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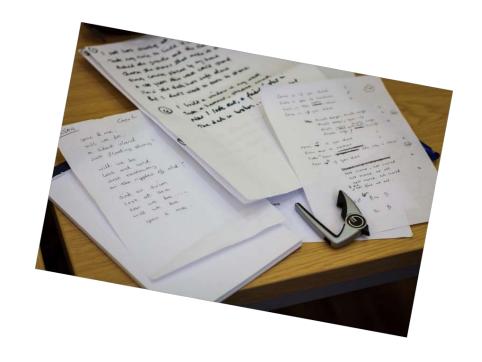
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SONGWRITING PROJECTS IN PRISONS

CASE STUDY OF A "VOX SESSION" IN HMP CASTLE HUNTLY

ABSTRACT

In the context of an increasing prison population in Scotland, the purpose of this dissertation is to consider the potential benefits of songwriting programmes within prisons, both generally, and specifically from the point of desistance theory. It does this by studying a "Vox Session" taking place at the open prison HMP Castle Huntly. This is a 3-day songwriting workshop run by an external organisation, Vox Liminis, and whose participants include prisoners, ex-prisoners, a prison officer, academic criminologists and the researcher, who took an active part.

Participant observation, semi-structured interviews and the song lyrics produced were all treated as data sources. Through a process of thematic analysis this data supported the use of songwriting projects in their ability to achieve intermediate outcomes on the desistance journey such as maturational reform, motivation, social bonds, confidence and self-esteem, as well as providing a "community" where a participant's "non-offender" identity could be brought to the fore and accepted by the group, contributing to a form of social rehabilitation. The cathartic nature of the songwriting process also emerged as a theme from the data despite not being recognised within the literature review.

The theme of this "Vox Session" was re-entry and the songs and interviews provided an insight into the views of prisoners on this concept. The findings highlight that for these individuals re-entry was often viewed as a welcome return to the family unit rather than a more uncertain return to the wider community, highlighting the importance of social bonds in this journey.

Overall, the research highlighted a range of benefits of songwriting projects within prisons, some common to general music or arts programmes but some felt to be unique to this genre and project set-up.

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I would like to take this opportunity to firstly sincerely thank all the participants of, and the musicians and facilitators who ran, the Vox Session workshop at HMP Castle Huntly for allowing me to both observe and interview them regarding their experience of the workshop. I felt extremely privileged to be a part of this workshop and without the participants' engagement with me this research would not have been possible. I am also grateful to Vox Liminis for providing me with the opportunity to take part in this workshop and to base my research around their Vox Session, and to HMP Castle Huntly for allowing me to carry out this research within their institution.

I would also like to thank Professor Fergus McNeill who supervised this research project and has provided me with invaluable support and guidance throughout its completion. I would also like to thank my parents, who have been a source of support and encouragement throughout my period of Masters study, and my employer and colleagues who have been so accommodating while I combined working with studying.

CONTENTS

1. **Introduction**

For many years the arts in prison were seen as simply a leisure pursuit, something that prisoners could become involved in to keep them occupied (eg. Forster, 1998). There were of course exceptions, with the Barlinnie Special Unit established in the 1970s and operating until 1994, being a high profile example of this where, as part of an experiment with a small number of particularly violent and high risk prisoners, they were allowed a more autonomous existence within the prison and as part of this took art classes (Cooke, 1989). This production of art continued on the prisoners' release resulting in some high profile rehabilitation "success" stories told in ex-prisoners' autobiographies (eg. Boyle, 1977; 1984).

In recent years, however, it has increasingly been recognised that the arts in general, and in relation to this study, music and songwriting in particular, have a far greater role to play within the prison environment than merely giving prisoners something to pass the time (Clements, 2004). Their therapeutic value, along with their rehabilitative function and their educational possibilities, are now all recognised, illustrated by the Scottish Prison Service's (SPS) recent organisational review document Unlocking Potential, Transforming Lives (2013) which recognises the creative arts as a "purposeful" activity. Therefore, rather than simply using the previously narrow definition of more formal or classroom based activities focussing on addressing the personal, social or psychological needs of prisoners they are instead moving towards concentrating on prisoners' strengths, potentially through an arts based medium.

While arts provision within prison, including music programmes, can be provided by internal departments, there are also external agencies, often third sector, which also provide arts

programmes across the prison estate. Vox Liminis is an external, independent organisation which works in partnership with prisons to provide music workshops. They were established in 2013 and aim to harness "the power of music-making to assist the reintegration of 'offenders' within Scotland" (Vox Liminis, no date). To do this they carry out a range of programmes including those involving work within prisons, supporting families and relationships affected by crime, through-the-gates work and work in community settings as well as work aimed at engaging the public in their role in rehabilitation. This study will focus specifically on their work with prisoners in a custodial setting and specifically their "Vox Sessions" which are 3-day long songwriting projects run by professional musicians. This dissertation is based on a qualitative study of a "Vox Session" taking place within HMP Castle Huntly, carried out through participant observation, semi-structured interviews and lyrical analysis of songs produced during the session. This "Vox Session" is unique, however, in that it not only involved current prisoners but also ex-prisoners, a prison officer and criminologists as well as Vox Liminis staff who act as facilitators. For the first time the session also had a theme: "re-entry".

This study is placed in the context of an ever increasing prison population in Scotland. The annual average prison population was estimated at 8,300 in 2012-13 and is projected to increase to around 9,500 by 2020-21 (Scottish Government, 2012) and there was an average reconviction rate for offenders released from custody in 2011-12 of 43.8% (Scottish Government, 2014). While traditionally there has been a focus on rehabilitation within prisons based on the theory of using evidence based programmes of "what works" there has recently been a theoretical move towards using desistance theory and the desistance paradigm (McNeill, 2006) to instead consider evidence of "how change works". While desistance theory does not suggest that interventions themselves "cause" desistance it does recognise

that they can "support" the process. Maruna (2001) identified three broad theoretical perspectives relating to desistance: maturational reform; social bond theory; and narrative theory. Although these concepts can actually be hindered by a custodial setting it is thought that this can be counteracted by the benefits of songwriting programmes in prison.

This research will place the prisoners' voices at its centre through its use of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. It will also aim to remove the power dynamic which would usually be present with the mixture of participants noted above, as all will begin from the same starting point of having no experience of songwriting and all will have some, although differing, experiences of "re-entry". This arrangement aims to allow the prisoners and their opinions to be equally valued where, as marginalised members of society, their voices are often removed from discussions on imprisonment despite their expert status gained through their lived experience.

This study will discuss the literature on the topic of music programmes within prisons more generally, as well as specifically focusing on those using the medium of songwriting. While considering the impact and effects generally of songwriting programmes within prisons this research will also look at this topic from the specific theoretical viewpoint of desistance theory and the desistance paradigm. Using thematic content analysis of the data from the case study, including the participant observation, interviews and the songs themselves, the lived experiences of the participants in the "Vox Session" will be looked at which will allow us to potentially engage in a much fuller way with this often marginalised population. This research seeks to discover how ideas of desistance can impact rehabilitation and what role songwriting can play in the life of offenders, both while they are in prison and also potential effects which could continue after they are released. The unique position of carrying out this

research on a project within an open prison means that the prisoners will be close to re-entering back into the community and this proximity to release is likely to heighten hopes and fears around this transition as well as increase thoughts around their "identity" and the impact this may have on their behaviour after release.

This research comes at a time where the Scottish political position around the areas of imprisonment, sentencing and rehabilitation appears to be moving away from the position in England and Wales, where much of the "UK" research into the use of arts programmes in prisons is based. As well as the SPS's move towards recognising creative arts as "purposeful activity" (SPS, 2013; SPS, 2014) and acknowledging the important part arts programmes have to play in the rehabilitation of offenders, they are increasingly focusing on the use of and learning from desistance theory (SPS, 2013). With regards to the Scottish Government, their recent decision not to pursue the prison expansion in relation to a new women's prison in Greenock indicates a potential shift in thinking on the issue of imprisonment. When these shifts in organisational thinking are taken along with the prominence of the concept of social justice in rhetoric from both sides of the recent Scottish independence referendum debate, the impact of this research could be greater, and the discussion it prompts more pertinent, at this time within Scotland.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Forster's (1998) research of the history of penal education in Britain split this area into a number of strands: vocational, training, remedial education, academic programmes, therapeutic and recreational. The latter is where he placed the arts and crafts, which were seen as harmless activities whose purpose was nothing more than to allow prisoners to

occupy their time. While Clements' (2004) look at the rehabilitative role of arts education in prisons does conclude that one reason for advocating their role is that it occupies prisoners in an interesting and fun activity which can impact on the dynamic security in prisons, this is not seen as its only role. He also notes that benefits can be a reintroduction to traditional education activities, increased self-esteem and communication, allow individuals to value their own ideas and those of others as well as helping to produce active citizens. This view is borne out by the results of empirical studies across a variety of art forms including visual art, theatre, music and creative writing (eg. Billington, 2014; Merrill & Frigon, 2015; Moller 2003; Albertson & O'Keefe, 2012).

This chapter specifically considers the use of music programmes within prisons and summarises the key findings of previous research studies which have looked at the effects of these programmes. This will firstly be considered more broadly and then, following a discussion of the area of desistance research, specifically from this theoretical viewpoint. It will provide justification for this research through the identification of gaps within the literature in relation to a specific focus on the unique nature of songwriting workshops and their connections with findings from desistance theory.

2.2 The effects of music programmes within prisons

The use of music programmes within the criminal justice sector, including in a prison environment, is well established (Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2012; Lee, 2010) and covers a wide range of activities including choral singing, instrumental music, songwriting, individual or group work and new composition as well as playing already existing pieces. From a therapeutic viewpoint it is noted that as a non-literacy based form of communication, music is accessible to a wide range of individuals with different learning capabilities and capacities

(British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT), no date). This is particularly important in a prison setting where low literacy levels are the norm (figures released by the SPS in 2012 reported that 81% of prisoners were lacking functional literacy (BBC News, 2012)). The BAMT also notes that by communicating using the voice or instrumentally, individuals are able to make connections both within themselves and with others around them.

As well as the potential therapeutic benefits there are also other benefits/impacts which have been reflected in studies carried out in this area. Firstly there is the impact on communication skills which are improved in group activities where participants have to learn to communicate both with each other and also with the music "leader". Studies of prison choirs (eg. Cohen, 2009; Silber, 2005) have shown a particular impact in this area with these studies involving both all-male (Cohen, 2009) and all-female (Silber, 2005) choirs so although it is noted that women are more open to arts programmes (Goetting & Howsen, 1983) it appears that effects on communication skills can be seen irrespective of gender. Again, with this research having been carried out in different countries (USA and Israel), these findings are not restricted to a single nationality or penal regime. It is not only choir programmes which show improved communication skills, with other music programmes also producing benefits in this area (eg. Barrett & Baker, 2012; Caulfield et al, 2010). Again, these projects involve a range of participants of both genders, a wide age range and take place in both general prison populations and within therapeutic communities.

Other benefits which have been noted in empirical studies of music programmes in prison include improvements in confidence and self-esteem (eg. Bilby et al, 2013; De Viggiana et al, 2010; Goddard, 2005; Caulfield et al, 2010; Barrett & Baker, 2012), interpersonal skills (eg, Bilby et al, 2013; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Digard et al, 2007; De Viggiana et al, 2010),

well-being (Cohen, 2009; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Digard et al, 2007; De Viggiana et al, 2010, Caulfield et al, 2010), likelihood of participating in further educational activities (Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Caulfield et al, 2010; Anderson & Overy, 2010; Barrett & Baker, 2012) and behaviour (Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Dawes, 1999). These studies also include a range of participants including male, female, long and short term prisoners as well as projects specifically aimed at younger and older offenders indicating that the benefits of music programmes do not just apply to a certain "type" of prisoner.

