

²⁹⁵ Leigh Franklin, Rob Mayes, and Mark Roberts, *Space and Place*, Failsafe Records, Feb 2013, songsinthekey.bandcamp.com/.

²⁹⁶ Rob Mayes, “Songs in the Key – Space and Place,” *Failsafe Records*, Mar 2013, <http://www.failsaferecords.com/>.

²⁹⁷ “Rebuild and Restore,” Arts Centre, n.d. ca. 2016, <http://www.artscentre.org.nz/rebuild---restore.html>.

taking place all over the city between landlords and tenants, but this one was particularly bitter and public. The Dux occupied the sole mock-Tudor building on a corner of the former Canterbury College campus,²⁹⁸ now known as The Arts Centre, which is largely built in the same neo-Gothic style as Christ Church Cathedral. Built as a private residence, that corner building then became home to the College's Student Union, before being saved from demolition and transformed into the Dux de Lux – a bar, restaurant and music venue – in the late 1970s.

After the first earthquake in the early hours of Saturday 4th of September, the Dux was open by late morning but was forced to close again on the following Wednesday when a large aftershock caused visible damage to one of the chimneys.²⁹⁹ Engineers organised by the Arts Centre management inspected the building and deemed it too dangerous to occupy. The Dux organised their own engineers who disagreed with the original assessment, and after a quick and very public spat, the Dux was allowed to reopen, but with less than half of their usual footprint in operation.³⁰⁰ In February, it was very different. This time there was no quick reopening, and indeed, no question that the Dux was badly damaged but again, there were differences in opinion about the scope and cost of repairs.³⁰¹ In March 2011, the Arts Centre cancelled the leases of all its tenants – bar one – advising at the time that it would be up to four years before they could return to the site.³⁰² The only business permitted to remain was Canterbury Cheesemongers, who later featured in the BNZ/Scribe video, and operated from the newer (1960s) Registry Building that had been assessed as being safe to occupy.³⁰³

²⁹⁸ "Student Union," University of Canterbury, n.d.
http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/canterburycollege/building_blocks/union.shtml.

²⁹⁹ Jonny Pipe (producer), "A Flat City, Episode 11: The Venues," RDU, 2012,
<http://www.rdu.org.nz/feed/podcast/a-flat-city>.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ Charlie Gates, "Dux de Lux fights eviction," *Press*, 25 Mar, 2011, A7.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, "Centre evicts tenants, lays off staff," *Press*, 24 Mar, 2011, A3.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, "Wine bar joins eviction battle," *Press*, 31 Mar, 2011, A4.

Many musicians, including Opshop's Jason Kerrison, Salmonella Dub frontman, Andrew Penman, Anika Moa, and Lawrence Arabia, pledged their support for the Dux, describing the bar as "the city's common room" and "Christchurch's beating heart".³⁰⁴ These musicians are among the many who credit the Dux for giving them their first break, and consider it an irreplaceable part of the city's music scene that should be restored and re-established. By early June, letters to the Editor and articles about the issue were appearing in the city's newspaper on an almost daily basis, and there was a glimmer of hope that there would be some sort of resolution to the impasse. But then the earth roared again on the afternoon of June 13th, 2011, with aftershocks of M5.6 and M6.3³⁰⁵ striking the city just over an hour apart, after which there seemed to be little hope for a quick fix to anything. Despite many offers by Dux owner, Richard Sinke, to cover the cost of the damage, the Arts Centre management is adamant that repairs will proceed according to their plan, and are not entertaining any offers of targeted funding for any part of the heritage site.³⁰⁶ The Student Union building is one of the oldest in the Arts Centre complex, and will be one of the last to be repaired: current projections have it re-opening in 2019.³⁰⁷

In some ways, the Dux was a terrible live music venue: the building had never been designed for the task, and was forced to make best use of a poky layout in a pretty, but not terribly functional, heritage building. As manager, Ross Herrick, explains: "The Tavern Bar [where bands played], was never acoustically treated. We did what we could with what we had. The sound desk was never in the right place because it was underneath the bulkhead and it was to the side".³⁰⁸ But despite all its

³⁰⁴ Vicki Anderson, "Musicians sing praises in call for 'vital common room' to reopen," *Press*, 7 Jun, 2011, A8.

³⁰⁵ GNS Science, "Jun 13 2011 – Large earthquakes strike south-east of Christchurch," *GeoNet*, 17 Jun, 2011, <http://info.geonet.org.nz/display/quake/2011/06/13/Jun+13+2011+-+Large+earthquakes+strike+south-east+of+Christchurch>.

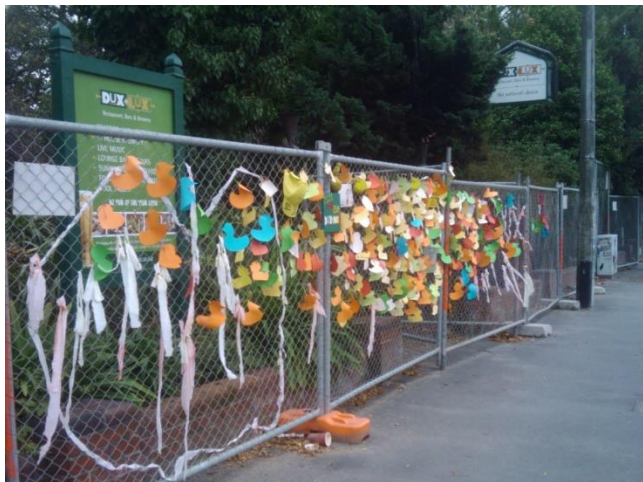
³⁰⁶ Charlie Gates, "Talks 'positive' but Dux reopening an unknown," *Press*, 4 Jun, 2011, A9.

³⁰⁷ "Rebuild and Restore," Arts Centre, n.d. ca. 2016, <http://www.artscentre.org.nz/rebuild---restore.html>.

³⁰⁸ Pipe, "A Flat City: The Venues".

physical flaws, the Dux was also a wonderful music venue: it was a bar that championed music and musicians, a place that became a second living room for many Christchurch music fans, and features in many memories and music videos.

A Facebook group, ‘Save our Dux,’ was created in early March, 2011, and quickly filled with messages and memories from around the world. Whereas most of the letters and articles in the newspaper focused on the repair stalemate, and so did discussion in the Facebook group, but often the discussion turned to memories of bands, music, and good times. People wandered down memory lane together as they reminisced about their favourite gigs and memorable occasions, like the ‘Big Snow’ of 1992³⁰⁹ when the Dux served up mulled wine and looked like a ski chalet. The community was reminiscing, expressing and sharing its grief, and praying for a quick recovery. One post to the group invited anyone living in or visiting the city to write words of support and encouragement onto colourful paper hearts and ducks on the safety fence around the building (see figure 7).



7: 'Save our Dux' ducks, Montreal St fence (June 2011)

³⁰⁹ For more information on the 1992 ‘Big Snow’, see Ministry of Culture and Heritage, “Canterbury’s ‘Big Snow’ 28 August 1992,” New Zealand History, 5 Jun 2015, <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/page/%26%23039%3B-big-snow%26%23039%3B>.

Memories were also shared about the time when the music video for the Dance Exponents' song, *Victoria*,³¹⁰ was filmed at the Dux and the art deco apartment building across the street. The video was different to most others made in New Zealand at the time as it was shot on location with characters playing out the abusive relationship the lyrics describe, rather than the standard, low-cost, performance-based shoot in a TVNZ studio.³¹¹ Singer, Jordan Luck, played a taxi driver, taking Victoria to and from her escort jobs. The real Victoria was Luck's landlady for a while in the early 1980s, and lived on Springfield Road, in the same house where music writer, Vicki Anderson, later resided. Several Dux regulars were involved or connected with the video shoot in some way, like musician and bar-owner, Al Park, who played the role of Victoria's pimp. One of the Facebook group members recalled how Luck managed to crash the taxi into a rubbish bin on Hereford Street during filming. The reminiscing continued, establishing and strengthening connections, with music providing a stepping stone to a shared experience and a sense of community. Physically restricted from visiting a favourite social space, people were converging in virtual hangouts to relive moments and remember places now cut off by the passing of time and the falling of bricks.

³¹⁰ Dance Exponents, *Victoria* [single], 1982, Mushroom Records, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmzLGVGZkVQ>.

³¹¹ "Victoria," NZ On Screen, n.d. ca. 2013, <http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/victoria-1982>.



8: The leafy Dux de Lux courtyard, looking through the safety fence (April 2014)

The Dux was always more than just a music venue: they ran a vegetarian restaurant, as well as brewing and selling their own beer, which could be enjoyed in a shaded courtyard space (now a resting place for building materials: see figure 8). When it became clear that the original Dux building was not going to be repaired any time soon, Herrick and Sinke started looking for an alternate space to call home, eventually opening up the different aspects of their business in three separate premises across the city. First to open was a live music venue, Dux Live!, in a light-industrial part of Addington, an area which, along with parts of neighbouring suburb, Sydenham, has been dubbed the SOMO district (South of Moorhouse). Rumours about a new venue first surfaced in the Save our Dux group in May 2011, and the hunt for a temporary live music venue was confirmed by Dux manager, Ross Herrick. However, securing the warehouse space would prove to be the least time-consuming or frustrating part of the process – months of delays working through the CCC building consent process³¹² meant the opening date of Dux Live! was pushed back

³¹² Vicki Anderson, “Dux Live! Red-tape horror is nothing new,” *Press*, 1 Nov 2011, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/opinion/blogs/rock-and-roll-mother/5889877/Dux-Live-Red-tape-horror-is-nothing-new>.

from October 28th to December 9th, 2011,³¹³ forcing several bands hoping to play at the new Dux into finding alternate venues at the last minute.

Even though Sinke acknowledged that the new venue would not be able to replicate the beautiful garden setting and ornate details of the original Dux de Luxe, keeping the heritage of the Dux name alive was the goal.³¹⁴ Herrick thought there were definite benefits to the new space: “The old Dux was a good little venue, though it was always a room we put music into, rather than a room built around music”.³¹⁵ The new space offered enough floor space and height to afford a mezzanine space overlooking the stage and dancefloor, a Yakatori kitchen, and the ability to take the kind of bands that attract a bigger crowd. For the first time, the Dux had a dedicated and purpose-fitted space for live music, and Sinke and Herrick spent 40 per cent of their budget on acoustic treatment for the concrete warehouse and a top-end sound system.³¹⁶ It promised a lot but also had much to overcome – the industrial location and concrete interior were not the most welcoming.



9: Dux Live! street frontage, Addington (April 2014)

The ‘outdoor courtyard’ area is under the canopy, just behind the tyre (far left)

³¹³ Vicki Anderson, “Live venue debut a step closer,” *Press*, 11 Nov 2011, A9; Miriama McDonald, “The Dux returns,” *Press*, 16 Dec 2011, sec. GO 14.

³¹⁴ Marc Greenhill, “Dux owner sets up music venue,” *Press*, 6 Aug 2011, A9.

³¹⁵ “RDUnited Chosen Few: Dux Live,” RDU [Facebook post], 21 Nov 2012.

³¹⁶ Marcus Winstanley, “Industry: Live in Christchurch,” *NZ Musician* 16, no. 9 (April/May 2012), http://www.nzmusician.co.nz/index.php/ps_pagename/article/pi_articleid/2761.

