A Mixed-Methods Study of Affective Difference in the Old-Time Music Revival in
Appalachian Virginia and North Carolina

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This dissertation by David Henderson Wood is accepted in its present form
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

How do we, as scholars, teachers, and performers of (and often advocates for) traditional musics which have been adopted by people from outside the folk culture best understand the current state of these musics, some of which are now played predominantly by these cultural outsiders? For example, on what grounds do scholars and musicians make the claim that there exists something like one old-time Appalachian music diaspora when the musicians playing old-time music today seem to differ so wildly, across so many measures, from the rural Southern/Appalachian musicians who have cultivated and sustained this music as a folk tradition? Should we continue to use “old-time music” to refer to the music played by both of these contemporary groups when the sound, function, and the significance of the music appears to be so different between them? Does it make more sense, for example, to conceive of the music played at the Clifftop festival in West Virginia as being so different in degree from what has historically been called “old-time music” that it might be better conceived of as different not in degree but in kind?

Scholars have long sought to characterize the differences between tradition-bearers from inside the music-culture and those from outside (often called “revivalists”) who adopt these traditional musics, as the title of the edited volume *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* demonstrates. Some scholars studying the various revived folk musics have acknowledged that the musics in their current

incarnations are, in fact, different enough that they ought to be conceived of as a separate thing entirely from the source traditions, yet they often do so by highlighting *extra-musical*¹ notions of difference instead of differences (which could be investigated systematically) in the “revived” (or “transformed”) music’s sound and in the musical perception, cognition, and affective responses of these different musicians. Supposing that these aforementioned differences do exist and that tools to investigate those differences are available to us (and many are), there is no good reason to not bolster our understanding of these music-cultures in their current incarnation by investigating *all* identifiable similarities and differences between the various types of musicians, including those that require stepping outside the methodological and epistemological boundaries of contemporary ethnomusicology.

And even in the area of extra-musical notions of difference (which is taken for-granted as truth across many academic fields and among the musicians themselves), scholars in the fields that would address something like a traditional music revival (e.g., folklorists, ethnomusicologists, cultural anthropologists) tend to rely on anecdotal evidence and often design their research in a way that will confirm, rather than challenge, their own personal biases. I will admit from the outset that I am strongly biased towards the ideas that 1) the categories of “outsiders” and “insiders” are subjectively real in the minds of most old-time musicians and that 2) old-time music for most cultural outsiders is fundamentally different than it is for most cultural insider musicians in important ways. This bias comes partially from my own experience as an outsider old-time musician. I can identify things in the structure and sound of old-time fiddle tunes that, for lack of a

¹ Here and throughout, “extra-musical” will refer broadly to affective properties of a piece of music that are independent of the sound and structure of the music (i.e., the music’s context)

better term, I find magical. Discovering that other musicians also found these particular features to be particularly moving added to my confirmation bias. Discovering that still other musicians (especially those who fit most folklorists' criteria as insider "tradition-bearers") did not seem to be affected in the same way by these structural and sonic elements again bolstered my bias. One goal of this dissertation therefore is to challenge my bias as a researcher by using methods of data collection and analysis that seek to limit that bias.

Old-Time Revival

From the founding of the American colonies until the late 1950s, old-time Appalachian string band music was played almost exclusively by musicians who grew up immersed in the musical tradition. It was played and sung by their family members, neighbors, and in their local community. Many of the musicians were from the mountain South, but fiddles, banjos, and string band music could be found all over the rural U.S. and in many major metropolitan areas in the South. The "golden age" of this music's popularity was from the mid-1920s, when it reached a national audience through the advent of the recording industry, until about the mid-1930s. In the 1940s this music began to fall out of popular favor, and many players of the music stopped playing entirely until the music was "revived" during the 1960s and 1970s folk revival. Young musicians from New York City, California, and other urban and suburban areas began to flock to the mountain South in search of these old musicians (e.g., see Malone 2011; Allen 2010). Musicians from as far away as Japan physically relocated to places like western North Carolina in order to be around the music and the fiddler's conventions held there every summer. They learned to play the music, sometimes directly from tradition-bearer

musicians, but more often from old recordings, and they began forming their own bands and music and dance communities (see Ruchala 2011 for a detailed study of the Surry County, North Carolina community). Today, these cultural outsiders significantly outnumber the few remaining musicians who have strong geographic, family, and/or community links to the older traditions.