Due to the nature of these qualities, generally these studies are qualitative with the participants self-reporting on any changes they may have felt within themselves or these changes being observed by the researcher. These studies can be seen as less "scientific" in relation to producing "evidence" of change and also less generalizable as the participants are not a randomly selected sample. Also, due to the fact the projects are generally small in size and short in duration, they do not tend to produce reliable quantitative results. Where the point of the study is to capture lived experience from the viewpoint of the participants however, only a qualitative research design is compatible with this and is able to capture the rich detail required.

One impact of music programmes in prisons which can be measured quantitatively, however, is their impact on behaviour. This is generally measured using a comparison between the number of adjudications (prison disciplinary procedures) an individual has in a set period prior to taking part in the programme compared to the number during and for a set period following its completion. Although the majority of research on music programmes within prisons do not appear to use this measure there have been results showing a reduction,

sometimes to zero, in adjudications during and following a project (eg. Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Dawes, 1999).

It should be noted, however, that it is not only the prisoner participants for whom there is found to be an impact from music programmes within prisons. Cheliotis (2012, p. 1) notes that the arts do not only impact on prisoners and those within the criminal justice system but are also an "alternative lens through which to understand state-sanctioned punishment and its place in public consciousness". This is particularly true where there is an element of public performance involved (eg. Cohen, 2009; Silber, 2005) or even where prisoners and non-prisoners work together on a project (eg. Cohen, 2009). These studies show an impact on both the prisoners and members of the public alike, with one prisoner noting of their public performance "It gave us a kind of confidence…like…we are prisoners but not so different from them" (Silber, 2005, p. 267) while an audience member at one of these performances noted "I [initially] though that this concert was a poor decision…promoting something that did not deserve the attention…After attending the concert my opinion has completely changed. I believe this is a terrific outreach program and a necessary part of rehabilitation and life improvement for inmates, and those of us on the outside" (Cohen, 2012, p. 229).

Sometimes forgotten when looking at potential benefits of music programmes within prisons is the production of the art form itself. Lucas (2013) notes that where songwriting is used as a confessional process then the individual can end up becoming the content for the art rather than being seen as the artist. As well as aiming to rehabilitate offenders in order that they can return to their community and lead crime free lives, HM Prison Service also have a duty to look after prisoners' humanity. If part of humanity is recognised as being able to express

yourself creatively then the provision of creative activities across the prison estate is essential and the products of these activities must stand on their own (Parkes & Bilby, 2010).

2.3 Desistance Theory

While there has been significant research carried out around the use of music programmes, as outlined above, historically very little was carried out from the theoretical perspective of desistance theory, however this has begun to change. When considering the potential impact of arts projects in relation to desistance there must first be a consideration of what is desistance. There is no single agreed definition of desistance and nor is there a single model outlining a fixed set of factors or processes involved in achieving it. While a dictionary definition of desisting is to "stop doing something; cease or refrain" (Oxford Dictionaries, no date) recent theoretical developments have seen desistance being defined as a process rather than a one off event with Laub et al (1998) noting that desistance was not an abrupt event but instead "a gradual movement away from criminal offending" (p.226). On top of this, McNeill et al (2012) noted that this process of change is one that will occur "naturally" for most offenders and that interventions will therefore not "cause" desistance themselves but must instead be there to accelerate and support this "natural" process.

Maruna's (2001) review of different theoretical perspectives on desistance resulted in him defining three broad strands of desistance: maturational reform; social bonds; and personal narratives. Considering the first of these in relation to individuals who are imprisoned, as noted by Leibling and Maruna (2005) this can actually inhibit the natural maturation process. By placing an individual within this environment you are effectively removing any sense of responsibility and infantilising them by taking their decision making processes away, therefore stunting their natural maturation. Given that in 2013 around 45% of prisoners in

Scotland were aged between 16 and 29 (Scottish Government, 2012) the lack of opportunity to continue the natural maturation process appears particularly pertinent.

In relation to social bonds, imprisonment again is likely to have a negative impact on the cultivation or maintenance of positive social bonds. Farrall (2004) notes that while building human capital through focussing on the capacities of an offender and providing education or behavioural training is often necessary it is not enough on its own to produce desistance but must instead be combined with social capital. This can be achieved through building bonding social capital, which includes ties with family and friends, as well as bridging social capital, which includes more distant ties with colleagues and acquaintances for example (McNeill & Whyte, 2007). The imprisonment process can again stunt the maintenance and growth of these social bonds as illustrated through the issues faced by families in relation to prison visiting (eg. Dixey & Woodall, 2012; Flynn, 2014). While these are beginning to be tackled in Scotland by initiatives such as The Croft at HMP Barlinnie and a new approach to family visits at HMP Low Moss (SPS, 2013) there are still issues around prisoners successfully managing to maintain strong social bonds whilst within prison.

Finally considering personal narratives, there are disagreements over whether a new personal narrative is essential to the desistance process. For example, Laub and Sampson (2003) argue that it is not necessary for all offenders to experience this change in how they see themselves and define their identity to be able to desist. It is likely, however, that those offenders who are more persistent and whose criminal identity is more entrenched will require to obtain what Maruna and Farrall (2004) have defined as "primary desistance" where there is a crime-free gap in a criminal career, as well as "secondary desistance" where there is a change in how an "ex-offender" sees themselves. It should be noted that while the labels indicate that

primary desistance must occur prior to secondary desistance, the two changes can often occur simultaneously or an individual may experience a change in how they see themselves prior to a change in their behaviour taking place. Recently the concept of "tertiary desistance" has also been considered, where the community must also accept the change of identity of the "ex-offender" and in effect reverse the labelling process of the criminal justice system (McNeill, 2014).

As noted above there is no single model of the desistance process, however, Giordano et al (2002, pp. 1000-1002) describe it as a four part process made up of "a general cognitive openness" to change; exposure and reaction to "hooks for change" or turning points; the envisioning and fashioning of "an appealing and conventional 'replacement self'"; and "a transformation in the way the actor views the deviant behaviour or lifestyle itself". The third and fourth points are similar to the personal narrative strand of desistance defined by Maruna above where the "ex-offender" is able to narrate a new "non-criminal" identity. The first point hints towards the necessity for agency in the desistance process where the individual must be an active participant and "want to change" rather than be a passive recipient of services which "make" them change. The second point notes the importance both of something being there which enables the individual to see the potential for change and which can support the process but also again notes the importance of agency by including their reaction to this as a necessary part of the process.

A fuller description of how the desistance process can be modelled comes from Shapland and Bottoms (2011) and their 7 point process created following their study of a group of young adult male recidivists in Sheffield. Similar to Giordano et al's model they begin with 1) current offending being influenced by a triggering event, 2) the offender identifying a wish to

try and change, 3) the offender thinking differently about himself and his surroundings and 4) the offender taking action towards desistance. This model, however, then goes on to take account of "obstacles" and "barriers" to change which most offenders are likely to face during the desistance process and must be overcome to "maintain change" before in the final step they develop a crime-free identity.

Linked in to the idea of offenders having to overcome obstacles during their desistance journey is the importance of motivation and hope. McNeill's (2006) desistance paradigm highlights the important of motivation in achieving desistance and that it can reduce the traditionally high attrition rates in rehabilitative programmes by allowing the participants to develop a sense of agency and allowing them to be an active part of the process. This is backed up by empirical studies such as Harris (2005) whose work with prisoners in Pennsylvania produced evidence that prisoners were willing to embrace the self-help approach of the desistance paradigm while reacting negatively to the traditional rehabilitative process where things were "done" to them.

Burnett and Maruna (2004) studied the importance of hope in the desistance process through a study of 130 offenders who had recently been released from prison. In this study hope was defined as their overall perception that personal goals could be achieved. They concluded that the greater the level of hope the prisoners had prior to their release, the greater the chance that the individual would desist from crime. A follow up study 10 years after release again showed there was still a link between higher levels of hope and a greater chance of desistance, although after this length of time the impact of hope was less than in the original study.

2.4 Impact of music programmes from a desistance perspective

As mentioned above there has been little research carried out on the impact of music programmes within prisons specifically from a desistance perspective, however there are exceptions. Bilby et al (2013) used qualitative methods to look behind the numbers of a previous quantitative study and focussed on whether the journey towards desistance was supported during five arts projects taking place across four different criminal justice settings including music production work with young offenders and music making within an open prison. Across all of the art forms it was found that participation enabled individuals to begin to redefine themselves, a key stage noted in the desistance models outlined above. It was particularly noted that "arts projects provide safe spaces" (p. 7) to allow these alternative identities to be explored.

Also key to the desistance process is a level of responsiveness where projects respond to participants' individual needs. It is noted that arts projects are particularly successful in this regard and that they are also able to give some level of autonomy to the participants, allowing them small, though significant, decision making control. It was also noted across the art forms that participation had resulted in an increase in the levels of confidence and self-esteem of the participants with a member of the music making team noting "I don't for one minute think we can change the world. It's about building up their self-esteem, and about helping them to remember what it's like to succeed again" (p. 35-36).

Another key element of these projects was noted as being the recognition of the professionals running the projects as well as others outwith the criminal justice system of the products created by the offenders that allowed their identity as an "artist" rather than an "offender" to be brought to the fore. The high levels of engagement in these projects was also noted as

beneficial, not only in relation to these projects but also in relation to their links to further participation in other education or work-related activities.

Anderson et al (2010) also looked at a range of arts interventions across a number of different types of prison within Scotland, including choral and songwriting projects in a young offenders institute and an operatic project in an adult male prison. While noting that imprisonment runs contrary to the needs of the desistance this research also notes that arts interventions can go some way to counteracting this by providing an environment and opportunity for offenders to think differently about themselves and "imagine" alternative futures and identities.

While not being carried out specifically from a desistance perspective, other studies have produced results which can be linked in to key concepts such as identity (eg, Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Barrett & Baker, 2012), maturation/responsibility/autonomy (Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008) and ideas of hope (Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008).

2.5 <u>Songwriting in Prisons</u>

With regards to songwriting projects specifically, these appear to commonly be studied as a general "music" project rather than being thought of as a unique combination of instrumental music and what could be thought of as creative writing in respect of the lyrical content of the song. Anderson et al's (2011) evaluation of the Inspiring Change project included the "Voice Male" program in HM YOI Polmont which included songwriting as well as group singing and vocal training, however there was no specific focus on the songwriting element and nor were the songs themselves considered as a data source. Lucas' (2013) study of a collaborative songwriting group in a women's prison in North Carolina notes lyrics that were

produced, along with an explanation of the thought process behind them, however, due to the purpose of the research being to look only at the production of the art form they are not treated as a data source in this instance and nor were interviews carried out with the participants to garner their own views of the process they were involved in. This study is important, however, as when analysis of the songs produced is carried out in this study, the fact that these are art forms in their own right should not be forgotten.

One study which briefly touches on an analysis of lyrics as part of the data is the "Re-imagining Futures" report (Bilby et al, 2013) which looked at a music production project with young offenders in the community. One participant noted how his lyrical content had changed throughout the project from originally being described as "ultra-macho" by the music leader and referring to what the participant noted as being "My life. Robbing. Selling drugs" (p. 30) to speaking of a positive future. This, however, was the only mention of song lyrics within the study. While this study will not be able to compare and contrast lyrical content over time, it does intend to build on studies such as this and carry out a more in-depth analysis of lyrical content, both generally and from the theoretical viewpoint of desistance.

A very recent study by Cursley and Maruna (2015) looking at the work of Changing Tunes in prisons used similar methods to those which this study will employ, including specifically analysing the lyrical content of songs produced by the participants. This research focused on long term music projects which continued for the participants after their release from prison, so highlights a different aspect of music projects and their links to desistance than this research will. Cursley and Maruna concluded that these projects appeared to allow changes in participants' self-identity to occur and that they developed social skills, increased feelings of self-confidence and self-worth leading to a sense of agency and control along with hope

for their future. They noted direct implications from the specific use of music but more often indirect consequences through the relationships which were formed during the project. The use of long term mentors in the project examined during this research gives it a different dynamic than that of the one off Vox Session, however is a key piece of literature when considering the use of songwriting projects within prison.