Dux Dine – housing the restaurant arm of the business – was the next venture to open, almost a year later, in November 2012. Sinke and team renovated the Riccarton stationmasters’ house, an old villa near the railway lines that had a similar charm to that of the much-missed Dux de Lux. Herrick said the new venue had “a comfortably familiar feeling,” but even though it would be open until late into the evening, was not being positioned as a “hard-core party venue”.³¹⁷ The trilogy was complete in September 2015, when the Dux brand was back in the central city with a new venture, Dux Central, occupying the only remaining brick building in Poplar Lane (previously home to The Twisted Hop bar).³¹⁸

Much time and money has been spent fitting out the spaces that now house the three hospitality strands that formerly co-existed in the Dux de Lux. Each space has been specifically designed for their purpose: acoustic treatment was a priority for music venue Dux Live!, and the non-residential location allows for a later closing time of 3am; the restaurant can define its own tone and opening hours; and the different spaces that make up the new Dux Central – the Poplar Social Club, the Emerald Room, the Brew Bar, and the Upper Dux – all have nods to the past while setting a new tone for the future. There are benefits to the new, spread-out Dux ‘family’ – the fixtures and trimmings are first rate, the square-meterage much increased, the locations and spaces have been designed and finished with great care – and yet, somehow, the sum of these shiny new parts does not fill the Dux de Lux-shaped hole that still exists.

In September 2014, Dux Live! was named as New Zealand’s best music entertainment venue at the Hospitality New Zealand Awards, with Dux Dine also a

³¹⁷ Anna Turner, “Restaurant with a familiar ring opens in Riccarton,” *Press*, 16 Nov 2012, A2.

³¹⁸ Abbie Napier, “Dux Central opens in Christchurch on September 16,” *Press*, 14 Sep 2015, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/eat-and-drink/71971570/Dux-Central-opens-in-Christchurch-on-September-16>.

finalist for the best restaurant.³¹⁹ However, all was not well within the Dux empire, and even though Dux Live! won best music venue again in 2015, it struggled to attract the crowds needed to make the venture profitable.³²⁰ Sinke felt that not only had many good local bands ‘fallen apart’ after the earthquakes, and new bands did not yet have enough fans, but that many young people preferred a DJ to live music.³²¹ With only a few international acts filling the 300-person capacity venue, and few local acts able to pull in crowds of that size, the doors closed and Dux Live! was no more. In a letter to the editor a few days after a *Press* article announced the closure, Sinke explained that they had only taken a four-year lease on the Addington site, thinking that the CBD would be back in action by then, and were going to take time out until the future of the inner city was less uncertain.

Empty spaces, missing places

Although the restaurant and bar buildings and their fit-out capture a sense of history and charm that people associate with the Dux brand, the empty wasteland and building sites that surround the Dux Central in particular quickly destroy any illusion of permanence or familiarity. Now that most of the quake-damaged buildings have been demolished, the freshly-scarred earth of the central city is like a child’s gap-toothed smile. Wandering around the city and forgetting what used to occupy an empty space, wanting to visit a shop or bar before remembering it is no longer there, being at the Dux but not at *the* Dux – these are the kind of things that contribute to a feeling Anderson describes as “lost city syndrome”.³²² Although initially worried she might be alone in mourning places lost, others have shared similar experiences of this nostalgia-variant. One person explains how there are two different cities fighting for dominance in their head: “The new keeps trying to overlay the old [but] when I’m not

³¹⁹ “Dux Live best in NZ,” *Press*, 20 Sep 2014, A9.

³²⁰ Leah Flynn, “Award-winning venue closes for good,” *Press*, 16 Mar 2016, A4.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² Vicki Anderson, “Lost city syndrome,” *Press*, 19 Mar 2012, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/opinion/blogs/rock-and-roll-mother/6600468/Lost-city-syndrome>.

looking at pictures, or in seeing it as it is, it's the old city that pushes its way to the front".³²³ Others expressed relief that they were not the only ones feeling strangely homesick in their own town, homesick for a place they never left but that had somehow left them.



10: Dux Central, surrounded by construction & empty space (March 2016)

There are a variety of methods residents used to fill the gaps in both memories and cityscape. The Human Interface Technology Laboratory New Zealand (HITLab), based at the University of Canterbury (UC), produced a technical solution: an interactive software application (app) for Android phones and tablets.³²⁴ Called CityViewAR, the augmented reality app makes use of GPS data and 3D models to show users parts of the city as it was prior to the earthquakes (see figure 10). However, not everybody needed technological help to remember buildings and details. Many people found that just by listening to a certain song or remembering particular gigs, it was not simply an image of a building that appeared, but a multi-sensory event complete with sound, movement, smell, and emotion. In virtual spaces like the Save our Dux group, memories of favourite bands and songs, crowded gigs, old friends, good times, great food, and long nights were shared and discussed,

³²³ Ibid., Comment by 'Juniper'.

³²⁴ "CityViewAR," HITLab NZ, n.d. ca. 2011, <http://www.hitlabnz.org/index.php/products/cityviewar>.

weaving a rich and colourful tapestry about a favourite part of Christchurch’s social scene.



11: A HITLab employee demonstrating the CityViewAR app, City Mall (May 2012)

There is a particular type of longing expressed by those who are still at home and yet cannot return to the home they knew. Whereas nostalgia is often experienced by people far from home who wish to return or those idly enjoying memories of a bygone era, people after disaster often encounter a similar nostalgic feeling with no change in time or place – a ‘loss without leaving’. This sense of being unable to find solace in one’s home environment has been given a name by Australian environmental philosopher, Glenn Albrecht, who coined the term ‘solastalgia’ to represent “the form of homesickness one experiences when one is still at home”.³²⁵ This feeling can be brought on by natural events such as fire, flood, drought or hurricanes, or by artificial means, like war, mining, climate change or gentrification. Solastalgia is often felt most keenly when people experience the change first-hand, for example a sudden natural disaster, and then have to adjust to life in a totally changed environment. This can create the “chronic distress of a solastalgic kind [that] would

³²⁵ Glenn Albrecht, “Solastalgia,” *Alternatives Journal* 32, no. 4/5 (2006): 35.

persist well after the acute phase of post-traumatic distress”.³²⁶ Just as the visible, physical effects of disaster last for years, so do the emotional effects, and there have been many occasions where music has functioned as a healing salve for a community that is hurting after disaster.

Music and community after disaster

Musical performances can be considered as intangible and ephemeral. The Eastern’s Adam McGrath laments that live music is often thought of as something that “only exists on the night [and] doesn't always seem that valuable”.³²⁷ There are times, however, when there seems no doubt about the value of musical performance. Anderson recalls a moment from the afternoon of February 22, 2011: “sitting in a stranger’s living room... Adam McGrath of The Eastern sang *Old McDonald* to my kids. My children laughed, and in that pure moment, I felt content”.³²⁸ Sometimes it is the small moments that make a big difference after disaster. Anderson considers the performances given by McGrath and friends in the weeks immediately after the February earthquake, during which they were “playing in makeshift backyards, standing in liquefaction delivering their stomping sounds and attempting to bring a smile to distraught people’s faces,”³²⁹ to be the most meaningful gigs they ever played in the city. Those performances may have only existed in that moment but the memories will last a lifetime and the value can be seen in non-monetary units: a smile on a weary face, a grimy brow slightly less furrowed, and some distraction from the destruction.

Even though some people thought that a lack of music venues in Christchurch would result in a lack of music, McGrath says “there was more music than there ever

³²⁶ Ibid., 36.

³²⁷ Quoted in Vavasour, “Entertaining Shakeytown”.

³²⁸ Vicki Anderson, “A Light in the Darkness,” *Press*, 18 Mar 2011, sec. GO 2.

³²⁹ Vicki Anderson, “The Eastern,” *Press*, 18 Mar 2011, sec. GO 9.

was before”.³³⁰ McGrath and Puffin felt that making music was the best contribution they could make to the recovery process of the city and its people. They, along with other harbour-based musicians including Marlon Williams and Delaney Davidson, played music all over the city in a variety of locations and venues. Of performing in the broken city, Puffin said that “not only is it quite good fun... this feels worthwhile at the moment”.³³¹ There were other musicians who also sensed the need for music among the chaos. New Zealand music legend, Dave Dobbyn, caught the first available flight to Christchurch and then made his way around the makeshift refugee centres, playing impromptu concerts surrounded by welfare queues and exhausted families who were resting on mattresses on the floor.³³²

Outside the cordon fences, as the city’s remaining venues slowly reopened after repairs, a wide variety of people could be seen congregating in a small number of bars and pubs. Lindon Puffin found himself facing a strange cross-section of the Christchurch community at times, playing to a crowd that looked like several different events – a 21st, a wedding, and a 50th – had all collided.³³³ But this is a challenge that Puffin enjoys, so he draws on his songbook, engages with the audience and takes requests, creating an atmosphere in which people can have fun – performer included. Playing to a diverse group of people with a common objective was something that felt worthwhile and meaningful to Puffin, and provided a sense of normality and hope, and a chance to relax in a time where so much was abnormal.

Immediately after disaster, many aspects of life can be disrupted or suspended, from power supply to transport to the normal structure of society. Victor Turner describes this as an example of ‘liminal’ time, a threshold or in-between space,

³³⁰ Quoted in Vavasour, “Entertaining Shakeytown”.

³³¹ *Ibid.* (ES)

³³² Dave Dobbyn, “The Loudest Silence,” *Press*, 18 Mar 2011, sec. GO 3.

³³³ Vavasour, “Entertaining Shakeytown”.

in which privilege, job, or social status no longer determine modes or methods of interaction.³³⁴ *Communitas* is a homogenization or levelling process that blurs status distinctions and dissolves the normal hierarchical structure of society.³³⁵ Under normal conditions, society works to “define differences between individuals, limit their interaction, and pull them apart, [whereas] *communitas* serves to unify, bond, and transcend structural relationships”.³³⁶ Edith Turner says *communitas* can be described as “a group’s pleasure in sharing common experiences with one’s fellows [and a state of being that] often comes in the direst moments of the life of a person or society”.³³⁷ *Communitas* is a concept that resists definition as it has endless variations, and is also hard to manufacture, as it is at its best when spontaneous.³³⁸

It has been noted that there can be a “tremendous upsurge in altruism and cooperation following a disaster, creating a veritable “postdisaster utopia” [as was seen] in response to the September 11 attacks”.³³⁹ While existing within a state of *communitas*, “human beings recognize the core humanity they share, [and r]elationships are immediate and spontaneous”.³⁴⁰ McGrath remembers many such moments: “You learnt real quickly and you learnt about how to negotiate with other people, on a real deep level, making really immediate connections. If someone wanted to hug you, you hugged them. If someone wanted to cry, you let ‘em cry”.³⁴¹ The feelings of equality, immediacy, and openness often associated with *communitas* were evident among the people of Christchurch after the earthquakes.

³³⁴ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1977), quoted in Jeffrey Rubenstein, “Purim, Liminality and *Communitas*,” *AJS Review* 17, no. 2 (1992): 250

³³⁵ Carr, “We Never Will Forget,” 38; Rubenstein, “Purim, Liminality and *Communitas*,” 251

³³⁶ Rubenstein, “Purim, Liminality and *Communitas*,” 251.

³³⁷ Edith Turner, *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 2.

³³⁸ Turner, *Communitas*, 1, 221.

³³⁹ Carr, “We Never Will Forget,” 38.

³⁴⁰ Rubenstein, “Purim, Liminality and *Communitas*,” 251.

³⁴¹ Quoted in Vavasour, “Entertaining Shakeytown”.

Music provides solace in hard times and the shared experience of a musical performance, in particular, fosters strong emotional connections. The ritualistic aspects of musical performance can be “linked to the profound experience of *communitas* inherent in the social drama of disaster”.³⁴² For many Christchurch residents, the simple act of spending time together while enjoying a musical performance helped create and strengthen social bonds. Anderson says music was a lifeline, getting her through the bad times by helping to “drown out the sounds of fear with the sound of life”.³⁴³ Music is often linked with the concept of *communitas* as, for a disaster community, music offers an opportunity for positivity and unity at a time when there is much uncertainty and disconnection.