These two broad types of old-time musicians, whom I'll call "outsiders" and "insiders" for now,² intermix online and in person, especially in states like North Carolina and Virginia, which have outsider old-time communities in cities like Floyd, Charlottesville, and Blacksburg (in Virginia) and in Asheville, Boone, and Chapel Hill (in North Carolina). Some have formed deep, long-lasting friendships. Some are members in the same band, have recorded music together, and attend each other's birthday parties, weddings, and funerals. Some insiders and outsiders have gotten married and raised families together. It would seem that this is an uncomplicated and happy story of shared affinity for a music resulting in a blurring of cultural, political, regional, and class distinctions that would normally keep these people separated. But below the surface there exist many long-running conflicts involving both the music and the cultural politics surrounding the music. There seem to be deep differences between the groups regarding how each conceives of old-time music, how they think it ought to be played, and what it is that they get out of playing it. Second, these differences have not yet been paid much

² I'm borrowing this sweeping, binary distinction from Rogers Thomas (2004), who defined "traditional musicians" (my "insiders") as musicians who are "*of the tradition [and] who grew up immersed in the culture and worldview that produced the folkloric forms they actively perpetuate*" (277) and "revivalists" (my "outsiders") as musicians "*from outside the tradition [who] participate in a musical genre that was not strongly associated with their own upbringing*" (Ibid.). Old-time musicians also tend to bifurcate the old-time community this way and tend to identify more with one group than the other (though the terms they used and the criteria for being labeled one thing or another vary considerably). Thinking about the old-time revival in these terms is more useful in some contexts than in others, which I'll address in more detail throughout the dissertation.

attention by the community of scholars who research traditional American musics, but I argue that they can help to explain the larger socio-political dimensions of this and other traditional music revivals.

Initial Observations of Musical Difference

My earlier research in this area for my Master's degree focused on the cultural politics involved in the old-time music revival in Southern Appalachia. My research aim was to better understand the motivations of cultural outsiders and insiders and how they conceived of their position in the larger picture of the old-time music revival. As a player of this music (11 years as of the time of this writing) who came in from outside the tradition primarily because of the affective power of the music, I was initially surrounded (first in college in southeastern Virginia and then in Tempe, Arizona) by other outsiders. Four years passed before I actually played with insider musicians who were from southern Appalachia, which I had the opportunity to do frequently when I began graduate school in western North Carolina. It wasn't long before I began to hear about some insider musicians' hostility towards outsider musicians.³ I also came to notice what I thought were glaring differences in how these two general types of musicians used the music, how they derived meaning from the music, and in the degree to which they seemed to be affected by certain sonic features of music.

³ How I was initially perceived by various types of musicians I'm not sure, nor do I know to what degree their perception of me influenced what they did or did not say to or in front of me. I do remember being called a "Yankee" in a joking (I think) way by an insider musician when I called the last meal of the day "dinner" instead of "supper," and I remember countering with something like, "I grew up well south of the Mason-Dixon." "Yankee" might have been a catch-all term that this particular musician used for anybody who did not share his dialect, accent, lifestyle, ideology, etc. But it also might have been the case that insider musicians, learning that I was from Virginia and did not present myself as a "hippie" per se, might have felt I would be a sympathetic ear for their issues with *outsider* outsiders and therefore discussed things in my presence that they might not have around other outsiders.