This research aims to provide a similar analysis of the shorter Vox Session and also to provide this in a Scottish context as the Changing Tunes research was limited to projects taking place in the south-west of England. Much of the research on desistance and the arts either comes from North America or with regards to the United Kingdom is in relation to England and Wales, while Scotland is different in many respects. As outlined in the introduction above, the move of the SPS towards labelling the creative arts as a "purposeful activity" and their increasing focus on desistance theory, along with the Scottish Government's recent move away from prison expansion, indicate that this research, with a Scottish locus, is particularly relevant at this time.

3. __Methodology__

The work of Vox Liminis and in particular their Vox Sessions provides an ideal case study to consider the impact of songwriting workshops run within prisons. Their aim is to use "the power of music-making to assist the reintegration of "offenders" within Scotland" (Vox Liminis, no date) and their focus on working *with* rather than *on* offenders is in keeping with the desistance paradigm that this research will consider the impact of prison songwriting projects through.

The Vox Session upon which this research took place was carried out within HMP Castle Huntly, which is an open prison housing prisoners in the final stages of their sentence and preparing them for release. The workshop took place within "The Shack" which is an outbuilding in the grounds of the prison opening out on to a garden area. This Vox Session is the first which has been run with a group of participants not solely comprising of prisoners and participants included seven prisoners, two ex-prisoners, a prison officer and three criminologists as well as two Vox Liminis staff who acted as facilitators, three musicians who led the workshop, one further musician who only attended on the second day, a photographer who attended on the final day and the researcher. The Castle Huntly prisoner participants were recruited through posters being placed in the prison and staff members approaching those who had taken part in previous Vox Liminis workshops, those who attended guitar lessons within the prison and one prisoner who was advised of the workshop while collecting a guitar from the education department. One prisoner participant joined the workshop on the day as he came to the building where the workshop was being held and an existing participant asked if he could join. The criminologist participants included one who is on the Board of Vox Liminis and two others whom he approached due to their interest in this area. The ex-prisoners were recruited through their involvement with Vox Liminis after their release.

This Vox Session was the first to have been based around a theme, namely "re-entry", and prior to attendance at the workshop all participants were asked to bring with them an item (object/photo/words) that had something to do with their understanding of re-entry as well as a list of 5 titles of imaginary songs on the theme of re-entry to stimulate thought on this theme.

In this study the following questions were asked regarding the participation in prison based songwriting workshops:

- Do songwriting projects within prison enable prisoners to form positive identities and build new narratives and which aspects of these interventions are key to this process?

- Can songwriting projects within prison contribute to an individual's rehabilitation through their journey towards desistance and, if they do, what intermediate outcomes on this journey do music programmes contribute towards?

In keeping with the fact that this is a person-centred study where the participants and their subjective experiences are placed at the centre of the research, a qualitative research design was employed. As noted in the above literature review, previous research carried out in this area has involved a similar research design allowing the research to gain an insight into the participants' perspectives of the workshop and to place the voices of often marginalised members of society at the centre of the study. Given that participants included prisoners and ex-prisoners as well as prison staff and criminologists there was the potential for issues of power to be present within the workshop, however, the fact that all participants were likely to have a similar level of experience of songwriting and that the theme for the workshop was a generic one of "re-entry" aimed to deal with some of these potential power imbalances.

A multi-method qualitative design was used so triangulation was possible, not only through obtaining the views of participants with different roles within the workshop (eg. musician, facilitator, participant) but also by gathering data from different sources providing a level of internal validity for the research. The methods used were the following:

- Observations across the 3-day Vox Session
- Semi-structured interviews of the participants, musicians and facilitators
- A thematic analysis of the song lyrics written by the participants

Analysis of the data from each of these methods was carried out using a manual thematic data analysis and employed a form of adaptive theory (Layder, 1998) combining both inductive and deductive approaches. This therefore allowed the data to be considered thematically in respect of exploring concepts from existing literature as well as allowing new themes and concepts to emerge from the data and the participants' experiences of this workshop. Each of the above methodological approaches is outlined in more detail below.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was carried out across the 3-day workshop, allowing interactions between the participants and between the participants and the musicians and facilitators to be observed in relation to potential behavioural changes. Handwritten notes on these observations were produced at the end of each day as to take notes during the workshop while trying to actively take part would have been too obtrusive and distracting. As part of the first and second days of the workshop involved group composition of a song, and I was an active participant so placed in a specific group, it was not possible to personally observe the full workshop experienced by all participants during these times and my observations of the group work is limited to that of the group that I was involved in. While this may have led to a loss of observation data, by fully participating in the workshop it was therefore possible to not only hear about the process but to personally experience it adding a further dimension to the research. Due to time constraints and the nature of some of the participants (open prisoners with home leave) the third day of the workshop where the final writing and recording was done was mainly spent carrying out interviews with the prisoner participants and prison officer as I did not wish to have to return to carry out the interviews due to the

prisoners having work placements, education classes and home leave that I did not want to disrupt. This therefore reduced the amount of observation that could occur on the final day.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out to augment the participant observation data allowing fuller information on the interviewees' narratives of their experience to be obtained which could not be done through participant observation alone. Interviews were carried out with all prisoner, ex-prisoner and prison officer participants as well as two of the academic participants (the third was the supervisor for this research project and therefore it was not felt appropriate to interview this participant). The facilitators from Vox Liminis were also interviewed along with one of the musicians. Repeated attempts were made to interview the other two musicians, however, due to their touring schedules and other work commitments this did not occur. The musician and photographer who only attended for one day of the workshop were not interviewed. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed them to be based around broad themes of the interviewee's experience of the workshop, what they had taken from the experience and around ideas of potential changes in identity and relationships while also allowing interviewees to bring out themes from their experiences which may not have previously been considered.

The interviews which occurred within the prison during the workshop (with prisoners, ex-prisoners and prison officer) lasted around 20-30 minutes. Time constraints around the number of interviews to be carried out within a day (see explanation above under participant observation section), along with the wish not to disrupt the writing and recording process for the participants had an impact on interview times, however, they did not feel rushed and the interviewees appeared happy that they had been given sufficient time to say all that they

wished to. Interviews with the facilitators, academics and one of the musicians took place following the workshop at an appropriate time and place which was arranged around their other commitments. Each of the transcripts was transcribed by the researcher and then anonymised before they were thematically content analysed manually as noted above.

Lyrical Analysis

Given that previous research has shown that participants in arts programmes are often able to express themselves through this medium in ways they have not felt able to previously, a separate, but related analysis was carried out on the songs written by all but two of the participants (one participant chose to compose an instrumental piece and due to having home leave it was not possible to speak to him regarding this piece and it was felt inappropriate to include the song written by the academic who is the supervisor for this research project). The lyrics were analysed for similar themes as with the interviews to see if they could provide any further understanding in relation to the research questions.

Ethical consideration was given at all times, with a full explanation of the use of the data being given to all participants and their right to discontinue their part in the research process at any time. The fact this would not affect their participation in the Vox Session was fully explained. Their anonymity in the final report was ensured as was confidentiality and issues around data protection. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants. Where a quote is attributable to a musician or facilitator their role has been used rather than a pseudonym. It was recognised that the workshop process could involve emotions and possibly cause distress to participants and processes were already in place through Vox Liminis to deal with this issue should it arise.

4. DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The results and analysis contained within this section are structured by theme, the emergence of which has been both from the literature review and from the data itself. Firstly the data will be considered in respect of "identity" which was identified through the literature review as a potentially important feature in the desistance process and which is considered in the first research question outlined above. The second research question considers intermediate outcomes on the desistance journey and the further themes in this section relate to this question. Some have come from the literature review such as the importance of maturational reform, social bonds, confidence and self-esteem, however, others have emerged from the data itself such the cathartic nature of the songwriting process. Given that the specific theme of the Vox Session was "re-entry" there is also a specific analytical theme around this.

4.1 Identity

This section will consider the first research question regarding the ability of songwriting projects within prisons to enable prisoners to form positive identities and build new narratives, and which aspects of these interventions are key to this process. The concept of identity is outlined by Maruna (2001) as one of the three broad strands of desistance and the envisioning and fashioning of "an appealing and conventional" 'replacement self'" is noted as the third part of Giordano et al's (2002) desistance process. There are, however, disagreements over whether a new personal identity is essential to the desistance process; some argue that not all offenders need to experience this change in order to desist (Laub & Sampson, 2003). This is particularly felt to be less important where the individual does not have such an entrenched criminal identity.

The criminal histories of the participants are not known, however most of the prisoner and ex-prisoner participants stated to the researcher during interviews that this was/had been their first time in prison. Perhaps because of this most did not appear to view themselves as having a "criminal" identity and stated that prior to their imprisonment they had "lived a normal life", "had a good life, a decent life" and spoke of how their "head was never in prison" and "I've always had my heid over the fence". This narrative appears to reflect what Maruna (2001) termed a "redemption script" where they feel they have control over their future and that with the right support and assistance can achieve all they are "meant to" in life. Some participants did acknowledge, however, that although they may not necessarily see themselves as having a criminal identity they recognise that other members of the community to which they will be returning may still view them in this way. One prisoner participant who chose to write their individual song about their impending release and re-entry into the community wrote the following lyrics:

"Here I am outcast, people can't forget my past

…

I've changed but they won't let me, oh I've changed"

(Cameron)

When asked about the song he had chosen to write he stated "…as I said before you might want to make the change but certain people willnae allow you to forget the things you've done".

This suggests that forming a new positive identity or a new personal narrative is not only related to the offender's sense of a positive personal identity but also the rest of society who

must be willing to accept this identity. This relates to McNeill's (2012) strands of rehabilitation which outlines the necessity for social rehabilitation, which is where there is an acceptance of the "ex-offender" by the community they are returning to, and also to the concept of "tertiary desistance".

Part of this acceptance can be seen during the Vox Session itself, where despite the mix of participants (prisoners, ex-prisoners, prison officer, academic criminologists) there did not appear to the researcher to be any differentiation between those taking part. This was also noted by one of the academic participants who stated:

> "…when we first got there we introduced ourselves, we identified as something like a musician, or an academic or a student, you know, and then the fact that those identities, well they didn't fall away in the case of the very talented musicians it was quite obvious, but for the group it stopped feeling like, it didn't feel divided in any way really".

> (Angela)

One of the musicians taking the workshop also commented on the lack of distinction between the different "types" of participant:

> "I felt like really quickly, because of the group work when everybody started to work together, I felt that those boundaries were, you know barriers or boundaries, were knocked down really quickly for me… for me when I was taking part in discussions it didn't feel like there was a them and us in the groups if that makes sense"

Although the community created during the Vox Session is not necessarily representative of the wider community to which the prisoners will return, the acceptance displayed during the workshop can represent the beginnings of, or possibilities for, social rehabilitation, which according to McNeill (2012) is an integral part of the desistance process.

When asked how they felt about the workshop being run by people from outside the prison system the prisoner participants made comment as follows:

"I quite liked the fact as well that you were speaking to people other than prisoners and guards… Just speaking to normal people."

(Kevin)

"…maist times in prison all you do is talk about like eh, drugs, what they're in for, or offences, know what I mean, and they kind of things. So you're trying to pull yourself away from that."

(Cameron)

"I've thought it's been quite good, all yous that are here from the outside, you're easy enough to talk to and get a banter with yous."

(Mark)

While a change in personal narrative is recognised as important in the desistance process, imprisonment can often inhibit this change by reducing the opportunities for prisoners to come into contact with individuals outwith the prison system. The first two quotes illustrate one of the benefits of external agencies such as Vox Liminis running workshops within

prisons as it allows participants to begin to distance themselves from their life in prison which, despite the fact they may not feel they have a "criminal" identity, can revolve around criminality narratives in which they may feel they must participate, instead allowing interaction with "normal" people. The final quote was said with some note of surprise that those from "outside" were not really so different. The opportunity for those inside prison to interact with those from "outside" allows the prisoners to see that they are able to relate to and communicate with those from "the outside" where often they will instead have had their differences reinforced.