In the aftermath of a disaster, circumstances and personal attributes interact to influence how people react, think and feel about the experience.³⁴⁴ Surviving a disaster is more than not dying, “survival is to do with quality of life [and] involves progressing from the event and its aftermath, and transforming the experience”.³⁴⁵ Dealing with change wrought by disaster is stressful and unpredictable, and has been shown to have long-term impacts on physical and mental health that can last – or occur – long after the disaster itself is considered to be over. However there is more to a disaster than the initial headline event/s, and the aftermath is often divided into four phases, although their definitions, descriptions and timings are debated and contested.

Victor Turner’s 1974 description of the four phases of disaster has many similarities with the disaster phases used by the New Zealand Government’s Chief Science Advisor, Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, in his 2011 report on the

³⁴² Carr, “We Never Will Forget,” 38 (italics in original).

³⁴³ Anderson, “A Light in the Darkness”.

³⁴⁴ Peter Hodgkinson and Michael Stewart, *Coping with Catastrophe: A Handbook of Disaster Management*, (London: Routledge, 1991): 20.

³⁴⁵ Hodgkinson and Stewart, *Coping with Catastrophe*, 2.

psychosocial effects of the Canterbury earthquakes.³⁴⁶ The first of Turner's four phases begins just after the event itself, with the 'breach' of social contract that "represents a drastic break with normal life".³⁴⁷ The second phase is the 'mounting crisis' which involves recognising the extent of the damage; followed by a third phase of 'redressive action', in which institutional or improvised mechanisms are implemented to heal the breach. The final phase is 'reintegration', when the crisis is overcome and life returns to normal.

The first of Gluckman's four phases also starts just after the initial event with the 'heroic' phase. This is followed by the 'honeymoon' phase, during which help arrives and people feel the situation is improving. The third phase Gluckman considers to be "somewhat awkwardly and unhelpfully termed the 'disillusionment phase' in which people realize how long recovery will take and become angry and frustrated".³⁴⁸ As with Turner, the final phase sees a return to some kind of normality, or a 'new normal' at least, but Gluckman notes it is important to "understand that this is a long-term process with no clear endpoint in that things can never return to exactly what they were before the disaster".³⁴⁹ Whether people left the city or stayed amidst the chaos, there were significant mental health issues to be addressed and timeframes that would continue to be extended.

Although the earthquake has been described as an 'egalitarian' event, in that everybody in the city went through the same event at the same time,³⁵⁰ people not only experience different stresses at different times, they also react in a variety of different ways. The ongoing seismic activity "expos[es] people to recurrent acute stress, while

³⁴⁶ Peter Gluckman, "The Psychosocial Consequences of the Canterbury Earthquakes," Office of the Prime Minister's Science Advisory Committee [Briefing paper], 10 May 2011. <http://www.pmcsa.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Christchurch-Earthquake-Briefing-Psychosocial-Effects-10May11.pdf>.

³⁴⁷ Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, (New York, Cornell University Press, 1974), quoted in Carr, "We Never Will Forget," 38.

³⁴⁸ Gluckman, "Psychosocial Consequences," 2.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ Fiona Farrell, quoted in Philip Matthews, "Life in Brownleeград," *Press*, 18 Jul 2015, C4.

at the same time, chronic stress is imposed by the on-going human, economic and social costs” of the disaster.³⁵¹ The initial M7.1 earthquake in September 2010 caused substantial traumatic stress to the city’s residents, which was then compounded by the widespread destruction of the February 2011 earthquake, “return[ing] many people back to the beginning of the cycle”.³⁵² Even now, five years later, aftershocks and insurance or building woes see thousands of residents still bouncing back and forward between Gluckman’s phase three (disillusionment) and Turner’s phase two (mounting crisis).

There are similarities between those recovering from disaster and those suffering acute bereavement or from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), in that multiple emotions will be experienced and there will be variation in people’s responses and progression through the various stages.³⁵³ Gluckman notes that, after disaster, “many people... will experience psychosocial effects – both individual psychological effects impacting on how people feel and social effects impacting on how they relate to each other”.³⁵⁴ ‘Normalisation’ has been identified as key to the recovery process: by getting people back to everyday activities such as work, school, socialising and enjoying a sense of community; and through recognition that the variety of psychological and emotional reactions experienced after the traumatic events are quite normal, “and are not reflections of being mentally unwell or weak”.³⁵⁵ In response to this report, members of several key agencies, including the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health, Canterbury District Health Board, and local councils, were brought together as the Psychosocial Response Committee,³⁵⁶ which

³⁵¹ Gluckman, “Psychosocial Consequences,” 1.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

oversaw the creation of the *All Right?* campaign³⁵⁷ to help Christchurch residents get through the difficult times.

All Right?

The *All Right?* campaign promotes ways of improving wellbeing by providing information on how to accept, and deal with, the variety of emotions being experienced by many residents. Ciaran Fox, programme design and delivery specialist at the Mental Health Foundation and mental health promotions strategist for *All Right?*, says the campaign's goal is to "enable Cantabrians at a population level to activate their own coping mechanisms, to grow a better understanding of their mental wellbeing and the things that impact on it, and how they can look after themselves through this time".³⁵⁸ Campaign material and events, as well as advice to the public and the agencies that deal with them, are all based on regular market research, which serves as a useful barometer as to where people, families, and communities are at in terms of their recovery and general mood.

Despite the wealth of information available about the likely stresses in post-disaster communities, Fox says this kind of sustained approach to looking after community and individual wellbeing after disaster has not really been done before. The Gluckman report identified likely psychosocial consequences and the need for consistent, evidence-based messages that would hopefully see most of the population coping well enough to avoid the need for acute mental health services. The lack of previous long-term and co-ordinated examples in similar post-disaster contexts meant the *All Right?* team were largely blazing their own trail. However Fox says they have followed the existing evidence around what works for people's wellbeing, kept in touch with the community's mood and progress through regular research, and have done the best they could.

³⁵⁷ "About Us," All Right, n.d. updated ca. 2015, <http://allright.org.nz/about-us/>.

³⁵⁸ Ciaran Fox, interviewed on 18 Dec 2015, at the *All Right?* office, Madras St, Christchurch.

The Mental Health Foundation has adopted and promoted the ‘five ways to wellbeing’ identified in the 2008 *Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing* report,³⁵⁹ and these form the basis of the *All Right?* campaigns. These five ways are: Connect (talk, listen, be there, get involved); Give (of your time and presence); Take notice (appreciate the simple things, remark on the unusual, be curious); Keep learning (embrace new experiences, set challenges); and Be active (step outside, move your body and your mood).³⁶⁰ Fox recalls how, in those early days after the earthquakes, The Eastern and friends “did an amazing job at engaging community spirit, at rallying people, at cheering us all up... they were really identified, for a lot of people, as being part of that – the best of us in that situation”.³⁶¹ Both organised and impromptu musical events helped people connect, take notice, and be active at a time when it was sorely needed.

There were many musicians in Christchurch at that time who felt that playing intimate gigs in whatever makeshift venues people could offer was the best way of being useful in the situation. Fox says that what flowed from those small suburban gatherings was “incredible, because people also realised how useful music was at a time like that. More than just ‘nice to have’, it was essential: it was what made us human... it was such a great reminder that music and art is essential to flourishing and living well”.³⁶² He says that recovery is not just about getting the roads fixed and infrastructure rebuilt, it is also about what sustains the soul: “there’s something kind of spiritual as well about music, and whether that’s overt or not, whether people realise that or not, it’s about what they enjoy and what they do”. Music can be beneficial in tumultuous times, in part because it is a very normal (and normalising)

³⁵⁹ “Mental Capital and Wellbeing,” UK Government, 2008, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mental-capital-and-wellbeing#final-project-report>.

³⁶⁰ “The Five Ways to Wellbeing,” Mental Health Foundation,

³⁶¹ Interview, 18 Dec 2015.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

thing for many people, but also because it encourages connection and sharing, and can happen anywhere, at any time, with very few resources required.

After the initial disaster phases, when electricity supply and internet connections had been restored, Fox says the *All Right?* team “found their voice on Facebook,” and set about creating sharable content. With an active and engaged community congregating and finding comfort through the *All Right?* Facebook page, the idea was to “make little videos that were an extension of the campaign, and also demonstrate acts of kindness”.³⁶³ Fox felt it was important to nurture and maintain the sense of community that many residents felt immediately after the earthquakes, so the team worked to create random acts of kindness and happiness that would brighten people’s days. Several of the campaign events organised by the *All Right?* team had a musical basis, including some of the ‘Outrageous Bursts of *All Right?*’ events that modelled or rewarded caring behaviour in the local community.³⁶⁴ Whether giving away compliments, coffee, petrol or flowers, these carefully orchestrated moments “are about sharing a little love”,³⁶⁵ and then sharing the love again via short videos made for the *All Right?* campaign’s social media outlets.

One early ‘burst’ saw a lucky group of concert-goers receive a surprise upgrade at the Ten Tenors concert, at the CBS Arena in October 2013. After being told that there was an issue with their allocated seats, all eight were led upstairs to a corporate box, where they were treated to a VIP experience.³⁶⁶ What started as a “nice night out” for one woman and her friends became an outrageous experience, captured on film and posted to the *All Right?* website. As well as working with a planned evening event in a traditional performance space, the *All Right?* team also took music into unexpected places during the daytime.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ For the full range of *All Right?* campaign events see <http://allright.org.nz/our-projects/>.

³⁶⁵ “Outrageous Burst: The Ten Tenors,” All Right? n.d. ca. 2013, <http://allright.org.nz/our-projects/ten-tenors/>.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

The eastern suburbs of Christchurch were among the hardest-hit parts of the city, and the local Pak n Save supermarket in Wainoni was a vital community hub. To Fox, it presented the perfect venue for another ‘Outrageous Burst of *All Right?*’, this time a flashmob featuring members of the CSO. He says, “it was a lot of fun for a number of reasons. [It is] maybe not a place that classical music has a high profile, so that was lovely, and it was also lovely to remind people of beauty that is still available to us... it was a little present to the east, really”.³⁶⁷ The video, *BYO CSO*, shows unsuspecting shoppers ‘conducting’ their normal shop before musicians in full evening dress unpack their instruments and begin to play in between the end-of-aisle specials and the chilled goods.³⁶⁸ People smile, they stop and chat, and many take out their phones to capture the moment before all those watching are showered with confetti and given grocery vouchers by the *All Right?* campaign mascots.

One of the final ‘Outrageous Bursts of *All Right?*’ was actually a series of ‘Little Bursts’ across the city, and this time it was all about gratitude and modelling the concept of ‘giving back’.³⁶⁹ After receiving nominations from the community, several deserving people were selected to receive a singing telegram from The Eastern, who tweaked the lyrics to one of their songs for the occasion³⁷⁰. The *All Right?* team, the band, and video crew spent a day traversing the city, surprising people like Sonny Makiri, a traffic controller who was nominated for his friendliness and cheerful demeanour on the job, as well as some teachers at Redcliffs School, city office workers, and some lovely neighbours.³⁷¹ Fox says that particular shoot was very emotional for all concerned, filled with the kind of genuine surprise and gratitude that “unlocks a lot of feelings for people”.³⁷² The page featuring the video of the singing

³⁶⁷ Interview, 18 Dec, 2015.

³⁶⁸ “Outrageous Burst: BYO CSO,” *All Right?* n.d. ca. 2014, <http://allright.org.nz/our-projects/byo-cso/>.

³⁶⁹ Interview, 18 Dec, 2015.