I attempted in my master's thesis research (mostly via participant-observation and semi-structured interviews), to speculate as to the nature of these differences between different types of musicians, but for the most part I was approaching the research as a humanist who privileged what I was directly told by my informants, and who referenced the scholarship of folklorists – not music psychologists. I found myself frustrated when I turned to existing humanistic scholarship on revivals and Appalachian music for guidance. For example, my experiences and focused research strongly suggested that outsider musicians (myself included) in general appeared to possess a stronger attraction to the music itself⁴ than did most insiders, and they (we) seemed to be much more visibly affected by the music than were insiders, yet revival theory instead focuses on musicians' attraction to the *extra*-musical features of a music-culture.⁵ It is tacitly assumed by these scholars that outsiders enjoy the actual music that they take up, but *what* it is about the music that they enjoy and how and why that might differ from insider musicians is rarely analyzed or applied in some way to aid in understanding the broader issue of music revivals.⁶

For example, that the same tune (e.g., a fiddle tune called “Benton’s Dream,” which is a favorite of both insider and outsider musicians in North Carolina) would have a different significance for insiders than it did for outsiders, and that insiders would have

⁴ “Music itself” here refers to the sonic features and structure of the music and conscious awareness and attention to those features.

⁵ For example, some scholars argue that old-time revivalists are attracted to the idea of a nostalgic utopia and a return to an agrarian past, and that they seek to create this with one another through their invented music community.

⁶ While determining to what degree a player's attraction to the music (e.g., heard on recordings at home) and to the surrounding culture (e.g., playing and socializing with others who play the music) contributed to their decision to become an old-time musician would likely be impossible, it would be possible to conduct a simple survey of current musicians asking them to compare the importance they attach to experiencing the music free of any tangible social context (e.g., through headphones at home or playing along to recordings) to the experience of participating in live musical events.

certain ideas about how it ought (and ought not) to be played (that were often violated by outsiders) seems obvious and an unavoidable consequence of outsiders learning to play a music that they had not grown up with. But my research strongly suggested that the (often subtle) modifications that some outsiders made to the music and the differences in outsiders' and insiders' experience of playing the music were not merely innocuous, but were in fact key to understanding the root causes of the *political* strife between some old-time insiders and outsiders (what has been called the "Old-Time Civil War"). When discussing reasons for local insider musicians' attitudes towards outsiders, it seemed to frequently come down to issues of musical aesthetics. Some insiders musicians accused outsiders of playing banjo with a "hippie-whack," putting in "hippie chords" on the guitar, and playing "hippie tunes," and I was told by one insider that outsiders were "slurring" (i.e., disrespecting) notable versions of local tunes through subtle changes to the melody and rhythm which would only be perceptible to experienced musicians.⁷ I'd not yet heard outsider musicians speak disparagingly in any way about insiders, but it seemed clear that their (our) musical background, tune repertoire, playing style, and goal of the jam sessions were different than most insiders'.

Also, when discussing the jam experience with other outsiders, the concept of trance came up repeatedly, often referring to a specific set of tunes or manner of playing that seemed to work best for inducing a strong musical experience. I had not observed any outward indications that the insider musicians were experiencing anything approaching trance, nor did they seem to play tunes that, by virtue of their musical

⁷ I am unsure to what degree the musical realm might have just been serving as a safe vessel through which my informants could express what was really cultural prejudice, and it is important to keep in mind that many of my native informants told me they were also upset about the influx of outsiders and the slow gentrification of their home counties.

construction, seem to facilitate those trance experiences. In fact, they didn't seem much affected by the music at all while playing. There seemed to me to be consistent and significant musical differences in the way that outsider and insider musicians performed, conceived of, cognitively processed, and were affected by this music. At the conclusion of that research project I was left wondering how I could test the accuracy of this theory, what best explained the cause of these differences (if they were indeed characteristic of insiders and outsiders), whether or not this phenomenon would also be found in other music revivals, and, if so, what that might mean for how we claim to understand music revivals generally.