This theme of a "normal" identity continued when discussing any potential sharing of the songs produced during the session with the public with one prisoner participant stating:

> "I think that's brilliant, know what I mean, cos then it'll gie folk, let them know that we're still, even though we're in prison, we've still got feelings, we're still normal."
>
> (Cameron)

Again this highlights an important aspect of Vox Sessions where the songs produced are there to be shared with the public, highlighting the importance of not only the process of the prisoner beginning to identify themselves more positively but also the rest of society accepting this identity and viewing them as "normal".

In relation to the prisoner/prison officer relationship, this was the first time a prison officer had taken an active part in a Vox Session. There were obviously potential issues of power imbalance in this scenario as well as the potential enforcement of "prisoner" identities. When asked about the presence of a prison officer most of the prisoner participants commented that

they were okay with this, that he was fully taking part and they are just doing their job. One prisoner participant commented that they would have been more comfortable if the officer had not been present and another specifically felt that the prisoner/prison officer relationship was still present within the workshop firstly due to the fact the officer was still in uniform and also as "It's like a teacher, and you're no, you're supposed to be the same as us here but he's never, he's pulled rank on us and I didn't like that" (Paul).

Through observation of the prisoner/prison officer interaction the researcher observed a change in the officer across the workshop. On the first day a distinction was made between the prisoners and the other participants as although all were eating lunch together within The Shack the prisoners had to first leave and register elsewhere before returning for lunch. This involved the workshop being interrupted and work having to stop. On the second and third days the officer carried out this registration on the prisoners' behalf allowing them to remain with the rest of the group, although of course this created a distinction when he had to leave to carry this out. Due to the nature of the prison environment, however, some interruption due to issues such as this is likely to be unavoidable. The general manner of the prison officer was also observed to change as on arrival he did carry obvious authority and there appeared to be a clear distinction between himself and the prisoners, however, by the end of the first day while there was an obvious reminder of his authority from his uniform, other than this he appeared to have become simply a participant.

The prison officer noted the potential benefits of working with prisoners in an environment such as the Vox Session with regards to the prisoner/prison officer relationships and how they view each other as:

"It then lets you see a different side and they probably see a different side of me as well… I think something like this shows you that when we actually all put it down together and write about our experiences, my experiences personally and emotionally are no different to what the guys have been writing about".

One of the ex-prisoner participants also noted the advantages of prisoners and prion officers working together in this way:

"I think it's good because through having them both in the same room if the prison officer opens up you'll find the prisoner gradually, and you'll find that what happens is the prison officer will be like 'Christ I've never seen them be like that before' and the prisoners will turn around and say 'Actually they're alright' and they'll walk away with a different relationship to they had maybe before they went into that room".

(Alex)

Observation of a conversation between two of the prisoner participants and the prison officer on the type of music they liked and bands they had seen when they were younger resulted in similarities which seemed to surprise one of the prisoner participants in particular. The creation of this unique environment where there is the potential of interactions such as this to occur creates opportunities not only for prisoners' identities to be viewed differently but also for prison officers to be allowed to take on an identity separate to that given to them through their role within the prison, which may enable changes in relationships in the prison outwith the workshop.

While none of the prisoner or ex-prisoner participants appeared to have taken on a "criminal" identity the Vox Session did provide the potential for a level of social rehabilitation where the "community" within the workshop accepted this "normal" identity. Many of the aspects of the Vox Session which are key to the reinforcement of this positive identity are not specific to songwriting workshops, for example, bringing in people from outside the prison environment and enabling prisoners and prison officers to work together. The ability to share the often deeply personal process of lyric writing, however, and the resultant community this sharing can create can bring about the realisation that everyone often has similar thoughts and feelings regardless of their situation and this can be the key to affirming the identity of a prisoner as not being "other" but rather having the potential to be the same as those outwith the prison system.

This idea of a "non-prisoner" identity is carried on by the Vox Unbound sessions which are held weekly for anyone involved in Vox and involve the group firstly eating a meal together and then going on to create and play music together. A number of the participants currently within Castle Huntly stated that they planned to attend these sessions after their release. When asked the reason for setting up this particular venture a Vox Liminis staff member stated "…it was partly just out of that demand [they had been asked by released prisoners who had attended Vox Sessions], but I mean the kind of thinking was 'Let's create an ongoing group that makes stuff together, that's not just for people coming out of prison but it's for people involved in Vox'". Given the number of services which are specifically for "ex-prisoners" this appears to be one of the few opportunities where they can attend a group and be able to bring their own identity and not one of an "ex-prisoner". A Vox Liminis staff member commented that one of the Vox Unbound participants had actually stated that it is one of the few things that they go to where they don't feel judged and that they just feel a part

of it. This ability to reinforce potential identity changes which may occur during Vox Sessions after release has the potential to further support desistance processes.

4.2 Maturational Reform and Motivation

Moving on to consider the second research question, a further broad strand of desistance identified by Maruna (2001) is that of maturational reform and part of this is the decision making process and a sense of an individual's agency and autonomy, which the nature of imprisonment can often inhibit. In fact it was noted by the prison officer that when the prisoners arrive at Castle Huntly "…for the first time they have to start thinking for themselves, they haven't had to think, they've had a regime that thinks for them".

The songwriting process in Vox Sessions, however, involves a lot of decisions and choices which have to be made by participants, although supported by the facilitators and musicians. For example, when writing their individual songs, participants were able to choose the topic to write about and there was no fixed format (eg. V1, V2, Chorus, V3, etc.) which they had to follow. When it came to putting the lyrics to music most of the participants relied on the musicians to do this as they either could not play instruments themselves or where they could it was not to a high enough standard to compose music, however much of the decision making process regarding the sound was still left with the songwriter and all participants stated the song still felt like theirs even though they had not always written the music. One prisoner participant noted:

"I told them how I wanted it… I said I want to keep it somewhere between Paulo Nutini and The Proclaimers… And then they gave me it and I said 'No that's too fast, that's too slow, that's too much'; it's brilliant working with them".

This was an area the musicians were particularly conscious of, noting that art is very individual and that although they were able to empathise with the feelings or emotions expressed by the songwriter, placing lyrics to a melody and putting them to music is a very personal process. While recognising that participants did not always have the musical vocabulary to fully articulate how they wanted their song to sound, their opinions and choices were made paramount to the process.

Observing the participants during this process appeared to highlight the differences between those who had participated in a Vox Session previously and those for whom this kind of environment and process was being experienced for the first time. Those for whom this was their first Vox Session appeared more reticent and would be happy for the musicians or facilitators to take a larger role in the decision making during the songwriting process. Whether they were unsure of the medium and saw the musicians as "experts" and therefore wished them to take decisions for this reason or whether for some it may be that due to being in the prison environment for a length of time they are less used to making decisions and being offered choices and so are less confident in taking control and doing so is unknown.

As well as decision making, a further intermediate outcome on the journey towards desistance is for the individual to begin to exhibit agency, autonomy and a sense of motivation. These are qualities which McNeill (2006) notes as key components in the desistance paradigm and Giordano et al (2002) recognise as the first point in the desistance process – "a general cognitive openness" to change. This motivation and ownership of the songwriting process was again particularly noticeable in relation to the prisoner participants

who had previously attended a Vox Session. Three of the participants for whom this was the case arrived at the beginning of the workshop with lyrics or ideas that they wished to work on. Throughout the workshop this motivation and "ownership of the process" was apparent across all the participants with one of the academics noting that "by the end we were all just scribbling down stuff all the time without any encouragement, everyone wanted to do that" (Angela). This motivation was also recognised by one of the facilitators who stated "that kind of motivation to keep doing it off their own back rather than just being facilitated all the time was apparent for a few of them" as well as being recognised by the prison officer who noted the prisoner participants had been "busy beavering away writing their lyrics" between sessions. One prisoner participant was observed taking the flip chart paper with their group's song lyrics on away with them at the end of the first day stating they were going to copy them out and work on them that night.

This sense of agency and autonomy was not only illustrated during the workshop itself but in relation to previous Vox Sessions by the activities of participants following its completion. In their Annual Report 2013-14, provided to the researcher by Vox Liminis (2014), they provide details of activities which have been set up by prisoners following their participation in Vox Liminis projects. These include a peer-led guitar group within HMP Castle Huntly which was supported by a Vox Liminis guitar amnesty to provide the group with instruments and also a prisoner initiated chanter group which was set up again at HMP Castle Huntly following the instigation of the guitar group.

Again, while these qualities can be encouraged by general arts and music programmes the unique nature of songwriting means the whole process from choice of topic to choice of melody and musical accompaniment involves a high level of responsibility for decision

making to be taken by the participants. There also appears to be an extremely high level of motivation evident in all the participants of the Vox Session.

4.3 Social Bonds and Social Capital

The journey towards desistance also requires opportunities to build both human and social capital. While the former can involve providing, for example, educational and skills training, the latter involves individuals maintaining and cultivating social networks and bonds which can help support them in their desistance journey. The prison experience can be particularly isolating and rather than encouraging the maintenance of social bonds can end up leading to their breakdown as opportunities to communicate with friends and family members are restricted.

From the choice of focus for their individual songs the importance of their partner is evident with four participants choosing to write a song for/about their partner:

"This girl is special

She means the world to me

…

She'll always stand by me

…

I'll dedicate my life to her"

(Paul)

"I don't want no other baby, it's you I had to find

So no matter what you're thinking, hear my words as they are true

I don't want nobody else but you"

(Andy)

"Me and you forever

Always together

Together forever"

(David)

With regards to the songs written for/about partners, all intended to give the songs to their partners and in a prison environment where opportunities to express affection or these sentiments as one might in a "normal" relationship are restricted, the provision of this opportunity through the Vox Session seems particularly important with participants noting:

"…you want to write love songs to them, make them feel special, you know you're thinking about them all the time."

(Paul)

"…I just write them for her to cheer her up a bit… just like telling her everything's gonna be alright basically aye, so I just like to let her know, reassure her"

(Andy)

Although these sentiments may be something that everyone who has been separated from their partner for a length of time feels, prison is not always an environment where these feelings are easily expressed with one prisoner participant noting:

"…everybody's kinda been through the same in here, either losing family or missing people and letting people know that you love them and all that kind of stuff. And for a guy it's hard to express that so that's how it's good to do it through music"

"…in prison you put on a face, like you cannae show your emotions really because you're seen as weak, but in here the day obviously everybody's on the same level and they want to do the same thing so it lets you express they feelings"

(Cameron)

Two other participants also chose to write about family members in the form of their father and their son. In relation to the former this was about the death of their father, while the latter was written by a prisoner participant who had not seen his son throughout his period of incarceration but wished to build a relationship with him on his release.

This openness and willingness to share emotions by the prisoner participants was recognised and commented upon by the prison officer:

"…I've been really encouraged how, and I include myself in this, how much the guys actually opened up… the guys that are involved in this, they don't associate with themselves in prison, they're not great pals, but they're able to sit down together and openly write about their feelings and then stand up and as part of a group sing about those feelings."

The unique combination of what is essentially creative writing along with music in a songwriting workshop appears to offer participants the opportunity to express themselves more easily as reflected in the following comments by prisoner and ex-prisoner participants:

> "…so probably it's giving you a wee chance to express yourself aye through music, whether it's playing or humming or singing or writing."
>
> (Kevin)

> "…songwriting's kinda been a kinda release cos I like writing stories, erm, but songwriting I can say what I want in very few lines."
>
> (Lee)

> "…I express myself more writing than I do any other way."
>
> (David)

> "…aye I think it's fantastic aye the set up they've got. Giving guys the opportunity to maybe express themselves when they cannae really dae it but they can dae it in writing, they can put it down in words, and express it in a song"
>
> (Andy)

The fact that so many participants chose to use this opportunity to express themselves to write about family, and particularly their partners, appears to illustrate the importance of this bonding social capital in their lives. This finding is important not only due to the importance of social bonds in relation to desistance but also as this appears to be a more significant

feature in relation to songwriting workshops than other arts interventions where the focus of research is not so much in this area.