³⁷⁰ “Smiles rewarded with random act of music,” *Press*, 18 Oct, 2014, A2.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*; Interview, 18 Dec, 2015.

³⁷² Interview, 18 Dec, 2015.

telegrams on the *All Right?* website carries the following warning: “Have a hanky nearby. You’ll need it”.³⁷³ This is indeed good advice but thankfully they are the good kind of tears, the type that come from seeing and sharing a genuine emotional connection, a connection that continues to be made no matter how far distant in time or place the viewing occurs.

Much of the early work done by the *All Right?* team centred around print material like posters, cards, and newspaper advertisements. These featured the kind of simple, consistent messages around emotions, reactions, and care of self and others, that Gluckman identified as being key to coping and recovery among the general population.³⁷⁴ As the *All Right?* campaign continued, there was also regular encouragement to take part in social and physical activities, from sharing compliments³⁷⁵ to taking part in a walking festival.³⁷⁶ Music can play a key role in keeping people active and engaged, through the connections with others that are created by shared enjoyment of an event and also by using music to inspire movement and dance.

The *All Right?* campaign was a key sponsor of *The Press* Summer Starter, an event described as part fun run/walk, part music festival.³⁷⁷ The ten kilometre course traversed the eastern suburbs of the city, starting in New Brighton (full-length course) or Ti Rakau Reserve in Woolston (four kilometre option), and finishing in Redcliffs with a party. *All Right?* campaign manager, Sue Turner, says “Christchurch has become a tale of two cities – those thriving and those struggling. Starting the run in

³⁷³ “Little Burst: Singing Telegrams,” *All Right?* n.d. ca. 2014, <http://www.allright.org.nz/our-projects/singing-telegrams/>.

³⁷⁴ Gluckman, “Psychosocial Consequences,” 5.

³⁷⁵ “Compliments,” *All Right?* n.d. ca. 2014, <http://allright.org.nz/our-projects/compliments/>.

³⁷⁶ “Walking Festival,” *All Right?* n.d. ca. 2015, <http://allright.org.nz/our-projects/walking-festival/>.

³⁷⁷ “Music to keep pace with runners,” *Press*, 8 Nov 2014, A10.

Christchurch's hard-hit east sends a strong signal that we're all in this together".³⁷⁸

Along the route were music stations featuring a variety of musical performances and styles, from a string trio to DJs, Polynesian drummers to a barbershop quartet. *All Right?* sponsored the musical acts involved with the Summer Starter, "many of which were selected for their connections to Christchurch's eastern suburbs".³⁷⁹ Headline act for the 2014 finish party was the queen of New Zealand hip hop, Ladi6, Christchurch-born Karoline Tamati, who was happy to 'give back' to her hometown,³⁸⁰ and particularly the eastern suburbs where she grew up.

During her time in Christchurch, Ladi6 was shown around the city by the *All Right?* crew, visiting "parts of town that were special to her," and meeting people who were doing great things and inspiring others.³⁸¹ Ladi6 says the experience was fantastic: "I got to tour Christchurch and see what's really happening. I got to interview [deputy mayor] Vicki Buck, and Johnny Moore from Smash Palace... We did a lot of awesome things".³⁸² Fox says that Ladi6 is "a bit of an inspiration herself, and much-loved by locals, so that was a nice thing to do". The resulting feel-good videos show off the city's street art, music project Beat Box, social services agency, Youth and Cultural Development (started by Ladi6's parents in 1992), as well as hospitality venues Brick Farm and Switch Espresso, and can be seen on the *All Right?* website.³⁸³

Physical activity is one of the 'five ways to wellbeing' that underpinned the *All Right?* campaign strategies. As Summer Starter co-ordinator, Jo Blair, says,

³⁷⁸ "The Summer Starter," *All Right?*, n.d. ca. 2014, <http://www.allright.org.nz/our-projects/summer-starter/>.

³⁷⁹ "Music to keep pace".

³⁸⁰ Brittany Mann, "Ladi6 to headline Summer Starter," *Press*, 25 Oct 2014, A14.

³⁸¹ Interview 18 Dec, 2015.

³⁸² Quoted in Vicki Anderson, "Out of Africa – Ladi's homecoming," *Press*, 28 Nov 2014, A17.

³⁸³ "Ladi6 Discovers Chch," *All Right*, n.d. ca. 2014, <http://www.allright.org.nz/our-projects/ladi6/>.

“Music is a great way to take the pain out of exercise”.³⁸⁴ Immediately after the February earthquake, when access to the central city was blocked by cordon fences and many buildings had been damaged or destroyed, the routines of daily life were massively disrupted for most of the city’s residents. One of the early *All Right?* posters featured a dancing granny in curlers and pyjamas, and posed the question: “Had a good boogie lately?”. Dancing, says Fox, is “an inherently affirming thing and happy thing to do, so it was a really good one to remind people that it’s possible to have physical activity even though we’d lost a lot of facilities”.³⁸⁵ For people whose exercise routines usually centre on gyms and their equipment, finding new ways to incorporate exercise into their lives can be a challenge, “so those kind of messages around dancing were just little ways to build it back into our lives. It didn’t matter that you couldn’t go anywhere... you can just put on some music and you can dance. And anyone can dance”. And, as the poster illustrated, you do not even have to get dressed or leave the house to do it.

Also disrupted by the effects of the earthquakes were the city’s many festivals. Some, like the Jazz and Blues Festival in 2011, were cancelled, and many others struggled due to a lack of available or accessible venues, or because low levels of funding, sponsorship, or ticket sales threatened their viability. The *All Right?* team identified the Body Festival as a key event for the city, not only as it was all about dance and movement but also because “it was one of the more participatory festivals we have and also gets people moving, gets people learning, gets people connecting with others [and] they had a lot of community outreach”.³⁸⁶ The festival’s artistic director, Adam Hayward, was “delighted with the collaboration between the *All Right?* Team and the festival. I hope it shows the power of dance to improve our

³⁸⁴ “Music to keep pace”.

³⁸⁵ Interview, 18 Dec, 2015.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

community's social, health and physical wellbeing".³⁸⁷ More than 10,000 people danced as part of the most recent Body Festival, with many residents taking part in 'Have-A-Go' workshops featuring different dance styles like tango, waltz, Victorian dance and hip hop³⁸⁸. Unfortunately for the Body Festival (which has been held every year since 2002), 2015 would turn out to be their 'last hurrah' as severe funding cuts, poor ticket sales, and further projected financial difficulties saw the organising trust wind itself up in November that year.³⁸⁹

In both 2014 and 2015, the *All Right?* team worked with the Body Festival to create and organise an event called 'Do A Little Dance'. This workplace dance challenge involved teams of co-workers getting together on a regular basis to choreograph and rehearse a dance routine to their choice of song.³⁹⁰ Although the event's Facebook page³⁹¹ shows there were positive reactions from those who took part, Fox describes the project as a limited success, perhaps due to the level of preparation and commitment required to take part. Even though it was pitched as a "dance competition for people who don't dance," and one that was not hugely competitive or serious,³⁹² there may have been something too formal and constrained about the format. The requirement for regular rehearsals and the co-ordination of a group of people during (or after) work hours potentially scheduled the fun out of what is, for most people, the spontaneous joy of dance.

Fox is still hopeful that maybe one day, the time will be right for this workplace dance-off, as more people realise how good dancing is for both the body

³⁸⁷ Quoted in "Case Study: All Right? Campaign – Christchurch," Creative NZ, n.d. ca. 2015, <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/development-and-resources/advocacy-toolkit/case-study-all-right-campaign-christchurch>.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Charlie Gates, "Body Festival finishes citing poor ticket sales, lack of funding," *Press*, 19 Nov 2015, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/74167543/body-festival-finishes-citing-poor-ticket-sales-lack-of-funding>.

³⁹⁰ "Do a Little Dance Workplace Challenge," All Right?, n.d. ca. 2015, <http://allright.org.nz/our-projects/body-festival/>.

³⁹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/alittledance/?fref=ts>.

³⁹² Interview, 18 Dec 2015.

and mind. He says the image of the boogying granny is one of their most popular, and the use of music for dancing has been very important during the recovery period. “Dancing is a really great way to be active and have fun. It’s more than just grinding physical exercise, dance, it’s generally uplifting and joyful”.³⁹³ Even though ‘Do A Little Dance’ may not have been the success he hoped for, he remains “deeply encouraged by things like Gap Filler’s Dance-O-Mat,” and the invitational nature of much of their work.

Gap Filler

Like the *All Right?* campaign, Gap Filler is not a strictly musical enterprise but many of its projects involve music. After the first earthquake in September 2010, Ryan Reynolds, a lecturer in theatre and film studies at UC, along with his partner, fellow thespian Coralie Winn, set about making use of the city’s empty spaces – some of which had been empty for years.³⁹⁴ After that first earthquake struck, Coralie says she had “no job, no theatre, no nothing... [and] the city was very strange and very quiet. There were fences up, some buildings had come down or were coming down, and it felt like a lot of people were staying away”.³⁹⁵ Reynolds, Winn, and friends decided to take over an empty city site, and “[w]ithin a few weeks of the quake, [had] created an outdoor café, art house cinema and music venue”.³⁹⁶ Even though the group had no money and few expectations, the site proved a huge success, with 41 bands playing over the two weeks it was in operation.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Rebecca Macfie, “Can Christchurch be revitalised?,” *Listener*, 14 Jun 2012, <http://www.listener.co.nz/culture/life-in-new-zealand/can-christchurch-be-revitalised/>.

³⁹⁵ Quoted in Peter Young (director), *The Art of Recovery* [documentary], 2015, Fisheye Films.

³⁹⁶ Macfie, “Can Christchurch be revitalised?”.



12: Lindon Puffin performs in a Colombo St gap (April 2011)

The level of interest in their first project caught Reynolds and friends by surprise. The fact that so many performers – musicians, poets, storytellers all – were desperate to share their thoughts and gifts showed that people were craving gathering and performance spaces.³⁹⁷ From humble beginnings, relying on volunteers and donated goods, Gap Filler is now a charitable trust with regular funding support which means Winn, and others, can now be paid for their tireless work.³⁹⁸ Gap Filler have filled empty Christchurch sections with such weird and wonderful things as a cycle-powered cinema, a collection of mini-golf holes scattered around the inner city, a fridge filled with books that people can add to or take freely, and donated, brightly painted pianos that are available to all. They have also organised or facilitated hundreds of music gigs in empty spaces around the city (see figure 12), which, at a time when there were very few open venues, was a welcome addition to the city's extremely limited entertainment options.

³⁹⁷ Ryan Reynolds, "Looking backwards, thinking forwards," Gap Filler, 26 Nov 2015, <http://www.gapfiller.org.nz/looking-backwards-thinking-forwards/>.

³⁹⁸ Macfie, "Can Christchurch be revitalised?".



13: People gather for the Sound Garden opening (October 2013)

Gap Filler also created the Sound Garden – an interactive space featuring musical instruments fashioned out of re-purposed materials. Built as part of the Festival of Transitional Architecture (FESTA) in 2013, the Sound Garden was inspired by a video clip featuring Brazilian street musicians installing instruments among the urban landscape. With an emphasis on fun and experimentation, the project gives people the chance to “make some sweet sounds in contrast to the demolition/construction noise scape”.³⁹⁹ In a city where many may feel like they no longer have control over any aspect of their environment, creating music out of chaos (or even just adding to the noise) places them firmly within the moment and allows them to make an impact. The Sound Garden was one of many Gap Filler projects that showed music can not only be created out of anything, it can be enjoyed anywhere, at any time, without the restrictions that have come to be placed around it – whether those boundaries are made of bricks and mortar or social expectations.