Contextual Differences and Affective Display

The different functional contexts for this music between insiders and outsiders is easy to pick up on even for a neophyte observer: attend a summer fiddler's convention like the one in Mt. Airy, North Carolina and it becomes obvious. Up on "hippie hill" or in "mini-Clifftop" (a camping area of mostly older-generation outsiders) one can find intimate jam sessions of three to five musicians lit by only a single candle, possibly inside an enclosed tent, playing tunes for themselves while swaying their bodies back and forth and bobbing their heads, eyes closed, seemingly trying to achieve trance or a peak experience. Down in the flatlands (the main camping area), the common jam session is well-lit, probably under the cover of an RV or under a pop-up shelter, and the jam is open to all. Passersby will often stop and listen or dance to the music and will talk at length with the musicians between tunes. Players usually have their eyes open and demonstrate minimal physical entrainment with the music. Some might get rowdy in-between tunes, but during tunes the dominant behavior is a sort of relaxed disengagement. Someone once

told me that an older insider fiddler who frequented the festival had about the same lack of expression on his face when he played music as he did when he was mowing the lawn or tying his shoes.

What might account for this difference in affective display between insiders and outsiders? It is certainly possible that emoting publically is less taboo for some outsiders than it is for insider musicians but that insider musicians are also having intense affective experiences while playing the music. In the mountain South, the church often serves as a safe haven for men to publicly demonstrate emotional vulnerability. Elsewhere, one might be thought of as unmanly or possibly a “damned hippie” were they to act as if they were in a deep meditative or transcendent state while playing old-time music. If we assuming that cultural restrictions on emotionality are at work and that insiders *are* also having strong experiences with this music, how might we determine whether the nature and source of those experiences is generally different between insiders and outsiders? My previous research in this area argued that while outsiders’ strong experiences are likely more dependent on structural and sonic features of the music⁸ than they are on extra-musical factors, insider musicians can sometimes have similar strong experiences due to the extra-musical associations they have with the tunes (e.g., links to ancestors, community history, awareness of playing with certain musicians)⁹ while not being as affected by or interested in particular structural features as are outsiders. This idea, as well as the areas of observed difference between insider and outsider musicians in the

⁸ Based on my experience as a player of this music, my hypothesis is that there are particular musical features in the tunes which make certain tunes more attractive than others to certain sub-groups of old-time musicians. Determining what these features are will be a main focus of my future research.

⁹ Often cued via spoken references before or after the tune or song

following sections, are issues that this dissertation seeks to investigate using more systematic and quantitative methods than did my previous research.

Musical Training

A key distinguishing characteristic of outsider old-time musicians is how many of them have formal musical training, sometimes from the classical tradition and sometimes in other styles of music. I've observed outsiders using roman numerals (i.e., I, IV, V) to label chords, whereas an insider musicians tend to say the letter of the chords (e.g., G, C, D) rather than their scale degree. I've observed outsider musicians to be more prone to consciously analyzing the music in a way commensurate with their musical training, but I have never heard an insider calling a tune "mixolydian" or saying that it has an "ambiguous tonality,"¹⁰ though their playing of the melodies and chords suggests that insiders understand these musical concepts implicitly. In my experience, most insider musicians are averse to analytically examining the music that they play, whereas many outsiders whom I know, perhaps due to the method by which they learn to play fiddle, banjo, guitar, or other instruments, cannot help but think of it analytically.¹¹ However, verbalizing this in any deep way (among both insiders and outsiders) usually only happens among close friends, if at all. As Andrew Woolf (1990) observed, "players do not get in extended aesthetic discussions about tunes, but positive aesthetic judgments, comments, and expressions are often made" (100). While having formal musical training would no doubt make a musician more likely to think and to talk about music using these

¹⁰ Although some insider musicians will talk about "modal" tunes (usually mixolydian or pentatonic minor).

¹¹ I will often ask insider fiddlers for pointers or clarification on particular techniques or passages that I want to learn from their playing. Usually the musicians are unable to slow their playing down without changing it in subtle ways, or sometimes they are unable to play only sections of a tune. This reflects a more holistic and implicit method of learning and understanding of the music versus the analytic, explicit approach of most outsiders.

named concepts and terms, how else might having formal musical training be useful in explaining the differences in musical behavior and experience for various types of old-time musicians?