As mentioned earlier, the prison environment can put barriers in the way of maintaining these bonds while a family member is incarcerated. One prisoner participant noted the difficulties in maintaining relationships with those outside prison:

> "When your phone calls and letters start off getting a few all the time and then they die aff and die aff, cos nobody uses letters anymair, you know what I mean. So you're sitting there wondering how am I no getting this letter, is there something the matter with the pigeon, is the pigeon no working?"
>
> (Cameron)

With limited visiting time and the 21st century modes of communication such as text messaging or social media not accessible to prisoners they are left with writing letters or phone calls. The latter can still be restricted, however, as illustrated by the lyrics of one prisoner participant's song:

> "Credit's low, I can't phone out
>
> …
>
> Credit's low, can't hear your voice
>
> …
>
> Credit's low, I can't reach you
>
> My mind's trapped, I need you
>
> Sent a letter home, it says a lot

Sent a letter home, it says it all"

(David)

Perhaps the use of written forms of communication by those in prison makes them more comfortable with the songwriting process as technology appears to have almost eliminated the need for writing in today's society. Many of the prisoner participants spoke of attending creative writing classes within the prison while for non-prisoner participants their last experience of this kind of writing was at school, however following their experience in the workshop they did recognise its benefits and spoke of trying to continue to write after the workshop.

While some participants acknowledged the difficulties of maintaining relationships with family one prisoner stated "I've seen my wee lassie a few times, she's come up on visits…[son] doesn't want to talk to me but [daughter] does. I'll see them soon enough." When then asked if it was difficult to keep up relationships while in prison, he responded "Keeping up the relationships maybe aye, but there's plenty of time to dae that when you get out" (Joe). This suggests that the participant expects relationships to return to what they were prior to his imprisonment and if they do not, this unexpected setback could act as what Shapland and Bottoms (2011) term a "barrier" or "obstacle" in the desistance journey. This participant did not choose write about their family for their individual song.

The importance of social bonds is not only important in relation to external individuals linked to the participants but also in relation to the group of people who made up the temporary "community" of the Vox Session over the three days. This was particularly recognised in relation to the group songwriting task with one prisoner participant noting:

"…And then when it comes together in the end yous have all had a wee bit of input, so it's like a group thing…a wee bond."

(Kevin)

For one participant who had spent all their adult life within prison, they noted that this was the only experience they had had of working in a team other than when they had played football, so creating social bonds with others in this way of working together had never happened for them. Tocci (2007, p.2) notes that "much rehabilitative and job-skills training tend to isolate the convicts in solitary endeavours" and "even most commonly found arts activities of drawing, painting, creative writing or reading are wholly individual pursuits. They lack the one essential feature for resocialization: namely actual socialization". This opportunity to socialise with people from outside the prison environment is acknowledged by the prisoner participants:

"…It's good to get to know a few new faces and that."

(Andy)

"…you're meeting different people…"

(Paul)

The importance of these social bonds is also recognised by the prison officer who notes that from his experience of working with prisoners:

"A lot of them find solace locked behind a door, they don't actually like being out on association and exercise and to take somebody that's had 15 years of that and then put

them out in society, it's not just setting them up to fail, it's wrong for society, it's wrong for the prisoners, it's wrong for the family, it's wrong for the taxpayer, it's wrong for everything."

Through songwriting workshops, participants who choose to write for family members are provided with the opportunity to strengthen their bonding social capital. With the addition of a melody and music the song moves beyond being written word only, such as a poem, and the sentiments of the lyrics can be enhanced by music (Lucas, 2013). By then producing a high quality recording the song can become a "gift" for a family member, one of the few things a prisoner can provide their family with during imprisonment.

For all participants, however, there is also the opportunity to cultivate 'bridging social capital' by being part of the Vox Session community created over the three days. For many, imprisonment can isolate and stigmatise and although they may be part of a community it is often one which is not viewed positively. The opportunity to create these social bonds and build this temporary community is a key part of the Vox Session and was recognised by one of the facilitators and one of the academic participants:

"…in a Vox Session you always create a like a kind of temporary community…"

(Facilitator)

"…what struck me about this experience is how it was the emphasis on true engagement with other people and creating, we created a community in that workshop, so creating a kind of community not based on the need to find a job, or based on the need to not re-offend, you know, it was just about engaging with people

and through having that engagement, I don't know, something positive was created I guess"

<div align="right">(Angela)</div>

This creation of a community and a "safe environment" to share emotions may also have an impact on the willingness of participants to be fully open during the process, the occurrence of which was noted above. One of the musicians spoke to the group of the death of her mother and later commented to one of the facilitators that normally she just did not speak about this and was surprised that the atmosphere of the group had meant that she felt comfortable enough to do so. The ability of a Vox Session to create an environment such as this within a prison provides participants an opportunity to be fully open with their emotions, a process necessary when trying to cultivate and maintain social bonds.

It is also interesting to note, however, the pressure that may be placed on family members as a result of the participants placing such an importance on these relationships. For example the following lyrics illustrate the level of reliance that may occur in relation to a family member:

"There's a struggle ahead

But with you by my side

We'll be ready to face the world"

<div align="center">(Mark)</div>

Therefore, while social bonds are key to the desistance process, support may be required not only for offenders in relation to this but also their families. Although not covered in the

scope of this research project it may be useful to speak to family members in relation to their experience of their relation taking part in a Vox Session, particularly where they are the subject or recipient of the song produced.

4.4 Confidence and Self-esteem

Often prison programmes can be seen as using deficit approaches where problems with offenders are identified and then "treated" or "fixed" and the prison environment tends to be one which highlights prisoners' limitations rather than their strengths. Vox Sessions, however, employ a strengths-based approach where the participants are part of the process and are able to fully contribute to this through their own skills and talents. This provides the opportunity for individuals to develop a sense of achievement and confidence during the workshop contributing to their self-esteem. This approach appears to be recognised by the participants who, when asked what they wanted to achieve from taking part in the workshop, generally responded that they just wished to write and record a song. One prisoner participant contrasted this with other prison events or services which they felt could have hidden agendas:

> "…there's no a, what do you call it thingmy reason, different reason for it… So here you come and you can be yourself and what it says on the tin is what you're daein"
>
> (Paul)

With regards to the choice of songwriting by Vox Liminis as the medium for their workshop they note their ambition in this choice:

"I actually think the ambition of writing songs somehow sets a kind of bar that's a whole lot higher than just playing instruments that you make covers through."

While it is recognised that confidence and a sense of achievement can be achieved through general music programmes, and these have been run previously by Vox Liminis, it is suggested that through the medium of songwriting and producing an original piece of work from scratch the sense of achievement can be greater and the potential impact of a resulting increase in confidence and self-esteem can be carried over to other aspects of the individual's life. This sense of achievement and its importance is reflected in the following comments by an academic and prisoner participants:

"…if you ever feel that you could put it onto a song or a CD dae that because it's amazing when you see the people's reactions when they see your, listen to your song."

(Cameron)

"…and everybody that's listened to it has said it's fantastic anaw so when other people are telling you that your song's good, you know what I mean, you know it's, it gies you a sense of achievement, you know you've done something."

(Andy)

"…I think it's nice looking back at how people were encouraging of each other in the group, you know, whether it was encouraging somebody to play the guitar or to sing or to use their words…And it did feel like a real sense of achievement when we got there."

The final quote above is in relation to the group songwriting exercise, which was the first time group work had been part of a Vox Session. This piece of work began as being based around the use of metaphors to consider the theme of re-entry. This method appeared to cause some issues with some of the prisoners commenting that the "students" could do this as they knew "big words" and they did not appear particularly comfortable or confident during this part of the workshop. One ex-prisoner participant commented "I just couldn't get it and I didn't really understand the concept". The facilitators recognised the challenging nature of this piece of work and acknowledged that the participants, including themselves, struggled with this process. The researcher can only comment on the group they were working in, where although there was an original idea, at some points the process became simply about finding a word that rhymed or a line that fitted rather than had a meaning. However, despite the challenging nature of this process all four groups completed and recorded a song, although some participants did comment that they were not 100% happy with it.

In relation to the confidence of participants, changes were observed across the three days of the workshop. In one instance one of the prisoner participants was generally quite quiet to begin with and worked on their own. Throughout the workshop, however, he began to mix more with the rest of the group asking what others were working on and, when prompted by the facilitators, had the confidence to offer suggestions. In another example, a prisoner participant appeared particularly quiet and unsure on the first day and into the morning of the second where he was being helped by another participant and when asked by one of the musicians if he wanted to come and work on music for his song, he appeared hesitant until the other participant offered to go with him. By the third day, however, while writing his

individual song, though he still appeared to like having someone next to him to help while he was writing, he appeared far more comfortable and confident. Another academic participant began by repeatedly saying they were not creative, however by the end of the process had written a particularly moving song which was praised by the participants as well as the facilitators and musicians.

This praise in a public forum is a particularly important part of this process and these findings build on previous research by, for example Cohen (2009) and Silber (2005), where the importance of a public performance of the work is highlighted. Throughout the workshop there would be live performances or recordings played of the participants' songs in front of the whole group. All these performances were respected with silence during the performance and what the researcher felt to be genuine applause after each song. Where participants had chosen to sing their own song there was always praise and a recognition that this was not an easy thing to do, particularly where the singer would comment that the musicians would have sung it better. After the performance of one participant's song another was witnessed at the break to go over and say they had almost been in tears listening to it. This affirmation not only of how good they felt each other's work was but also the fact that this was a safe environment where these sentiments could be expressed are important outcomes on the desistance journey.

This need to build confidence and self-esteem is not only recognised by Vox Liminis but is reflected in their choice of musician to lead this workshop with one finishing their interview with the researcher by stating:

"…it's that sense of community and building self-worth, being heard, because a lot of, certainly from my experience of what I've read or what I've seen in the world around me, because negative emotions and negative behaviour results because those things aren't being met, it's like a basic human need and if that's not met then there's no hope".

4.5 <u>A Cathartic Process</u>

One theme which emerged directly from the data is the cathartic nature of the songwriting process. Both an academic and prisoner participant spoke of the cathartic nature of their writing experience during the Vox Session:

"It was cathartic, you know a bit cathartic for me, that was you know difficult memories in there… I've written about it and now, I've been thinking about that memory for a long time and it's almost kind of written about now and I'm like oh, like I actually listened back loads and was like, it doesn't actually make me emotional when I listen to it back it's almost like I've written that now and that's out."

(Nicola)

"It's like writing a letter about all the bad things that are going on and ripping it up and posting it, posting it to a non-address and then you don't need to do that, it's as if you've unloaded it, know what I mean, so it is good that way."

(Cameron)

Many "traditional" rehabilitation programmes within prisons, such as cognitive programmes, aim to help prisoners think and react differently, dealing with feelings such as anger or

difficult situations in new ways whereas previously their coping mechanisms may have led to violence or criminality. Songwriting appears to offer the possibility of allowing individuals to let go of potentially destructive thoughts and feelings by writing them down and turning them into a song that can either be listened back to or simply put away.

4.6 <u>Re-entry</u>

In Shapland and Bottoms' (2011) description of the desistance process they mention the presence of "barriers" and "obstacles" which most offenders are likely to face on their journey towards desistance. These obstacles/barriers can be particularly present during the initial re-entry process where prisoners are released and first return to the community. Although the theme of the workshop was "re-entry" and this was the starting point for the group songwriting process, the songs all went off in very different directions and most participants felt the final version of their group song had little to do with re-entry. As the researcher was an active participant in the workshop and therefore the group songwriting process, I can only really comment on the process behind the production of my own group's song "How Close is the Thunder".