³⁹⁹ “New project alert – Sound Garden and RAD Bikes launch this week,” Gap Filler, n.d. ca. 2013, <http://www.gapfiller.org.nz/new-project-alert-sound-garden-and-rad-bikes-launch-this-week/>.



14: Coralie Winn (L) turns to watch a road cone being played
at the Sound Garden opening (October 2013)

The largest and most ambitious project undertaken by Gap Filler was the Pallet Pavilion – an open-air performance and social space built using recycled pallets, of which there was no shortage in the city. With a design team that consisted of recent architecture graduates and built using volunteer labour, the pavilion’s foundation was also recycled, built with sections of floor from the demolished Clarendon Tower.⁴⁰⁰ After 250 volunteers spent almost 3000 hours constructing the temporary events centre, the Pallet Pavillion opened in 2012, just before Christmas. Almost immediately after opening, the venue was beset by noise complaints from annoyed neighbours, and after initially stopping all live music gigs, agreed to hosting more subdued acoustic performances that did not continue late at night.⁴⁰¹ Noise complaints about temporary venues, and particularly those without a roof, are perhaps to be expected and it certainly was not an unusual occurrence in a city where many gigs

⁴⁰⁰ Marc Greenhill, “Waste not, want not for Gap Filler’s latest project,” *Press*, 12 Oct 2012, A4.

⁴⁰¹ Sam Sachdeva, “Pallet Pavilion termed noisy,” *Press*, 28 Dec 2012, A5.

took place in canvas marquees.⁴⁰² But the Pallet Pavilion faced some unique challenges during its operating life.



15: The Pallet Pavilion at night (January 2013)

Lighting design by Kevin Cawley

Given the size and visibility of the project, and the financial status of the Gap Filler organisation, it was often necessary to enlist the help of the public to help run and look after the Pallet Pavilion. As part of the building consent conditions, Gap Filler needed to satisfy the Fire Service’s concerns about the arson risk and have someone on-site at all times, and had been paying for overnight patrols from their limited funds. With the cost of professional security services proving prohibitive, the organisation used their Facebook page to try and find a creative solution. Charitable or community-minded night-owls were sought to baby-sit the venue overnight between 11.30pm and 7am, with use of a tiny office and free wi-fi available. Vicki Anderson was one who answered the call, spending the evening alternately talking to friendly visitors and being spooked by the weird noises of the near-empty inner city.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² Vicki Anderson, “Noise the decider in closing music venue,” *Press*, 5 Apr 2012, A11; *Ibid.*, “Freebies to please the neighbours,” *Press*, 1 Jun 2013, A18.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, “Babysitting the Pallet Pavilion,” *Press*, 24 Jun 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/opinion/blogs/rock-and-roll-mother/8835206/Babysitting-the-Pallet-Pavilion>.

The Pallet Pavilion was originally supposed to come down at the end of April 2013, but after the successful hosting of concerts, community events, and World Buskers Festival acts, calls for it to be retained grew louder.⁴⁰⁴ Gap Filler set up a crowd-funding campaign on fundraising site, PledgeMe, and successfully raised over \$80,000 to keep the venue running for another year.⁴⁰⁵ After a second summer of hosting events in a city still starved of venues, Gap Filler teamed up with local percussionist, Brett Painter, to ensure the Pallet Pavilion went out with a bang.⁴⁰⁶ Painter, principal percussionist with the CSO, put together a one-off band called The Deconstruction Orchestra and composed a piece of music for the occasion, entitled *constructionDEconstruction*. With a nod to the noise complaints the venue received in its first days, its final days would be sent off with music that combined familiar city sounds like the Wizard and the tram, the Christ Church cathedral bells, with sounds representing the earthquakes and the city's reconstruction.⁴⁰⁷ In a performance that really did bring down the house, the Deconstruction Orchestra played a fitting farewell on traditional instruments as well as chainsaws, sledgehammers, and a toilet seat.

Without doubt, the most successful Gap Filler project has been the Dance-O-Mat, something that many people said would never work. Reynolds says that when they started work on the idea, "a lot of people thought that no one in Christchurch would dance in public. They said Christchurch was too conservative".⁴⁰⁸ Inspired by a laundromat situated outside the Addington Coffee Co-op, the idea behind the project was deceptively simple: use a coin-operated washing machine to create a user-pays music system that works just like a laundromat, except your money buys playing time: \$2 for 30 minutes. The laundry theme was further explored on the initial Dance-O-

⁴⁰⁴ Marc Greenhill, "Pleas to retain Pallet Pavilion longer," *Press*, 27 Apr 2013, A5.

⁴⁰⁵ "Fundraiser gives pallet pavilion reprieve," *Press*, 7 Jun 2013, A2.

⁴⁰⁶ Vicki Anderson, "Sound of the city," *Press*, 4 Apr 2014, sec. GO 8.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ Charlie Gates, "Dancing in the street," *Press*, 25 Jul 2015, A1.

Mat site, with the addition of a rotary clothes line complete with the kind of flouro t-shirts sported by most construction and demolition workers around the city (see figure 16).



16: Shirt tales, Dance-O-Mat site #1 (March 2012)

Winn says the Dance-O-Mat’s location, near the edge of the central city’s red zone, created “a nice juxtaposition of destruction and dance”.⁴⁰⁹ It also made dance extremely visible to passers-by and to the public in general, something Fox says is incredibly powerful. He explains that dance is often hidden, “locked away in either dance clubs at night or in rehearsal spaces where the public don’t see,” so having such a public dance space is invaluable in terms of normalising this kind of activity and behaviour.⁴¹⁰ Fox laughs and says, “it’s a little bit like the old *Field of Dreams* cliché, but if you build it, they will come”. Experimentation is key to many of Gap Filler’s projects, and the Dance-O-Mat was a huge risk in what is considered by many to be a straight-laced city, but Winn says it “has proven that Christchurch people will dance in public if given a space to do so”.⁴¹¹ Reynolds says the Dance-O-Mat project somehow captured the public imagination and, “before we knew it we were kind of in

⁴⁰⁹ “Shake, rattle and roll – to music this time,” *Press*, 17 Mar, 2012, A18.

⁴¹⁰ Interview, 18 Dec 2015.

⁴¹¹ Coralie Winn, “Vacant space a gap for growth,” *Press*, 8 April 2013, A15.

the middle of something that was bigger than us”.⁴¹² Even after some low-life stole the original t-shirts off the clothesline, there was plenty of colour on display at the Dance-O-Mat, in ways that many would not have anticipated.



**17: Gap Filler staff and supporters test out the Dance-O-Mat
in its first week of operation (March 2012)**

Just as the earthquake had shaken up the landscape and its inhabitants, the conservative image that many people had of this southern city was also about to be shaken up, thanks to this small outdoor dance floor. First came the Superhero Dance Squad, an anonymous group of people in superhero costumes who gathered (for a while at least) each night at 7pm.⁴¹³ Fox has fond memories of the Superhero Dance Squad and their dance parties, and says that sort of activity cannot be designed for. “It just is a way that people respond to it, and I think there’s something about that great combination of music and dance, that ability to come play your own music and do it in your own time, it was a real winner”.⁴¹⁴ The Dance-O-Mat has been described as a

⁴¹² Quoted in Peter Young, *The Art of Recovery*.

⁴¹³ *Superhero Dance Squad* [video], 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qe9YvNVQKg0>.

⁴¹⁴ Interview, 18 Dec 2015.

“brilliantly simple cross between art installation and collective therapy,”⁴¹⁵ and although this temporary dance floor is currently at its fourth different location, it seems to have found a permanent place in many people’s lives.



18: DubFX gig in the Bedford Marquee on Madras St (April 2014)

Residents of Christchurch have become accustomed to partying in temporary facilities since the earthquakes, as many music gigs and other events have been held in marquees and vacant spaces across the city. So much of what used to take place indoors is now happening in open spaces or under canvas but, as music creates and defines its own space in conjunction with the mind of the listener, physical location ceases to be of much importance. With its disco ball shooting glimmers of light around the empty spaces, the Dance-O-Mat played host to a silent disco as part of the Body Festival in 2012, “a tribute to the lost dancing nightlife of our city”.⁴¹⁶ Writer, Vicki Anderson, was one of those taking part, putting on headphones and keeping both eyes shut as she shyly “cut a few shuffly shapes on the dance floor hidden by a group of carefree women who smelt of regret and shampoo”.⁴¹⁷ As the music played, Anderson says her ‘mind’s eye’ was elsewhere, dancing through treasured city venues

⁴¹⁵ Helen Anderson, “Pop-up city,” *Australian*, 7 Dec 2012, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/life/travel/pop-up-city/story-e6frg8rf-1226531535005>.

⁴¹⁶ Vicki Anderson, “The sound of silence,” *Press*, 12 Oct 2012, sec. GO 10.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

that now existed only in memory: “Dancers, like nightclubs, come and go in the twinkling of an eye but the dance lives on”.⁴¹⁸ The city as we knew it has gone but, emerging from the cracks is a creative spirit attempting to fill the gaps in our lives, one empty space at a time.

The Dance-O-Mat has seen many thousands of dancing feet since the first coin was inserted into the washing machine in 2012. In the first three months alone, over 600 hours of use was recorded (based on the money collected),⁴¹⁹ and thousands of people have had a little dance, including Prince Charles and Camilla who took to the floor while visiting the city on their 2014 Royal Jubilee tour.⁴²⁰ More recent figures show there is still steady usage of this little experiment – from July 2014 to July 2015, the dance floor was activated over 1800 times, “meaning that Christchurch people have danced in the street for about 934 hours in just over a year”.⁴²¹ Although it is a transitional project, “the social connections that are made and the experience that people gain from being part of it, that’s something that’s permanent”.⁴²² Living in a permanently altered environment, this temporary dance floor has provided many benefits for both casual and more committed dancers.

As well as the loss of many performance venues, the city is also suffering from a lack of rehearsal space for music makers and music users alike. Many different dance groups have brought their dance classes out into the open and a wide range of styles have been seen on the Dance-O-Mat, “from salsa to flamenco, break dance, swing, ceroc, [and] belly dancing”.⁴²³ Sarah James, a member of the Swingtown Rebels dance group, says the Dance-O-Mat is a space where everything is not centred

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ “Dec 20, 2014 The Dance-O-Mat (Location No.4),” Gap Filler, 20 Dec 2014, <http://www.gapfiller.org.nz/dance-o-mat/>.

⁴²⁰ “Prince Charles and Camilla try out the Dance-O-Mat!,” Gap Filler, n.d. ca. 2014, <http://www.gapfiller.org.nz/charles-and-camilla-try-out-the-dance-o-mat/>.

⁴²¹ Gates, “Dancing in the street”.

⁴²² Brie Sherow, *Life in Vacant Spaces*, quoted in Young, *The Art of Recovery*.

⁴²³ “Dance-O-Mat (Location No.4)”.

on the earthquakes. It is a space filled with “the feeling of happiness and community... just like nothing had changed and [you are] just having fun with friends and having a dance”.⁴²⁴ Both music and dance are helping people in this shattered city to re-establish a sense of place and self, and to process the at-times overwhelming changes that are taking place on a daily basis.



19: The Dance-O-Mat drying out after overnight rain (March 2016). The un-repaired Christ Church Cathedral can be seen to the left, and Julia Morrison's *Tree Houses for Swamp Dwellers* is far right.

The Dance-O-Mat's current location sees it sitting between the recently-restored Isaac Theatre Royal and Julia Morrison's large-scale public artwork, *Treehouses for Swamp Dwellers*. When Peter Young's documentary on the city's creative response to the earthquakes, *The Art of Recovery*, premiered at the Isaac Theatre Royal as part of the 2015 New Zealand International Film Festival, Fox was in attendance with friends who feature in the film. A big fan of the Dance-O-Mat, Fox said it was the logical place for the group to meet before the screening, and they all had a little dance before going in to watch the film “because it just felt like the right thing to do”.⁴²⁵ Winn says that people's willingness to participate in the creative re-

⁴²⁴ Quoted in Young, *The Art of Recovery*.