Use of Psychoactive Substances (esp. marijuana)

I am aware of a small number of insider musicians who seem, both in the way they play the music and in their choice to befriend and play music with outsiders, to be more closely aligned musically and culturally with outsiders. For example, drug use is an important factor in the social milieu of old-time music. Some insider musicians who have “gone hippie” in the eyes of other insider musicians smoke marijuana with their outsider friends before, during, and after jam sessions, much to the disdain of other insiders who have a cultural taboo against marijuana use. Using or abstaining can have serious social consequences in this musical community, including what seems to be social ostracization and dismissive comments by other insider musicians. Alcohol, however, is used by all types of old-time musicians and has been inextricably linked historically with old-time music and dancing.¹² Alcohol and marijuana are different classes of psychoactive substance and have quite different effects on the brains and bodies of users. Aside from cultural taboos, might there be other physiological and psychological reasons why marijuana is more conducive to certain musician’s jam experiences while alcohol works better for another’s? Is a musician’s use of mind-altering substances while playing music a good predictor of other aspects of their musical behavior and experience?

¹² Of course, even the type of alcohol is different between the two groups. Microbrewed beer, Jack Daniels, or hipster-favorite Pabst Blue Ribbon can be found at outsider events, while traditional musicians might be more likely to drink macro beer (e.g., Coors Light), local moonshine, or some other discreetly stored liquor.

Assessing and Categorizing Cultural and Musical Difference

Charles Seeger wrote that “the particulars of one’s own music masquerade as worldwide universals and, as an almost automatic reflex, distort not only one’s understanding of one’s own music, but of all others as well” (1977: 44). Assuming that cultural outsiders have their “own music,” which, when understood as a function of lack of early exposure to traditional music, exposure to types of music not frequently listened to by cultural insiders, musical training that highlights music theory, or shared personality and cognitive factors that influence their music perception and production, musician-scholars ought to be interested in to what degree their understanding of a traditional music (assuming that they are outsiders to that music-culture) might be “distorted” by these factors. At issue here is: 1) whether or not to understand insider old-time musicians as belonging to a different “culture” than do outsider musicians from other U.S. regions and 2) whether or not to understand insiders’ old-time music as “foreign” to outsider musicians in the sense that we would say *gamelan* is foreign to most people in Appalachia (or America, for that matter). Until these semantic debates are examined in a way that defines these terms in a strict, quantitative way, and then scientifically measures and compares the component variables of these constructs, there is little point in debating these questions rhetorically. This dissertation does not solve these debates, but it attempts to make a first step towards bringing empirical data into the discussion of these distinctions.

Identity politics are especially highlighted in old-time music today in areas like North Carolina, which is home to all manner of self-categorized “insiders” and “outsiders” with different criteria for membership in each group. For scholars to apply

this binary distinction in any useful way, they must consider the fact that many of these outsiders have permanently relocated to the rural mountain South from elsewhere, and some have lived in Appalachian or Piedmont North Carolina since the late 1960s. Further complicating matters, some of these transplanted musicians have raised children in their adopted communities who now also play old-time music. Growing up in this sort of mixed-culture environment (i.e., having a “home” culture that often stands in sharp relief to the local culture outside the home, which is more pronounced in rural areas that lack a large transplant population) makes applying any sort of insider/outsider label to these young musicians especially difficult.

Things become especially contentious when right-to-ownership claims are made by musicians that other musicians feel are unjustified. An extreme example would be if an old-time playing child of two college-educated, affluent, non-religious, politically progressive, classically-trained musician parents who grew up in New England claimed that because he or she was born and raised in an Appalachian county he or she is just as much “Appalachian” as a musician who was born and raised in Appalachia, whose family has lived there for several generations, who is working-class, not college educated, devoutly Christian, politically conservative, and who has no formal musical training. Of course, “Appalachian” means many things to many people, and any of these contested cultural labels, when self-applied for purposes of identity construction, do little in the way of explaining individual differences in musical behavior and experience. A key challenge, it would seem, to researchers of music revivals is to decide on what grounds they assign a label like “insider” to one musician but not another. How much of that consideration ought to be focused on musical factors (e.g., what sort of music was this

person exposed to most as a child?) distinctive to that individual musician? And how much of the distinction ought to be based on extra-musical factors (e.g., what zip code did the musician grow up in)?