The process began by finding a metaphor to use as a lens to look at the theme of re-entry through. The group began by thinking about the uncertainty of re-entering into something or somewhere and how things may have changed and it can sometimes feel easier to stay where you are than go back where you are not sure of exactly what faces you. The metaphor that was chosen was the weather which can also be uncertain and the "approaching storm" is the coming of the time to re-enter and when we "count the distance" we are counting down the time until we re-enter. The refrain at the end of each verse of "How close is the thunder? I start to count again" symbolises the time when you have to re-enter coming closer and is

based on the counting between thunder and lightning strikes to estimate how close the storm is to being overhead. The second verse highlights the decision of whether to go out and face the storm, or tackle re-entering, or to stay where you are: "Will I buckle up my duffle coat, face the storm ahead? Or will I go upstairs, find shelter in my bed?" The middle section was added at the suggestion of the musician working with the group, however contains the phrase "To face it on my own" as one of the prisoners who was part of the group felt it was important to recognise that the decision to change must be made by the individual and no one can make them do something they don't want to do. The final verse is where the decision has been taken to go out and face the storm and then it begins to clear with the refrain changing to "How far is the thunder? No need to count again".

This optimistic turn to the end of the song indicates a sense of hope which is recognised as an important part of the journey towards desistance (Burnett & Maruna, 2004). It is not only the lyrics but also the music which reflect a sense of optimism as the song is in a major key. The musician who worked with the group discussed the use of minor chords to reflect the dark nature of a storm as they felt the song sounded very "happy" which was at odds with the idea of a storm, however, the group wished to retain the major feel to the song. One of the prisoner participants was particularly involved in the music side of the songwriting which was in contrast with his lack of input regarding the lyric writing where he would often sit back slightly from the rest of the group despite encouragement to join in with the process. The fact he was more involved in the music made it feel as if the song was still a full group production and that the sentiments of the song reflected all the group members.

While the full process involved in the other group songs is not known, one academic participant did speak of how their song "Our Little Phoenix" grew out of the idea of re-entry

as a "trusted safe space" to the prisoners within their group.   This highlights differences between how those actually about to experience re-entry view it and the views of academics and professionals working in the field who tend to view the experience of re-entry much more negatively.   There is also a sense of hope within this song and the possibility of a new start reflected in the chorus:

"They tear it down (x3); we will rebuild"

While it is not known what the actual experience of re-entry will be for these individuals the potential for setbacks if the experience is not as positive as they had anticipated is clear. However, the idea that re-entry is a "trusted safe space" taken along with the importance of partners in these participants' lives highlights the importance of these social bonds and the safety and comfort they provide for those returning to them.   Here it appears re-entry is less about the community and more about the family.

With regards to the individual songs, participants were able to choose any topic as a basis for their songwriting.   While many chose to write about family members one prisoner who was closest to "re-entering" chose to write explicitly about this subject in a song called "I've Changed".   The song begins with verse one outlining the wait to be released from prison:

"While the world goes on I sit

Waiting for the day to come

…

Hoping that I never return"

The second verse moves on to when they have been released and re-entered back into the community and encounter obstacles to change and judgement illustrating the importance of both the ex-prisoner and the community to which they are returning in the re-entry process:

"Take the first steps back to life

Everything stands in my way

Here I am outcast, people can't forget my past

They're stuck in their old ways"

The chorus reflects the fact that often the ex-offender can take on a new personal narrative and non-criminal identity but these are not always accepted by the community to which they are returning and this can cause a sense of worry and apprehension:

"I've changed by they won't let me, oh I've changed"

In the final verse the writer acknowledges they may face what Shapland and Bottoms' (2011) noted as "barriers" or "obstacles" on release but that they are in control of the choices they make and can avoid the revolving door of prison:

"Stay on the path of choices

Don't get led astray

There's so much, much more than that revolving door"

(Cameron)

When asked what the song was about the participant stated:

"…changing and trying to fit into the community and getting ready for they steps. Trying to get yourself prepared for people knocking you back down again, cos you might be on a high but obviously you've got to come to reality what they're gonna be thinking even though in your head you might have want to changed but people don't let you"

Although the other participants may have chosen not to write as explicitly about the theme of re-entry all acknowledged that they had been thinking about re-entry anyway, either as academics, as ex-prisoners who had recently been released from prison or as prisoners who had release dates coming up. The importance of open prisons in this process was emphasised by the prison officer:

"… it's also the time in the prisoner's sentence when they are beginning to look to being released, the future, the worry that comes with that. It's a real big part of their sentence and I think it's underplayed the role that open prisons play".

He went on to expand on this by noting that some prisoners may "fail" the test of re-entry on their home leaves and require further support in a closed prison environment but that this is preferable to them simply being released from closed conditions and "failing" in the community. Although Castle Huntly does provide support and services for prisoners around their release, one prisoner participant did note with regards to the Vox Session:

"I appreciated the fact that people actually think about this stage of a sentence where people's getting prepared to go back into the public and re-enter society, I suppose get

their life back, cos I've never really spoke about that to anybody and not even like family or that understand it."

<div align="center">(Kevin)</div>

Another ex-prisoner participant commented on the benefits of having a workshop such as this themed around re-entry:

"…I think it reassures that you're not the only one who's going to be re-entering… I think that being in that room with other people reassures you that you're not the only one going through it."

<div align="center">(Alex)</div>

Although all the prisoner participants acknowledged that they would be "re-entering" not all felt that this was a major issue for them:

"I don't really find that I'm re-entering myself into anything."

<div align="center">(Andy)</div>

"When I go hame I just feel like I've never been here but when I come back here I feel like I've never been hame."

<div align="center">(David)</div>

Some prisoner participants also commented that they did not feel like they had really been away that long:

"Just four year, no that long when you see some of them, it's alright."

(Joe)

"I'm quite lucky I've only done two years."

(Andy)

The prisoners here appeared to be distancing themselves from "proper" long term prisoners (the prison service terms a long term prisoners as someone sentenced to at least four years, although they may be released having served half this sentence) who may have difficulties with re-entry. While it is of course not known whether these prisoners will encounter issues when they are released the fact these have not been anticipated could have an impact on their desistance journey.

The fact that many of the prisoner participants did not speak of being apprehensive of re-entry and instead focused on returning to their partners/families is perhaps an indication of what they view re-entry as – less of a return to a wider community and more a return to a smaller family unit, although this may of course change as release becomes more imminent, or after release. This finding is important as research has previously looked at how arts interventions in prison can support the desistance journey but not considered what participants feel is the most important aspects around their re-entry. The importance placed on relationships indicates how key a role they have to play in the desistance journey. As outlined in Section 4.3 above, the opportunity provided through the creation of a song for a family member as well as the "community" experience of the Vox Session itself can have an impact on both bonding and bridging social capital and provide an opportunity to both maintain and cultivate these bonds.

This workshop also had an impact on the academic participants and their thought process around re-entry. Both of the academics interviewed reflected that while often the topic is discussed around hard, practical themes such as the importance of housing, employment, etc. this workshop had made them think about the softer themes of simply engaging with people and relationships and the impact this can have around re-entry. Songwriting workshops such as this Vox Session therefore appear to provide opportunities to both contribute to intermediate outcomes on the journey towards desistance as well as provide an insight into this journey for those working in the field of criminology and the study of desistance.

5. **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Vox Session which took place in HMP Castle Huntly appears to have had a range of impacts on the participants, either recognised by the participants themselves, observed by the researcher or taken from an analysis of their song lyrics. Although the size of the group and selection process for participants would not allow generalisations to be made across the wider prisoner population, important conclusions can still be drawn. Again, however, it should be borne in mind that this workshop took place within an open prison, which is a unique environment when compared with closed prisons and will also be likely to contain a subset of the prison population which has been motivated to comply with the process and conditions necessary to gain entry to an open prison.

There is a long history of the use of music programmes within prisons and more recently an increase in studies carried out on their impact, however, this research set out to specifically consider the unique aspects of songwriting programmes, both generally and from a desistance perspective, which is a rarely studied specific arts intervention within prison. In relation to

the issue of identity, this research built on previous studies of how arts interventions can enable prisoners to form positive identities and build new narratives by highlighting the importance of the wider community also accepting these identities. In this Vox Session the prisoner and ex-prisoner participants did not really see themselves as having a "criminal" identity, though recognised that others may not view them in the same way, so in relation to identity the workshop did not so much allow them to envisage a more positive "non-criminal" identity and narrative for themselves but provided a "community" who accepted this identity, providing a level of social rehabilitation or "tertiary desistance" to occur, or at least seem a possibility.

Many of the aspects of the Vox Session which can impact on the concept of identity such as the bringing in of people from outside the prison system, creation of a community where social rehabilitation has the potential to begin and enabling prisoners and prison officers to work together, could theoretically be achieved by any general arts intervention. However, the unique nature of songwriting which involves an often deeply personal process of lyric writing, when shared, has the potential to allow a deeper sense of "community" to form more quickly and easily, potentially having a greater effect on the concept of identity than other arts programmes.

With regards to other intermediate outcomes on the desistance journey, this Vox Session provided participants with the chance to make decisions and take responsibility for the process of which they were a part, rather than be merely a recipient. This is a key aspect of a further strand of desistance, maturational reform, which is often inhibited due to the infantilising nature of the prison environment and is an important aspect of the desistance paradigm. While other arts interventions do allow a level of autonomy, the songwriting

process belongs entirely to the writer from the choice of topic, to the structure of the song and even, although perhaps to a lesser degree dependent on music ability, how the melody and accompanying music are constructed. The ownership of this process and motivation of all the participants to fully take part in it was evident.

The third strand of desistance, social bonds, was also a key feature of the Vox Session with around half of the participants choosing to write their individual song for or about a family member, mostly their partner. The prison environment makes the maintenance and cultivation of social bonds difficult and the Vox Session offered a rare opportunity for the prisoners to provide a family member with a gift expressing their feelings when often provision of both support and material goods will be in the other direction. Again, while other arts programmes can result in an outcome that can be captured and given to prisoners to perhaps share with family and friends, the potentially emotional and individual nature of songwriting can produce a uniquely personal product.

It is not only external bonds which were supported by the Vox Session but also the bonds between the participants, musicians and facilitators. This form of bridging social capital within the temporary "community" produced within the workshop can provide a form of social rehabilitation as mentioned earlier, along with the opportunity to work with others and socialise in a way that can often be prevented in the isolating environment of prison, even during activities and education opportunities provided by the prison.

Again, as with other music and general arts programmes, the Vox Session appeared to provide an opportunity to increase the participants' confidence and self-esteem. The ambition of producing a song from scratch, however, has the potential to create a greater

sense of achievement than simply playing an existing song or instrumental piece and consequently cause a more significant increase in a participant's confidence and self-esteem. Key to this process seems to be the sharing of the material produced with the group and the opportunity for their respect and appreciation of each song to be shown.

One theme which did not appear from the literature review but which emerged from the data itself is the cathartic nature of the songwriting process. Although numerous participants noted they found it easier to express themselves in writing, two particularly noted the cathartic nature of this writing process. In relation to the rehabilitation of prisoners, interventions within prison often aim to change the way they can deal with difficult and negative feelings in a more positive way and songwriting could offer potential in this area.

Finally, in relation to the theme of the Vox Session, re-entry, the songs and interviews have provided an insight to this process from the point of view of recently released prisoners and also those who have upcoming release dates. While one prisoner, who was closest to release, did express doubts over whether he would be accepted as a "changed" person and recognised the difficulties of the re-entry process, most had a more positive outlook and viewed re-entry as a welcome return to their family unit rather than a more uncertain return to the wider community. While criminologists and those working in the field of desistance tend to view re-entry in a more negative manner, recognising the importance of family and therefore the significant impact of any failure of these social bonds could be key in supporting the journey towards desistance and as noted above the Vox Session appears to provide the space and opportunity to offer some support in the maintenance of these bonds. The potential pressure this emphasis could place on family members is also of interest, however, and considering the workshop experience for them could be a useful future project.