⁴²⁵ Interview, 18 Dec 2015.

use of these spaces is not only key to recovery but shows how important the engagement of the people is to the success of any venture.⁴²⁶ Although there is a simple idea at the heart of this wildly popular project, it is not necessarily an easy thing to replicate.

After fielding more than a dozen inquiries from cities around the world keen to set up their own Dance-O-Mat, the Gap Filler team have created a manual, which has building instructions for both the physical space and the level of community engagement required for success. Reynolds says, “If a council in another city just replicated that design and put it in a vacant space, it would get used less than the one in Christchurch. The significance of it would be diminished”.⁴²⁷ So important is community engagement to the success of the Dance-O-Mat, “more than half of the manual [that Gap Filler created] is about how to ensure the Dance-O-Mat is embraced by the local community”.⁴²⁸ The Gap Filler team are ecstatic to see the potential for this idea to go around the world, but whether it works as well (or at all) in other cities and countries remains to be seen.

The long road to recovery

Christchurch provides a unique case study for those interested in city planning, regeneration, resiliency, and community coping strategies after disaster. Brent Toderian, a city planner and urban designer visiting from Vancouver, explains that “the first instinct we have as humans after a pretty significant tragedy is to try to rebuild civic life, and we use arts and culture and other things we love to really bring people back together and help start the healing process”.⁴²⁹ But this process is not as simple as reopening art galleries and building new venues for not only has the city changed, its people have been altered too. Reed Kroloff, an architectural commentator

⁴²⁶ Quoted in Young, *The Art of Recovery*.

⁴²⁷ Gates, “Dancing in the streets”.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Quoted in Young, *The Art of Recovery*.

with experience in the US cities of New Orleans and Pittsburg, says that “cities reborn after disaster are reborn with a different population”.⁴³⁰ While he is loath to use the words ‘hardened’ or ‘world-weary’, he acknowledges that people in a disaster zone “have had an experience that many other people have never had, so there’s a certain level of self-reliance”.⁴³¹ Many of those who have visited the city over the last five years comment on the creative uses of space and interesting installations on display: one Australian travel writer delighted in the “viral rash of witty, inspiring and ephemeral expressions of community solidarity and human ingenuity popping up in the city and suburbs”.⁴³² It is worth noting that most of these creative responses have been generated from within the affected community, by individuals and local groups who can identify and quickly respond to a perceived need, and are not afraid – or too big – to fail.

Reynolds observes that people in Christchurch have not only been responding to the individual Gap Filler projects but also the sense of possibility they represent. By creating temporary projects, he says, “what we really did was lower the risk. If it’s temporary, you don’t feel the pressure to get it 100% right, you’re open to new ideas... you lower the cost of failure so much that almost every idea becomes worth trying”.⁴³³ In contrast, most of the large-scale, permanent civic projects (like the convention centre, arts precinct, public library and sports stadium) have not yet moved beyond the concept design phase.

Participatory projects allow the community to engage and make an impact on their environment, even if only temporarily, and foster a feeling of change and progress where none might otherwise be evident. Reynolds says there is a sense of parallel progress that has been enabled by Gap Filler and other community groups:

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Anderson, “Pop-up city”.

⁴³³ Reynolds, “Looking backwards, thinking forwards”.

“Alongside the official and commercial rebuild has been a community of experimentation, reimagining the city not in words and architectural renders, but by constantly bringing it into being”.⁴³⁴ By not sitting around waiting for permanent solutions, by shifting the focus from surviving to thriving, from rebuilding to reimagining the city, organisations like *All Right?* and Gap Filler have given people opportunities to feel involved, engaged, and ultimately, energised and excited about living here.

It is not a quick and easy task, rebuilding a city and its people. The Gluckman report on psychosocial consequences was published in May 2011 and was based on the scientific literature available at the time. The estimates were that, for most people, phase three – the disillusionment (or recovery and rehabilitation) phase – would last between four and nine months. It is now over five years since the earthquakes began in Canterbury, and many people would still consider themselves to be disillusioned and nowhere near a sense of normality. The latest research conducted for the *All Right?* campaign in November 2015 shows that, when comparing people whose insurance claim had not been settled with those who have settled, people with unsettled insurance claims were more likely to feel frustrated (53% c.f. 34%), angry (27% c.f. 10%), filled with uncertainty (49% c.f. 28%), and that life was much worse than before the earthquakes (50% c.f. 26%).⁴³⁵ However, qualitative research findings show there are also people who feel positive about the future of the city, with community-led projects like Gap Filler being seen as the most successful aspects of the recovery process.

Although there has been a reasonably steady decrease in the numbers of people overall who consider themselves to be stressed or struggling, there are still some concerns about the general wellbeing of Christchurch residents. Only fifty per

⁴³⁴ Reynolds, “Looking backwards, thinking forwards”.

⁴³⁵ “A summary of All Right? research findings,” All Right, Jan 2016, http://allright.org.nz/media/uploads/AllRightResearchSummary2016_i1yGc7O.pdf.

cent of respondents to the latest survey said they regularly slept well – the same as it was in 2012 when the research was first conducted. Fewer respondents agreed that they regularly ate well (72% in 2015, 80% in 2012), and the numbers of those “grieving for what we have lost of Christchurch” has stayed consistent, at about two thirds of respondents.⁴³⁶ In addition to the drops among key indicators in these regular ‘touching base’ surveys, the state of the regions mental health is regularly in the news, with stories about higher recorded numbers of suicide attempts and the never-ending pressure on mental health services in the region.⁴³⁷

While there have been reported increases in “calls for service relating to attempted suicide” in Canterbury, these figures include people registering concern about another person and multiple calls about a single person or event, as well as rural areas where social isolation and lack of social connection are significant factors that cannot necessarily be linked to the earthquakes.⁴³⁸ There is no reliable, scientific method of determining how much of an effect the *All Right?* campaign, and the collective efforts of musicians or community organisations like Gap Filler, have had on the population of Christchurch. There is no ‘control city’, for example, in which 400,000 other people who experienced the same events and stresses were not offered reassuring messages and regular distractions but were instead left to fend for themselves, that we can now compare ourselves to.

What has been shown, however, is that dispensing data for psychotropic medication in the region has not shown any significant increase in Canterbury since the earthquakes. Psychotropic medications affect emotions and behaviour, and are

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Ashleigh Stewart, “Suicide attempts increase in Canterbury,” *Press*, 21 Jan, 2016, A1; Ibid., “Canterbury’s mental health funding to be cut,” *Stuff.co.nz* 16 Feb 2016, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/76850687/canterburys-mental-health-funding-to-be-cut>; Ashleigh Stewart and Jo Moir, “Government to fund several mental health packages worth millions for Canterbury,” *Stuff.co.nz*, 21 Mar 2016, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/78107902/government-to-fund-several-mental-health-packages-worth-millions-for-canterbury>.

⁴³⁸ Stewart, “Suicide attempts increase in Canterbury”.

grouped into four main classes: antidepressants, antipsychotics, anxiolytics, and sedatives/hypnotics. Using the national database for the prescription and dispensing of psychotropic medications, researchers analysed local and national trends over several years, from 2007 to 2014, which allowed “robust comparisons between pre- and post-disaster” data, as well as between the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB) and other parts of the country.⁴³⁹ Beaglehole et al found that, although there was a short-term increase in the dispensing of sedatives/hypnotics and anxiolytics in Canterbury after the initial earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, there was no significant change in the dispensing levels of antidepressants or antipsychotics, and no long-term or above-average increase in the prescription of any psychotropic medications in the region.

Anecdotal evidence and newspaper headlines may have lead many people to believe that there had been a significant increase in the use of prescription medication for things like stress, anxiety, depression and sleeplessness in Canterbury. This disparity between expectations and evidence was certainly of interest to Beaglehole et al, who wondered why more changes in prescription rates were not observed. The authors note that “[a]lthough mental health symptoms and disorders are commonly reported sequelae of disasters, the impact on a population varies significantly between studies,”⁴⁴⁰ and they offer some suggestions about interpreting the data, and what it might say about the mental health of Cantabrians.

Some people or population sub-groups, for example, may have been seriously impacted by the disaster and experienced significant changes in medication usage, but those variations were not visible in data covering the wider population. Another possibility is that some individuals choose not to seek help in times like this and, rather than being among those unaffected by events, they are just not visiting medical professionals. Another suggestion is that many of those who may have been

⁴³⁹ Ben Beaglehole et al. “The impact of the Canterbury earthquakes on prescribing for mental health,” *Australia & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 49, no. 8 (2015): 746.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 748.

“vulnerable to the effects of the earthquakes were over-represented in the population shifts after the earthquakes,”⁴⁴¹ and therefore any medication prescribed to this group would be included in data from the DHB in the region(s) they moved to.

The study also notes that, in response to the earthquakes, a number of government, medical, and social agencies provided targeted health services for residents, such as free counselling sessions, easily accessible primary health care, and other social supports, which “may have reduced the demand for specialist mental health services... or provided other means of managing symptoms without the use of psychotropic medication”.⁴⁴² One thing the study’s authors did not mention is the *All Right?* campaign – something that CERA wellbeing research shows almost half of survey respondents are aware of, with 69% of those having a favourable or very favourable opinion of the campaign, a figure that is increasing every year.⁴⁴³

The goals of the *All Right?* campaign are very much about keeping the majority of people in the greater Christchurch area functioning at a level where acute mental health services are not required. It is incredibly difficult to definitively measure success in this area – the many surveys and research on the attitudes and physical or mental health of the Christchurch population have different methodologies, different aims, and different conclusions. Just because psychotropic prescription rates in Canterbury have not increased does not mean that the numbers of people with fragile mental health have also not increased – as noted, people may not seek help, they may be using other coping strategies, or they may have moved outside the area. But these prescription results are a positive indication that the potential for a widespread mental health crisis in Christchurch after the earthquakes has not been realised.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 749.

⁴⁴³ “*Wellbeing Survey*,” CERA, Sept 2014, 12, <http://cera.govt.nz/sites/default/files/common/cera-wellbeing-survey-september-2014-report.pdf>.

It would be a mistake, though, to think that the *All Right?* campaign's time has passed, that there is no further need for wellbeing promotions and creative opportunities to connect, give, move, learn, and take notice of the good that surrounds us. While the latest *All Right?* survey shows that the percentage of respondents who are worried about another big earthquake had dropped from 54 per cent in 2012, to 42 per cent in 2015,⁴⁴⁴ planetary forces pay little attention to survey results. Without stopping for gift wrap, the network of faultlines that lie beneath the city delivered another round of seismic activity, starting with a magnitude 5.7 earthquake on Valentine's Day, 2016, that caused further cliff collapses around Sumner, and was followed by many noticeable aftershocks over the next two weeks.⁴⁴⁵ Reactions among residents were mixed, with some thrown straight back into emotional turmoil, while others quickly dusted themselves off and got on with the clean-up.⁴⁴⁶ The *All Right?* team, which is now down to a staff of one – Ciaran Fox – jumped straight on the Facebook page to send out reassuring messages to those affected. There is most definitely still a need for some bursts of *All Right?*.

Conclusion

What this collection of stories and case studies has shown is that, whether it happens intentionally or accidentally, music can be used in a variety of ways after disaster that result in an improvement in the wellbeing of the listener. Songs are able to recreate a particular moment in time and place through the multi-sensory associations they carry in their lyrics, melody, and imagery, as well as the often vivid memories they spark of what was happening, and with whom. A song shared is a connection made – between people, between moments, between good times and bad.