Clifftop vs. Galax: Distinct Traditions on Display

Musician-scholar Amy Wooley wrote that Clifftop is “a 1990s reenactment of a 1970s reenactment of nineteenth century agrarian utopianism through the filter of 1960s counterculture egalitarian communalism and the contemporary romanticization of that recent period....” (2003, 295). Or, put another way by an insider musician from Surry County, North Carolina, “Clifftop is a weird place.” An attendee at the Appalachian String Band Festival (a.k.a. “Clifftop”) festival in West Virginia, the premiere gathering of outsider old-time musicians, would be hard-pressed to find conservative bumperstickers, Christian t-shirts, or anybody with strong opinions against gay marriage, with the possible exception of the local festival staff and vendors, local law enforcement, and the handful of mostly older local musicians who attend. Subarus adorned with Obama stickers, bio-diesel trucks with “Keep Asheville Weird” stickers, and gender-neutral teenagers playing tunes with long-haired Deadheads (all of whom are barefooted) are the norm. By contrast, the Old Fiddler’s Convention in Galax, VA, which happens the weekend after Clifftop, is the premiere gathering of insider old-time and bluegrass musicians, though it is primarily a bluegrass event. There one will find many Bush and Romney stickered pickup trucks (most with tool boxes, some with gun racks), campers, and tour busses for some of the better-known bluegrass bands. Thousands of local fans with Virginia Tech paraphernalia attend more for the party than for the music, it seems. Cornhole boards, modern country music, a variety of Southern accents, and much

camouflage abounds. A few get arrested each year for being drunk-in-public, especially on Saturday night. The healthy food options are few and far between.

By and large, the attendees at Galax, with the exception of the smattering of outsider musicians who attend, are not interested in a trance-like old-time jam experience, but many who camp overnight are there to get drunk and party. Although bluegrass musicians and fans greatly outnumber old-time musicians at Galax, insider old-time musicians attend Galax *en masse*, in some cases as an “anti-Clifftop.” In the minds of most old-time musicians, Clifftop is emblematic of musical and social liberalism, cosmopolitanism, utopianism, and a musical aesthetic based on “groove”; Galax is emblematic of musical and social conservatism and a particular sort of musical aesthetic that is based on the concept of “drive.”¹³

Things weren’t always this way. Before Clifftop existed, the values held by those who would later attend Clifftop were integrated (by virtue of their presence) into Galax and many other fiddler’s conventions.¹⁴ Outsiders had begun attending and competing at Galax starting in the 1960s, and “hippie” bands and fans were a solid fixture at the festival throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Outsiders set up camp in and around the horse stalls, and this was an insulated world of their own that limited their interaction with and shielded their illegal drug use from the locals, though most outsiders did compete in the public stage contests, often using bizarre band names and attire. In 1989, these stalls were torn down for reasons still unclear, and many outsider musicians never returned to Galax.

¹³ These are loaded terms which refer to certain playing styles associated with certain types of old-time musicians (e.g., those who have been especially influenced by bluegrass aesthetics might appreciate “drive” more than “groove”) and with certain geographic regions where old-time is played (e.g., the “Galax-style” music which represents a blending of old-time and bluegrass styles tends to be described fondly as “driving”)

¹⁴ E.g. Union Grove, which had a similar mix of insiders and outsider as did Galax. This festival became so over-crowded and out-of-control that it was shut down entirely.