Overall, although the Vox Session may only be 3 days long, Vox Liminis note from their experience that these short, intensive programmes are usually more successful at creating a cohesive and ambitious group who achieve and experience much more than with shorter weekly sessions in a prison setting and this cohesion and ambition was certainly noted by the researcher. During the Vox Session the researcher noted an increase in the confidence, self-esteem and motivation of participants, although it is also recognised that these traits were already present in some participants, generally those with previous experience of Vox Sessions. The workshop provided an opportunity for decision making and the participants to exercise a sense of autonomy as well as be part of a group willing to accept their "non-criminal" identity and not see them as "other". The "safe environment" created also allowed an openness and sharing of emotion where very personal songs could be created and both bonding and bridging social capital built. As well as the above outcomes, which are all part of the desistance journey, the Vox Session also provided the opportunity to take part in a potentially cathartic writing process and discuss and share views on re-entry with others who are also, or have recently, experienced this.

While conclusions have been drawn from the available data, further gaps and potential research opportunities have also arisen. While an analysis was carried out on the song lyrics produced, due to time constraints it was not possible to go through the finished song lyrics with the writers in order to get a detailed explanation of their meaning. This could result in a greater understanding around the concept of social bonds. Given the importance of social bonds in the desistance process and the prominence of family members, and partners in particular, in the choice of song theme it would also have been useful to speak to the recipients of the songs and to discuss the experience and meaning of the songs for them. As

mentioned above, there is the potential for pressure to be placed on these family members and they are as important a part of the desistance process as the offenders themselves. While it is felt this research has added to the body of work around the area of songwriting projects within prisons, particularly in relation to desistance, there is still a great deal of learning to occur in this area.

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APPENDICES

Back at the River

(Andy, James, Mark)

Back at the river

My feet are sore

I've been walking forever

I won't walk anymore

Losing these old boots

And these holey socks

Need the ice water

Need the cold shock

Back at the river

Casting a song

But someone is missing

Who taught me so long

A voice of the old school

He helped me begin

He knew the river

Like his own skin

So brick up the river

Build me a dam

The water's fast flowing

No one knows who I am

Brick up the river

Build me a dam

Brick up the river

Build me a dam

Here in the water

On the old round stones

It's a long lonely summer

Dried it out to the bone

The fish have stopped rising

The mayflies have gone

There's nothing to catch here

This is not home

Let flow the river

Break down the dam

I'm safe in the water

I know who I am

Let flow the river

Break down the dam

Let flow the river

Let flow the river

Kicking the pebbles

I'm casting the bait

Reeling in hope

And the river's in spate

Boy stands beside me

He's casting a line

He's angling for knowledge

I'm safe in my mind

Jumped in the river

I've broken the dam

I'm safe in the water

I know who I am

Jumped in the river

I've broken the dam

I'm back in the river

I'm back in the river

I'm back in the river

I'm back in the river

How Close is the Thunder?

(Angela, Cameron, Kevin, Researcher)

I always count the distance, of the approaching storm I

measure it in silent seconds, while the skies are torn

Stomach churning, butterflies struggle in sideways rain

How close is the thunder? I start to count again

Will I buckle up my duffle coat, face the storm ahead?

Or will I go upstairs, find shelter in my bed?

Difficult decisions, in this hurricane

How close is the thunder? I start to count again

Lightning illuminates

Natures awe, a wake-up call

A message from somewhere

To face it on my own

A wake-up call, to face it on my own

Outside abandoned brollies, drip and start to dry

Birds leaving cover, circling in the sky

Relieved to see uncertainty, cleared for new terrain

How close is the thunder? I start to count again

How far is the thunder? No need to count again

Our Little Phoenix

(Paul, Joe, Nicola)

Nestled in nettles, shielded from the noise

The river beats the traffic, our soundtrack of choice

Crackle of the fire, clothes tinged with smoke

And all of us are Tarzan, swinging from an oak

They tear it down (x3)

We will rebuild

War whoops from wildcats, aerosol grenades

Black ash and splinters, left after raids

Old holey castle, that let in the rain

Levelled by raiders, rebuilding again

They tear it down (x3)

We will rebuild

Time to regroup, with my trusted band

Work and hard labour, rough calloused hands

Scavenged a couch, called it a throne

Rebuilt a haven, a place of our own

They tear it down (x3)

We will rebuild

They tear it down (x3)

We will rebuild

Nestled in nettles, shielded from noise

The river bears the traffic, back when we were boys

Seasons Came

(Facilitator (x2), Alex, Lee)

Seasons came and we moved with them

Hundreds took flight for something new

Rain in their faces turned to sunlight

Open these wings, carry us through

CHORUS

And right above me

I saw my flying V

From the landscape of the old

I feel the warmth as my wings unfold

Every day on this lonely carousel

It means that I don't fly away

Since I brokered a steady rhythm

I am clipped, my feathers frayed

CHORUS (x2)

I feel the warmth as my wings unfold

A Thousand Things

(Mark)

There's a thousand things I'd like to say

But my heart won't let it out

And every time I think of you

Another tear falls

So put your arms around me

And tell me everything's gonna be alright

There's a thousand things I'd like to say

But my head can't find the words

And every time I imagine your face

My heart pounds like a drum

You take me from the darkness

And show me that I'm ready to face the light

CHORUS

I miss you more than words can say

Will everything be ok?

Will everything be ok?

There's a thousand things I'd like to say

But these words are all choked up

And every time I try to speak

My tongue gets tied

You can cure me of the silence

And help me figure out how to say it right

There's a struggle ahead

But with you by my side

We'll be ready to face the world

CHORUS

Colour in the Grey

(Nicola)

Every day, nothing seems to change, somehow

Day after day, the same until now

I've been waiting for a paintbrush

To colour in the grey

To colour in the grey

Every week, new horizons recede, somehow

Week after week, repeat until now

I've been waiting for a paintbrush

To colour in the grey

To colour in the grey

Every year, pathways disappear, somehow

Year after year, reappears until now

I've been waiting for a paintbrush

To colour in the grey

Colour in the grey

To colour in the grey

Colour in the grey

Dining Room, Hospital

(Nicola)

It's nearly five o'clock

You lie still, eyes open wide

Roles reversed, I hold your hand

Telling stories at your side

People who have sat here

Round plates of food and rising steam

Dogs snatching fallen crumbs

Your face then still a beam

CHORUS

Climb up stairs, impossible

Bed replaced the old table

That is where you lost it all

The dining room, hospital

It's nearly half past five

But the night's passing slow

Waiting for company

From the morning radio

Staring at the red carpet

Still stained from Sunday roast

Echoes of another time

When you were not half ghost

CHORUS

It's nearly six am

Bed is coming soon

Break the silence

It's out of place in this room

Christmas crackers, laughter

Drank too much, voices raised

Fight to be the loudest

But you weren't quiet in those days

CHORUS (x2)

<u>Dragonfall</u>

(Joe)

Chasing after beetles, eyes dark and lost

Death just around the corner, who gives a toss

Felt the world crashing, shivering to the bone

Like one man on a mountain, wet and alone

CHORUS

Grace under pressure, this is the key

But things will get better, just wait and see

Dig in your heels, get ready for the brawl

Time in your life to start standing tall

Don't end up like all the lost souls

Swimming with the sharks, it's a bad road to go

Breaking bread with the black eyed pack

Waiting for that bayonet in the back

CHORUS

Chasing after beetles, eyes dark and lost

Honey Bee

(Lee)

CHORUS

Honey bee, oh honey bee, make it work, make it work with me

We can build, we can build a hive

You make me feel, make me feel alive

Tiny things you do, may seem small to you

Keep our love so strong

Ting jigsaw parts, puzzle we can solve

Two pieces making one

CHORUS

Tiny peas in a pod, tiny strawberry seeds

No thorns on a rose

Tiny things you do, may seem small to you

Keep our love so strong

CHORUS (x2)

Hide in Plain Sight

(James)

I see the pain, it's etched on your face

You try to show, that there's not a trace

You know everything, it will be okay

Today, it is just one more day

This journey, it has a long way to run

There will be better days yet to come

I know when I say, you just don't believe

But the time it comes, they will have to leave

CHORUS

Like a hole in the wall

You try to blend in

You hide in plain sight

Hoping it won't begin

Your inner strength

Is betrayed by your flesh

You hide in plain sight

But you know it begins

I see the pain, it's etched on your face

You try to show, that there's not a trace

You know everything, it will be okay

Today, it is just one more day

CHORUS (x2)

I've Changed

(Cameron)

While the world goes on I sit

Waiting for the day to come

It's a long, long wait, till I walk out the gate

Hoping that I never return

Hoping that I never return

Take the first steps back to life

Everything stands in my way

Here I am outcast, people can't forget my past

They're stuck in their old ways

They're all stuck in their old ways

CHORUS

But no matter what, I gotta pick things up

I've changed but they won't let me, oh I've changed

But no matter what, I gotta pick things up

I've changed but they won't let me, oh I've changed

Stay on the path of choices, don't get led astray

There's so much, much more than that revolving door

Cos a statistic gives themselves a way

Cos a statistic gives themselves away

CHORUS

I've changed but they won't let me, oh I've changed

I've changed but they won't let me, oh I've changed

Me and You

(David)

I kiss you on the cheek and move to your neck

I kiss you on the lips and touch your flesh

I'll do the simple things for you, like running you a bath

I love the simple things, like making you laugh

CHORUS

And it's me and you forever

Always together

Together, forever, and it starts tonight

And it's me and you forever

Always together

Together forever, hold me tonight

I must be in love or just falling for your tricks

You've got me addicted to the taste of your lips

I'm happy every minute, you've got me beguiled

I'd move with you to Sweden, if it makes you smile

CHORUS

I get lost in the moment

I get lost in your eyes

I am lost in the moment

I am lost in your eyes

I get lost in the moment

I get lost in your eyes

I am lost in the moment

I am lost in your eyes

And it's me and you forever

Always together

Together, forever, and it starts tonight

And it's me and you forever

Always together

Together forever, hold me tonight

New Ties

(Alex)

CHORUS

I can't let it show

Don't want the world to see

I'm just a puppet

And you're the maker of me

I can't let it show

Don't want the world to see

I'm just a puppet

And you're the maker of me

Imagine holding hands

Imagine kissing lips

Never thought I could feel

A love as free as this

CHORUS (x2)

I hope you see through me

I hope you catch my smile

Never want you to think

That love is not my style

CHORUS (x2)

Premonition

(Paul)

You were my premonition, you were my dream come true

You were my premonition, my one and only you

CHORUS

Each day I fall in love all over again

Freedom comes from loving you

Comes from loving you

You were my trusted keeper, my heart is full of love for you

You were my trusted keeper, my one and only you

CHORUS

You were my sole protection, my heart and soul belong to you

You were my sole protection, my one and only you

Each day I fall in love all over again

Freedom comes from loving you

Each day I fall in love all over again

Freedom comes from loving you

Comes from loving you

Rollercoaster Relationship

(Andy)

When I tell you that I love you, honey

Hear my words and keep them, honey

Cause I love you from the bottom of my heart

I know we have our bad days, baby

Sometimes we're trapped in a maze, maybe

But I don't want no hot and cold, honey

CHORUS

This rollercoaster is messing with my mind

I don't want no other baby, it's you I had to find

So no matter what you're thinking, hear my words as they are true

I don't want nobody else but you

I know it's hard when you're in pain, baby

But if I could cast a spell, baby

I'd fix you up and sweep you off your feet

Relax and ease your mind, honey

And I will think you'll find, honey

We're made for each other, so let us shine

CHORUS

We're made for each other, so let us shine

We're made for each other, so let us shine

CHORUS

I don't want nobody baby but you

Sent a Letter Home

(David)

Credit's low, I can't phone out

My mind's trapped, trapped full of doubt

Sent a letter home, it says a lot

Sent a letter home, it says it all

Credit's low, can't hear your voice

My mind's trapped, don't have a choice

Sent a letter home, it says a lot

Sent a letter home, it says it all

Credit's low, I can't reach you

My mind's trapped, and I need you

Sent a letter home, it says a lot

Sent a letter home, it says it all

It says it all

Song for Philip

(Angela)

Circular huts like smiling eyes

Air as hot as the woodsmoke

Laughter punctuates like clouds to the skies

This is home (x3)