⁴⁴⁴ "A summary of All Right? research findings," Jan 2016.

⁴⁴⁵ Andy Fyers, "Map: Every Christchurch earthquake since Valentine's Day," Stuff.co.nz, 29 Feb 2016, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/77367436/map-every-christchurch-earthquake-since-valentines-day.html>.

⁴⁴⁶ Kurt Bayer, "Valentine's Day earthquake shreds Christchurch's nerves: 'We all know it could have been worse'," Herald, 15 Feb 2016, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11589601

Both live and pre-recorded music can bring people together, get people moving, keep them learning, growing... living.

Reflecting on the local musicians who played their hearts out when it was needed most, the trips down memory lane afforded by certain songs, the freedom and joy that comes from dancing like no one is watching – some of the greatest benefits for community wellbeing came from these moments, from the use of music and the creative harnessing of community spirit. Hardly any of this was created by government agencies, and it wasn't in the instruction manual for 'how to deal with disaster'. But it should be, for music rebuilds the soul and strengthens the heart, without which nobody or city can truly live.

Chapter 6: Looking back, moving forward

Six months after the February 22 earthquake, I interviewed Adam McGrath about the rewards and difficulties involved with entertaining people in a disaster zone for a radio documentary due to air on the first anniversary of the September 2010 earthquake. Towards the end of our interview, in a reflective mood (which is not unusual for Adam), he made the observation that was selected to close out the programme: “It’s been a real blur, and at some point I guess I’ll get to sit down and write it all out and figure it all out and remember it all... but I think with time and perspective we’ll all look back on this and say hey, you did pretty good. I’m proud of you”.⁴⁴⁷ Time and perspective are in short supply immediately after a disaster, and it is often only years later that the value and significance of seemingly small actions and brief moments becomes clear.



20: View during phone call to RNZ, St Albans Park, March 2011

A few months earlier, in March 2011, I was sitting beneath a shady tree on a beautiful sunny day, ready to take a phone call from a producer at Radio New Zealand (RNZ) National. Over the previous days, Jim Mora’s afternoon show had been playing items about Christchurch that had previously aired on the long-running Sunday afternoon programme, *Spectrum*. Jack Perkins, *Spectrum*’s senior producer,

⁴⁴⁷ Vavasour, “Entertaining Shakeytown”.

wanted to include my piece from 2010, and it was arranged that after it played, I would join the panel by phone to provide an on-the-spot perspective on recent events. The day suggested was one on which I planned to attend an open-air gig by Adam McGrath and his many musical friends in St. Albans, which provided the perfect setting. Positioned a reasonable distance from the music to avoid disturbing the vibe or overwhelming the on-air conversation, I listened as the final moments of my first documentary programme on local music, *Harbour SouNZ*, played out on the radio.

What struck me as I watched and waited was the palpable sense of community among the people gathering for this hastily arranged gig. It felt similar to the community feeling among the Lyttelton-based musicians and residents I encountered while making *Harbour SouNZ*, but with amplified levels of rawness and honesty, and layered with an underlying sense of relief. As people arrived and spotted familiar faces, there were shrieks, hugs, tears and laughter as they shared experiences, survival tips, news of mutual friends, locations of water supply points, and any food they happened to have. At this point in time, just one week after the big event, not everyone had regular access to news and information, as power and internet were still out for many. The only way to know if someone had survived the earthquakes, for the most part, was to see them in person. This hastily thrown-together music gig in a small suburban park provided a multitude of additional benefits beyond the pleasure of listening to the music itself: the ability to catch up with friends and family, to hear news of others, an opportunity to connect and relax, and to do something just a little bit normal while the city (and some of its people) shook and crumbled around us.

There was no scientific research behind musicians' willingness to get involved – many simply sensed a need and tried to help out the best way they knew how. Musicians, especially those who perform frequently, know how to read a crowd, and how to adjust their performance style and content to guide or suit the mood, to ensure everyone has the best time possible. Good disaster preparation extends beyond

evacuation plans and emergency supplies, and Fox argues that while supporting local musicians might seem like a strange addition to the mix, “they will be the sorts of people you turn to in these times when there is no power, when there are no venues. They’re people that are skilled at curating a space, at creating an environment for people to relax and connect”.⁴⁴⁸ With very little preparation or setup, musicians can entertain and distract people from what surrounds them.

Many of the New Zealand musicians who took part in fundraising or morale-boosting endeavours after the Christchurch earthquakes had limited financial resources but gave freely of their time and energy. Compare this to US hip-hop artist Jay Z who, after seeing the damage and distress in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, donated a million dollars but ultimately felt like he contributed very little.⁴⁴⁹ He reflects on the experience in his song, *Minority Report*:

*Sure I ponied up a mill, but I didn't give my time
So in reality I didn't give a dime...
Damn, that money that we gave was just a band-aid.*⁴⁵⁰

There are many benefits that flow when music and musicians are involved in a charitable cause. At a basic level every dollar raised, every item donated for auction, every song on a compilation album counts towards the greater goal of recovery after disaster. Yet, as Jay Z seems to belatedly realise, the benefits that flow from the communal enjoyment of music can be worth far more than monetary donations to those in a disaster zone – for both performer and audience alike.

In that liminal time after disaster, when so much is altered and uncertain, people seek comfort in the familiar and in the company of others. Fox would like one of the messages from Christchurch to be that musicians are precious and should be treasured, because it is they who will rise to the top and rally people’s hope and optimism. The sense of *communitas* experienced by those gathering for a musical

⁴⁴⁸ Interview, 18 Dec 2015.

⁴⁴⁹ Kish, “My FEMA People,” 685.

⁴⁵⁰ Jay Z, “Minority Report,” *Kingdom Come* [album], 2006, Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam Records.

event after a disaster “is crucial, and actually a real strength if you can harness it, and a good way to do that is to enable events to occur”.⁴⁵¹ After disaster, it is important to create or identify spaces and places where people can safely gather, and that need does not dissipate as soon as the immediate danger passes. But it is important to appreciate that *communitas* cannot be made to order or produced on demand.



21: Sign of the times – counting down to a street party in Lyttelton (July 2011)

The state of *communitas* may turn up when you least expect it, and when you also need it most. Asked to describe why music mattered, Adam McGrath put it this way: “Music is affirming. When you have nothing it can give you purpose, hope, inspiration and courage. It gives moments to discover yourself and your place in the world”.⁴⁵² There are times when people need a little reminder about where they are needed, and times when people gather together to share music but also find hope and courage. The town of Lyttelton is well known for its street parties and it sometimes seems as if half of Christchurch has gone through the tunnel for a good night out. In 2011, the usual Festival of Lights street party was due to be held on London Street just a few days after the big June aftershock cluster, and there were fears that

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² Adam McGrath, “The Importance of Music,” *Why Music Matters*, 12 Oct 2012, <http://anz.whymusicmatters.org/mmanz/blog/importance-music-adam-mcgrath-eastern>.

everyone would be scared and stay home. Adam remembers going from fear to joy when, on the walk from his house, he realised that the streets were full of cars searching for a park:

When I got to the corner of London and Canterbury [Streets], my eyes exploded at the wash of people, thousands of ya... my heart burst, my hope-o-meter flung itself into the red and maybe after a whole bunch of months of fear and failure and desperate times I got a glimpse that maybe it'd all be ok, that maybe we could see out all this shit and find our way home again... I was for a few moments rebuilt.⁴⁵³

Many people feel they need music to survive, and so too, do musicians need people. Not just because of the economic relationship involved but also because the reciprocal nature of *communitas* that emerges in times like this can provide the boost that is needed for both performer and audience to carry on.

Communitas is an elusive concept that presents in many different situations and is something that, once encountered, is unlikely to be forgotten. Edith Turner says that trying to describe *communitas* “is like trying to locate and hold down an electron. It cannot be done. *Communitas* is activity, not an object or state”.⁴⁵⁴ While music is not a requirement for the state of *communitas*, it often occurs where music is present through the singing, dancing, listening, and sharing that takes place. This may be one of the reasons for Gap Filler’s successes with creative uses of space, for there is also a playful aspect to *communitas* in that it can suddenly appear in the “space between things”,⁴⁵⁵ which is the natural habitat of a Gap Filler project. Architectural commentator, Reed Kroloff, says disaster communities have “a certain level of self-reliance and a level of self-awareness and pride [which] is potentially a huge benefit to cities. [Decision-makers should] harness that kind of energy and say ‘let’s give

⁴⁵³ The Eastern Facebook post, 29 Jun 2013. Within 30 minutes of posting, this had been ‘liked’ by almost 4,000 people.

⁴⁵⁴ Turner, *Communitas*, 220.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 221.

these people room”⁴⁵⁶ One thing there is currently no shortage of in Christchurch is empty spaces, most of them in the inner city where buildings have been demolished. But the continued success of groups like Gap Filler relies on there being landowners who would rather enrich the community than their pocket, which many owners do by leasing the space to Wilson’s⁴⁵⁷ for yet another carpark.

City planner, Brent Toderian, says it is ironic that, “once we have time and money to spend on a permanent solution, we start to default back to old, safe decision-making. We over-think things, we go back to what the market will do or not do, instead of really holding true to those first human instincts”⁴⁵⁸ The earthquakes have brought a lot of changes to the physical and psychological landscape of the city, and not all of them bad. Many in the city have a new appreciation of what really matters to them, a willingness to try new things, and a sense of openness. Fox thinks the earthquakes have changed the outlook for the city and its people, and it is a change he would like to see continue. Residents no longer feel that activities like music and dance have to happen in prescribed places, and Fox feels that the earthquake has been beneficial as it brought the underground up over ground a little, where people can see and experience it. People now realise that “we can make this happen anywhere at any time, and I think that’s a great learning”⁴⁵⁹ There will undoubtedly be a period of transition for these transitional organisations, as the number and availability of empty sections diminish. But there is plenty of time yet – one thing we have all learnt is that when rebuilding on such a massive scale, everything takes longer than anticipated, including personal recovery.

⁴⁵⁶ Quoted in Young, *The Art of Recovery*.

⁴⁵⁷ Charlie Gates, “Car parks taking over central Christchurch,” *Press*, 20 Jul 2013, <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/8943931/Car-parks-taking-over-central-Christchurch>.

⁴⁵⁸ Quoted in Young, *The Art of Recovery*.

⁴⁵⁹ Interview, 18 Dec 2012.

Ciaran Fox has been running workshops on wellbeing in Christchurch for many years now, helping people unlock their own wisdom around what keeps them well in times of stress. In every group, he says, there are some who talk about music. “They just talk about it like lifeblood, how important it is to them, just having music around. Not necessarily being musicians, just being people who love music”.⁴⁶⁰ Every time those stories are told, Fox says he notices other people nodding and realising that music is important to them as well. Having talked about music and wellbeing for over 30 minutes by this point in the interview, Fox has now reminded himself of the importance of music in the recovery process, for individuals and the city as a whole:

I can’t stress how important that actually is. The more I think about it, the more I remember it... it’s vital, so value your musicians, and be prepared to have them be involved in leading recovery, leading a response to a disaster, and value what they bring – that intangible stuff around people’s wellbeing and people’s hope, that will keep people going through the tough days.

Musicians are absolutely precious, he says, and they need our support in the good times so they can be in good heart and good health to support the community through the bad times. When a city is in crisis, musicians can provide inspiration and keep people hopeful, and that is a vital component of the recovery process.