Coincidentally, Clifftop began that same year, and it became the new home for many of the outsider musicians who felt out of place at Galax. Galax is primarily a bluegrass event now, but you will find very little bluegrass played at Clifftop. Clifftop is designed in almost every aspect to cater to the musical values of outsider musicians. For example, it hosts a “neo-traditional” band category, which caters to bands who deviate from traditional string band rules as far as instrumentation and repertoire. Clifftop’s judging aesthetics broadly reflect a particular outsider approach that is focused on musical refinement, subtlety, nuance, and virtuosity. The playing style rewarded there is often incompatible with the hard-driving old-time style associated with southwest Virginia and northwest North Carolina that is valued at Galax, and there has been both published and word-of-mouth criticism levied at the judging aesthetics at Clifftop, especially in the fiddle competition. Bemoaning the domination of the Clifftop fiddle contest by classically-trained outsiders, and noting the discrepancy between the how those fiddlers play and the way that the old, dead fiddlers associated with those tunes played, outsider musician Walt Koken remarked that

I must say they all played with beautiful tone on fine instruments (although one played a fiddle that was certainly not traditional, having five strings), right on pitch, some of them were obviously classically trained, and they certainly deserved some sort of recognition, but I did not hear anything which I would call “Appalachian,” neither in style nor melody. (2009, 2)

Koken also noted that because many musicians there try to emulate the winners and understand their playing to be emblematic of proper repertoire and technique, these contests have had a significant influence on repertoire and style of other old-time musicians.

In addition to the differences in musical aesthetics, the behavior of musicians during jam-sessions – the principal activity at most fiddler’s conventions – seem to be generally different between insider and outsider jams. My own experiences at Clifftop with different types of jams have left me with a bias that I’m sure many Clifftop fans would find to be an unfair characterization. Nevertheless, the following story is indicative of my general observations as an old-time musician, and the conclusions I drew from it are also shared by many musicians whom I interviewed both formally and informally. My first experience at Clifftop, in 2007, was not what I expected. I arrived at the campgrounds around noon with a U-Haul trailer attached to my truck with all my worldly possessions inside, since Clifftop was a stop on a cross-country move taking me from Arizona to North Carolina, where I was to begin graduate school. It was my first real old-time music festival, and aside from one musician I knew who may or may not have been coming, everybody else there was a stranger. Not sure of what to do, I wandered around with my guitar taking in the music and the variety of people. After passing by many tightly-cloistered jams that already had a guitar player, I remember feeling discouraged. Also, not having my own chair was a mistake that I wouldn’t make again.

Finally, I found a jam with both an open atmosphere and an open chair for me to sit in. The people there were friends from Tennessee, and they welcomed me into their jam with open arms. We jammed there in the afternoon sun for hours. As night fell, I was not so lucky. Unfamiliar with jam etiquette and erring on the side of caution, I meandered around the festival grounds with a guitar and a probably too-eager look on my face, but the jams I passed by seemed like private séances – not something that a stranger walking around was to join in on uninvited. I was not invited into any of the jams I saw that first

night, though I had a bit better luck as the festival went on and I started being more aggressive. Subsequent Clifftops were better and usually full of good jams since I had met many other East Coast musicians and would usually camp with them – ensuring that I had a “home base” if all other jams failed.

But the last Clifftop I attended (2011) was reminiscent of my first. A series of unfortunate events led to me sleeping through the critical period of the day where people make “jam dates,” and as I woke up to the last of the sun setting, I found myself again trolling the campground in the dark looking for a jam to join. Not many of my old-time friends were in attendance that year, and the ones who were there were either scattered in various places or in jams with no more physical room for another player to join. Just about to give it up for the night (Saturday, the last night of the festival), I wandered to an area in the campground that I had been to only once or twice. There I came across a large, fully-illuminated canopy shelter with plenty of open chairs and a few musicians playing a standard tune, “Sourwood Mountain.” There were older people, who appeared to be Appalachian natives, socializing, eating food, and dancing to the music. I looked on for a minute or so before one of the musicians, who was wearing overalls and looked and talked like someone who had grown up in the Southern mountains, asked me if I wanted to join them with my fiddle. After some hard-driving, straight-ahead tunes, I came to learn that these were descendants of the late Henry Reed – a fiddler from Giles County, Virginia. They offered my wife and me food and liquor, other non-players socialized with my wife during the tunes, and we kept playing music for several hours until I was too tired to keep going.