Circular huts like bloodshot eyes

Fear as hot as the woodsmoke

Gunfire punctuates like clouds to the skies

This is home (x3)

Foot after foot and mile after mile

The angry borders

Carved by the sweeping hand of the Nile

Circular huts like strangers' eyes

Time fading like the woodsmoke

Memories punctuate like clouds to the skies

This is not home (x3)

Foot after foot and mile after mile

The angry borders

Carved by the sweeping hand of the Nile

Circular huts like tired eyes

Loss lingers like the woodsmoke

But hope punctuates like clouds to the skies

This is home (x4)

This Girl is Special

(Paul)

This girl is special

She means the world to me

So elegant, refined, so free

She's everything that she needs to be

Oh I remember

How I made her walk to me

The day we met down by the quay

She's everything that I need to see

She drives me crazy

With every little move she makes

A shake of the hips, her shoulder she dips

Blows me a kiss from those beautiful lips

My loving baby

She'll always stand by me

She's honest and true, we're stuck like glue

We'll be together our whole life through

Hold on honey, missed and blue I'm

coming home to be with you Diamond

smile will light our world again

My broken woman

Dark days and lonely nights

She sits at home, so all alone

So far away from the life we have known

This man is her man

I'll dedicate my life to her

We'll get over this strife, as husband and wife

You'll feel my love for the rest of my life

Oh my sweet lady

I'll be coming home again

I'll be with you, and we'll work it through

We'll get you back to you being you

Hold on honey, missed and blue I'm

coming home to be with you Diamond

smile will light our world again Hold on

honey, missed and blue

I'm coming home to be with you

Diamond smile will light our world again

This girl is special

APPENDIX C

Ethics Committee for Non Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

NOTIFICATION OF ETHICS APPLICATION OUTCOME – UG and PGT Applications

Application Type: New Date Application Reviewed: **27/05/2015**

Application Number: **9904307**

Applicant's Name: **Kirsty Deacon**

Project Title: **Songwriting in Prison**

APPLICATION OUTCOME

(A) Fully Approved ☐   *Start Date of Approval: 01/06/2015 End Date of Approval: 07/09/2015*

(*B)* Approved subject to amendments

> If the applicant has been given approval subject to amendments **this means they can proceed with their data collection with effect from the date of approval, however they should note the following applies to their application:**

Approved Subject to Amendments without the need to submit amendments to the Supervisor ☐

Approved Subject to Amendments made to the satisfaction of the applicant's Supervisor ☑

The College Ethics Committee expects the applicant to act responsibly in addressing the recommended amendments.

(C) Application is Not Approved at this Time

Subject to Amendments made to the satisfaction of the School Ethics Forum (SEF) ☐

Complete resubmission required. Discuss the application with supervisor before resubmitting. ☐

Please note the comments in the section below and provide further information where requested.

If you have been asked to resubmit your application in full, send it to your supervisor who will forward it to your local School Ethics Forum admin support staff.

Where resubmissions only need to be submitted to an applicant's supervisor.

This will apply to essential items that an applicant must address prior to ethics approval being granted. As the associated research ethics risks are considered to be low, the applicant's response need only be reviewed and cleared by the applicant's supervisor before the research can properly begin. For any application processed under this outcome, it is the Supervisor's responsibility to email socpol-pgt-ethics@glagow.ac.uk with confirmation of their approval of the re-submitted application.

APPLICATION COMMENTS

Major Recommendations:

Minor Recommendations:

This seems a very interesting project. The following minor recommendations are required for the ethics application form: 3.4b - please provide home address. 3.5d - please indicate whether you are intending to destroy research data (both currently ticked).

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact your School Ethics forum admin support staff.

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project:

Name of Researcher:

Please tick the boxes as appropriate

I confirm that I have been given an introduction to the research, and understand the contents of the information sheet I have been provided with.

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation in this study is **voluntary** and that I may end my participation in this study at **any** point, should I so wish.

I understand that I do not have to answer a question if I do not want to.

I confirm that I have been informed that my interview will be recorded by audio equipment. I agree to this being used.

I confirm that I have been informed that notes from the interview(s) will be typed up on the researcher's password protected laptop, in a secure data file.

I understand that the researcher may use some of my words in her research report and in the presentation of her findings. I understand that these will be anonymised and it will not be possible to identify me.

I understand that the interview will last for about 45-60 minutes. The interview can be shorter or longer than this, depending on my wishes.

I understand that the interview will take place in a private area of the prison.

Participant

Print Name: ………………………………………………….

Sign Name: ………………………………………………

Date: ………………………………………………

Researcher

Print Name: ………………………………………………….

Sign Name: ………………………………………………….

Date: ………………………………………………….

Thank you very much.

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Plain Language Statement (or Participant Information Sheet)

Title of Project: **SONGWRITING IN PRISON**

Name of Researcher: **Kirsty Deacon**

Hi, I'm Kirsty and I am a Masters student at the University of Glasgow. My research is looking at the use of music within prisons and specifically looking at the songwriting workshops run by Vox Liminis known as 'Vox Sessions'. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you've taken part in one of these 'Vox Sessions'. Please take time to read the following information carefully and if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information please just ask. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

'Need to knows'

- I will be taking notes of what happens during the 'Vox Session'. You can still take part in the workshop even if you do not want to be part of these observations. If you do agree to be part of this observation I will take notes during the workshop but you will not be identified in the final report.
- If you agree to be interviewed you will be asked about your experiences of the Vox Sessions which you have taken part in. There are no right or wrong answers; any information you give me will be very helpful for my research.
- You can pause or leave the interview at any point; you are under **no obligation** at all to participate in either the interview or the observation.
- If there is a question you are not comfortable about answering, that is completely fine. You can say 'I don't want to answer that', and we will move onto the next question.

- You will be asked to sign a consent form so that I know you agree to take part, though you can change your mind at any point.
- As long as it is ok with you, I will audio record the interview. This is to make sure I have an accurate record of what you have to say.
- The recordings will be transcribed (written up), and some of the words you say may be used in my final report and in the presentation of my findings. However, it will not be possible to identify you. Instead, you will be identified with a pseudonym, which you can choose yourself if you like.
- The interview will take about 45-60 minutes of your time. It can be longer or shorter than this, depending on your wishes.
- The interview will take place in a private space within the prison.

<u>Things to remember</u>

* **Taking part in this interview or observation is completely up to you.**

* **It is ok to change your mind, at any stage.**

* **Taking part will have no effect on taking part in other programmes within the prison, either run by Vox Liminis or any other organisation.**

<u>Is the research private?</u>

In general, anything that you tell me is private. **Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of significant risk of serious potential harm to yourself or others is uncovered. In such cases the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.**

Records of the interview will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and on my password protected laptop so all of the data will be kept safe and secure.

The results of the research study will be produced as my Dissertation and may be made available as a publication by Glasgow University and/or Vox Liminis.

<u>Any questions?</u>

If you have any questions, you can ask them to:

Me, the researcher: Kirsty Deacon, (9904307d@student.gla.ac.uk, c/o SCCJR, University of Glasgow, Ivy Lodge, 63 Gibson Street, Glasgow, G12 8LR).

My research supervisor: Prof. Fergus McNeill, (Fergus.McNeill@glasgow.ac.uk; 0141 330 5075; SCCJR University of Glasgow, Ivy Lodge, 63 Gibson Street, Glasgow G12 8LR).

OR

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of this research project, you can contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer Dr Muir Houston (Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk; 0141 330 4699; School of Education, St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH).

Participant Observation Pro Forma

- Space:

  o Layout of the room

  o Suitability of the room for the purpose – eg. is it a welcoming and creative space, does it still feel as if the prisoners are "being watched" or "under guard"?

  o How do the prisoners and the musicians/Vox Liminis staff use the space and do they appear to feel comfortable within it?

- Activities

  o What is the structure of the workshop?

  o Does everyone freely participate immediately? If not, how are they encouraged to participate – both by those running the workshop and by each other?

  o What are the differences/similarities between how the participants take part in this workshop and how they interact both with each other and with those taking the workshop? Do these change throughout the day and across the 3 day period?

  o Does there appear to be any evidence of "power relationships" between types of participants or does everyone appear to be equal? Do the groups mix and work together easily?

- Emotions

  o How do people seem to be feeling, and does this change before/after the workshop? Does this change over the 3 days?

  o How do the musicians and Vox Liminis staff interact with the prisoners and vice versa? If prison staff are present how do they interact with the prisoners and the musicians/Vox Liminis staff? Does this change across the 3 day period?

  o How does the atmosphere within the workshop change both throughout the day and across the 3 day period?

Interview Themes (Workshop Participants)

For use after information sheet has been read, consent form signed, and there has been an opportunity to ask questions.

Hi [name]. Well I'm Kirsty as you know. And also as you know I'm wanting to learn about the use of music and in particular songwriting programmes within prisons. I'm wondering if you can tell me a bit about your experience of being involved in the songwriting workshop that you've just taken part in.

I know that's quite a big general question so to break it down can I just start by asking:

- What made you sign up to take part in the workshop? Have you done anything like this before?

- What did you think the workshop was going to be like before you took part? Did this opinion change across the 3 days?

- Is there anything that you particularly enjoyed/disliked about the workshop?

- What did you think of the experience of working with professional musicians?

- Do you think you will keep on playing/writing music after the workshop? And after you leave Castle Huntly?

- Can I ask you a bit about the song that you wrote in the workshop?
    - Did you have an idea of what you wanted to write about before you came to the workshop? Did you end up writing about that? If not – why not – what changed?
    - How was the experience of putting your thoughts/feelings into a song?

Based on answers…is there anything you think that could/should be changed about the workshop or how it is run? Is there anything that would make it better for you? Remember that I am not promising to change anything (that isn't within my powers), but I am trying to learn about what taking part in these songwriting workshops is like in as much detail as possible because we don't know that much about the experiences of participants like yourself.

Thanks so much for your time and taking part in this interview, it's been really helpful.
Now I'm obviously not the expert here so I might have missed stuff. Is there anything else you think I should be aware of/include in report/is important to look at more?

So I think that's us finished now. How are you? Was that ok? Do you have any questions about anything? Provide information of support available within Castle Huntly.

You can talk to me again if you like, any time that suits you. Even if it's just to tell me something that you forgot to tell me that you think is important I know, or to ask any questions you might have. Thanks!

Interview Themes (Musicians/VoxLiminis Staff)

For use after information sheet has been read, consent form signed, and there has been an opportunity to ask questions.

Hi [name]. Well I'm Kirsty as you know. And also as you know I'm wanting to learn about the use of music and in particular songwriting programmes within prisons.

I'm wondering if you can tell me a bit about your experience of being involved in the songwriting workshops run by Vox Liminis that you are involved with.

I know that's quite a big general question so to break it down can I just start by asking:

- How did you first become involved with Vox Liminis – and their songwriting workshops in prisons? Are you involved with any similar programmes or organisations? How many songwriting workshops in prisons have you now taken part in?

- As someone for whom I'm assuming music plays a large part in your life, why do you think workshops like this should be run in prisons?

- I had my PPT training last month – do you remember your first experience of coming in to the prison environment and meeting "prisoners"?

- In this workshop did you find that the songs were written about similar topics or are they quite different? Is this similar across other Vox Liminis workshops you have been involved in?

- These workshops can be looked on as having a rehabilitative function and "changing" the prisoners but do you think they have also "changed" you at all?

Based on answers…is there anything you think that could/should be changed about the workshop or how it is run? I am not promising to change anything (that isn't within my powers), but I am just trying to learn about what taking part in these songwriting workshops is like in as much detail as possible.

Thanks so much for your time and taking part in this interview, it's been really helpful.

Now I'm obviously not the expert here so I might have missed stuff. Is there anything else you think I should be aware of/include in report/is important to look at more?

So I think that's us finished now. How are you? Was that ok? Do you have any questions about anything?

You can talk to me again if you like, any time that suits you. Even if it's just to tell me something that you forgot to tell me that you think is important I know, or to ask any questions you might have. Thanks!