It does seem as though the city is more appreciative of, and more involved with our musicians and creatives now that so much activity is happening in the public eye. There is also a hint of change underway in terms of our ‘insular’ nature as a city, and not just because of the international nature of the rebuild workforce. While there will always be those who construct a social hierarchy of Christchurch that is topped by descendants of the fabled first four ships,⁴⁶¹ and who reinforce the idea that being born here is the minimum requirement to be considered a true Cantabrian, the concept of being a local, of belonging to the community, may now be a little more invitational.

⁴⁶⁰ Interview, 18 Dec 2015.

⁴⁶¹ Katie Pickles, *Christchurch Ruptures*, 2016, (Christchurch: Bridget Williams): 17.

Many aspects of personal or community identity become more complicated every time you add another variable or dig into the background of a ‘local’ favourite. Several of those who might be considered as local heroes of the rebuild – like the musicians who have been performing for their hometown or some of the leading lights in our creative recovery – would fail both parts of the ‘ships or birth’ localness test. For example, Jordan Luck was born in Canada, grew up in Geraldine, and now lives in Auckland; Lindon Puffin started life in Picton, moved to Rangiora then Christchurch, before leaving for Auckland (and coming back again); Jason Kerrison was born in Invercargill and now lives in Auckland; Coralie Winn hails from Adelaide and Ryan Reynolds from Chicago. But there will be many people in Christchurch who consider all of these people to be locals, and it would take a brave soul to try and argue against that perception.

As with many other dichotomies, any attempt to distinguish a hard and fast line between insider and outsider will immediately run into grey areas. There are so many levels, layers, connections, and contradictions that it is better to think about degrees of insight, as physical location or cultural background are but a small part of a much wider and more complicated issue. Whether describing local identity or trying to define a community, the idea of place is simultaneously nothing and everything. If we can accept there is plurality in identity, and fluidity in textual meanings, then we need to also rethink the concept of local. After all, home is where the heart is – which is not necessarily where you were born or where you live now. The earthquakes do not define this city but there is no denying they have changed it, and it is up to us now – the people who call this place home – to make sure those changes are for the better. It may not be as simple as ‘take two songs and call me in the morning,’ but I do strongly recommend the regular application of music for a happy heart, soul, and community.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

It is clear that disasters have an important cultural dimension, and that the popular culture of disaster can take many forms including the making of new songs and the remixing and reuse of existing music. Throughout history, musicians have written songs about disastrous events (whether or not they personally experienced them), and some consider these disaster songs to be a vital form of expression. However, there is more to music after disaster than disaster songs: music is also a fundraising opportunity and performance event, a communal experience as well as a cultural product. When examining the music of disaster, analysis of the text or object is only part of the story – it is crucial to take into account the circumstances and purpose of its production, as well as the methods of distribution and consumption.

Research into popular music and the cultural scene of a disaster can be approached in many different ways, and every researcher has their own perspective based on location, background, and their level of familiarity with the community and its existing culture. For researchers, as with those who make music about disaster, an individual's sense of identification and connection with those affected is not solely determined by location or cultural background. No-one is automatically inside or outside a situation, no matter how physically distant, however any differences that do exist will affect the output created. Whether that is through word use, choice of argument, opinions held, input sought or conclusions drawn, whether the difference is subtle or overt, those people whose lives, cities and issues are being discussed are likely to notice the disconnection.

As a cultural product, music provides an ideal avenue through which to explore the effects of disaster on a community, looking for insights into conflicts, power struggles, heroes and villains, but focusing on music as object alone leaves out a significant part of the picture. This research has drawn on the lived experience of disaster, bringing together a number of voices, stories, actions, and reactions to provide a thick

description of music use in a disaster community. Despite the cultural differences, there are many similarities between the experiences and creative outputs seen in Christchurch, and other cities hit by disaster, like New Orleans in the US and Port-au-Prince in Haiti. In each location, music has been used to benefit disaster-affected communities by raising funds and spirits through events such as *A Concert for Hurricane Relief*, *Hope for Haiti Now*, and *Band Together*. There have been memories created and recalled by specific songs, and spaces filled or recreated through singing, dancing, and by being together. New songs have been written to commemorate who and what has been lost, and old songs have gained new meaning under different circumstances.

Of those other cities, in fact for all the disasters that occur far from where we live, we rely on observations and interpretations from people who live there, from the media, and from those who make their voices heard beyond the crisis zone. While the large-scale music events and catchy tunes make an impact through media coverage, standard music distribution channels, or through online sharing or discussion, there are a multitude of activities and attitudes at street level that are invisible from afar. After the earthquakes in Christchurch, musicians from all over New Zealand, as well as several international artists, responded by holding fundraising events for the city. From one-off events at small bars in even smaller towns, to multi-artist events that packed out the biggest stadiums or open-air venues – the wide variety in the size and approach of events was far more than was shown through news media. Providing a sense of the sheer scale of the musical response, and uncovering some of the reasons why so many musicians took part in efforts to help the city has been a significant part of this research, and may help to expand the definition of charitainment as an overly entertaining and light version of charity. The ulterior motives and misrepresentations that are often associated with media events like telethons and celebrity rock concerts are not evident in the majority of events covered in this research.

Music provides a soundtrack to people's lives, and during times of stress it can also provide many benefits through its use in a variety of methods and situations. The lyrics and video imagery of songs made in years gone by have been shown to take on new significance and meaning after disaster, offering snapshots of times, people and places that are no longer with us. Even without making use of the accompanying imagery contained in videos, music has the ability to recreate spaces or relocate the listener somewhere other than the physical location in they occupy. This small act of musical magic can provide a great deal of comfort when suffering solastalgia – the feeling of homesickness one experiences when the familiar landscapes of home suddenly change or disappear, when one has not left home but that home has nonetheless gone from sight.

The earthquakes and the demolition crews that followed have created a lot of empty land in Christchurch and, through the creative use of space and materials, the sound of music has filled many gaps – not just on the ground, but in the hearts and lives of the people. Denied access to favourite social spaces, cut off from the regular rhythms of city life, organisations like Gap Filler have allowed residents to have an impact on the sound and feel of the city. Projects such as the Pallet Pavillion and the Dance-O-Mat have encouraged the community to engage with the environment and each other, they have brought life and people into the city centre, and showed the world that even Christchurch people will dance in the streets if you give them the means to do so.

Perhaps unexpectedly, music has been a significant force in the recovery process through the role it played in the concerted efforts made by many to maintain and improve the general wellbeing of the community. A key tool of the *All Right?* campaign, music has been used to keep people moving, to keep them engaged and connected, and to reward and model the kinds of attitudes that help people heal both physically and mentally. Disasters can be incredibly stressful experiences, and the

stresses of the aftermath can be just as detrimental, if not more so, than the event itself, as they continue for much longer. Long-term mental health issues have been shown to affect people in disaster communities years after the initial event, and thanks to the combined efforts of mental health providers and researchers, and the many different musicians or individual pieces of music, the people of Canterbury appear to have escaped the worst effects. While this cannot be attributed solely to the use or influence of music, it should be recognised as an important contribution to the recovery process of the city's residents.

But it has not only been in an official capacity that music has proved to be beneficial. Many local musicians were involved in performances around the city in the weeks immediately after the February earthquake, and some of those small events had an enormous impact. Although not trained in the intricacies of mental health and wellbeing, musicians have the ability to feel the mood of a crowd, to provide inspiration and thrive on the energy of a crowd. They are the ones who have kept people energised, enabled connections, and filled people with hope and joy. The feeling of *communitas* has been evident amongst those who have gathered for musical events of all types and sizes, whether live or recorded, whether it was the primary reason or a background soundtrack. Music has helped people to make sense and use of the spaces around them, and it has helped keep the past alive while finding new ways to live in this altered environment.

The spirit of *communitas* captured in the production, or enabled by the shared consumption of music is an important aspect of researching the popular culture of disaster, and requires a certain amount of embedded knowledge to identify. Individual events, songs or albums can tell us much about people and experiences of disaster but they are only a small part of a much bigger picture. When looking at music and disaster, combining analysis of these cultural products and experiences with an examination of the intent behind the production, use, distribution and consumption,

and situating this within the wider social and/or disaster context, shows the different uses, meanings, and subtleties that exist in these situations. By employing such a wide-ranging approach, this research has aimed to provide a better understanding of the nuances involved in the music of disaster, and how 'band aid' can be more than just a sticking plaster for those who are living within a disaster community.

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Appendix 1: YouTube Playlist

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwKFQf2PoiW5kkJqhNG1MpRyedSqunajq>

- 1: Scribe/BNZ. *Not Many Cities* [charity single]. 2011.
- 2: Mia X. *My FEMA People* [single]. 2006. Unknown label/release method.
- 3: Live. *Lightning Crashes (OKC Bombing Mix)* [unauthorised remix video]. 1995.
- 4: DJ Sammy and Yanou. *Heaven (10 Yrs. I miss you Daddy)* [unauthorized remix video]. 2011.
- 5: Elton John. *Candle in the Wind 1997 (Goodbye England's Rose)* [charity single]. 1997.
- 6: Beyonce. *Halo (Hope for Haiti Now)* [live performance]. 2010.
- 7: Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday. "Do You Know What it Means to Miss New Orleans." *New Orleans Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* [album]. 1983 (originally recorded 1947). Giants of Jazz Productions.
- 8: Charlie Miller. "Prayer for New Orleans." *Our New Orleans* [album]. 2005. Nonesuch Records.
- 9: Randy Newman. "Louisiana 1927." *Good Old Boys* [album]. 1974. Reprise Records.
- 10: Kansas Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie. *When the Levee Breaks* [single]. 1929. Columbia.
- 11: Foo Fighters. *My Hero* [live performance]. 2007. Roswell Records.
- 12: Jed and Hera. *Issues* [single]. 2013. HeraSings.
- 13: Bats. "North by North." *Daddy's Highway* [album]. 1987. Flying Nun Records.
- 14: Exponents "Christchurch (In Cashel Street I Wait)". *Expectations* [album]. 1985. Mushroom Records.
- 15: Maitreya feat. Che Fu & King Kapisi. *Chur to the Chur* [charity EP]. 2010. Self-release.
- 16: Opshop. "Love Will Always Win". *Until the End of Time* [album]. 2010. Rhythmethod.
- 17: Exponents. "Victoria." *Prayers Be Answered* [album]. 1982. Mushroom Records.
- 18: Ladi6. "Like Water." *The Liberation of...* [album]. 2010. Independent release.
- 19: Dave Dobbyn and Lindon Puffin. "Kingdom Come." Sony BMG. [Live performance] at Christchurch Arts Festival, 2009.
- 20: Delaney Davidson, Marlon Williams and Lindon Puffin. *The Devil's Right Hand* [Live performance]. World Buskers Festival, 2014.

Appendix 2: Consent form

Information and Consent

PROJECT TITLE: More Than a Band Aid: How the use of popular music helped a city recover after disaster.

RESEARCHER: Kris Vavasour

Please read the following information before giving consent.

This study is looking into the disruption the earthquakes have caused to musical output and consumption. By exploring aspects of the local popular music scene, this research will provide an insight into the altered social and cultural environment of our shaken city.

This research project is being conducted by Kris Vavasour as part of the Cultural Studies Masters programme at the University of Canterbury, under the supervision of Professor Eric Pawson. If conducted in person, the interview will be recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. Portions of this interview may be quoted, summarised or paraphrased, and will be attributed to the interviewee unless confidentiality is specifically requested. If you wish to check the transcript of the interview before publication, please contact the researcher directly.

Aspects of this research may be published or presented before completion of the Master's thesis, and information gained during the interview may also be used in future research projects, reports or presentations. Your signature on this form indicates your willingness to participate in this project and gives consent for use or publication of information gained during this interview.

Signature _____

Date _____

Name _____

Email _____

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*This project has been reviewed and approved by the
Geography department, University of Canterbury.*