Leaving this jam, I remember making a connection between these musicians and the ones from Tennessee who had welcomed me into my first Clifftop jam session years earlier. My personal experience had been that after passing dozens of outsider jam sessions that were not designed to appear open or welcoming it was in both cases people whom I would now consider to be “insider” musicians who had arranged their jam to appear open and who ended up inviting me to join them. These musicians knew nothing about me or my musicianship before asking me to join the jam, whereas with some insider jams one almost has to be vetted to be allowed to join. This represents a paradox: why is it that predominantly liberal and open outsiders would behave in such insular ways? Although Andrew Woolf argued that “the predominant ethos of the [fiddling] festival... is openness” (48), Amy Wooley found that outsider musicians

try [to] set up jam situations that are conducive to achieving a state of ecstasy or transformation. That is why many musicians are particular about who they will jam with. Many newcomers may see this as snobbery on the part of some musicians, but it has to do with finding oneself in a personally satisfying jam. (2003, 315)

And, more practically, certain old-time musicians only get to see their musical friends a few times a year at these conventions, so it makes sense that they would want to make the most of it.

“The Clifftop Experience”

A promotional video for Clifftop, produced by West Virginia Public Broadcasting and now available on YouTube, does an outstanding job at illustrating some of the differences in musical approach, meaning, and lifestyle differences between insiders and outsiders who attend the festival. Early in *The Clifftop Experience* (2008), the narrator takes us by the porch of the main building where apparently the “old masters” gather to

play music. In this particular shot they are playing bluegrass, not old-time, which is fitting considering the overwhelming popularity of bluegrass among those native to West Virginia who play acoustic music. The narrator, riding on a golf cart, drives by a jam of young teenagers, who appear to be from somewhere else other than central West Virginia. Some have very short hair, and it is hard to discern their sex until they speak. None have any discernable mountain or Southern accent. One of the musicians is playing a cello, and they are playing music that sounds like what some insider musicians in North Carolina would call “revivalist, progressive old-time.”¹⁵ In fact, the tune being played sounds like it is newly composed, as the harmonic progression is something I’ve never encountered in a traditional tune. The sign on their tent reveals that this is the CD release party for the Old-Time Liberation Front band, and a Google search reveals that the band, “a group of young acoustic musicians who create their own original blend of string band music,” hails from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, met one another while playing classical music, and were winners of the 2007 neo-traditional band contest at Clifftop.

According to their biography on their CDBaby.com page, “old-time, folk, and bluegrass... provided the creative sextet with their greatest inspiration” (“Twenty Twelve by Old-Time Liberation Front”). Listening through the sample tracks, I recognized the tune being played in the video documentary – an original entitled “Rainelle” (I’m assuming after the town close to the campground that many New Englanders would pass through on their drive to the festival). The band biography also reveals that the band uses

¹⁵ While an experiment would have to be designed to determine whether or not musicians who claim to be able to identify “revivalist” old-time consistently list similar musical features, some indications of this sort of consistency emerged from my survey and interview responses when musicians were asked to identify what they like or dislike in old-time music. Multiple musical dimensions are at work here, including jam instrumentation, rhythmic considerations, tempo, volume, tone, attack, tune choice, chord choice, etc.

two violins, a viola, a cello, and a bass and are known for their “Cluck Old Hen Remix,” which mixes “the archaic charm of the traditional tune with fragments of the rapper Lil’ Bow Wow’s ‘Basketball’ and Beck’s ‘Where It’s At’” (Ibid.). As the golf cart pulls away from the band, the tour guide for the video says, “This is what I was telling you about – the children, young children, are all growing up and taking care of this music. You know, it’s like, I can die now. It’s alright. It’s passed on, you know?” The narrator seems to be saying that what form the music takes as it is taken up by new generations is irrelevant to him as long as there is still somebody playing what they call “old-time music.” Many insider (and outsider) musicians whom I know, in contrast, would only consider the music successfully “passed on” if the music still met certain stylistic criteria and was using the same base of repertoire as was familiar to them.

I found in my master’s thesis research that some of my informants considered it their personal obligation to be a tradition-bearer in the face of what they consider unwelcome and unfortunate changes to old-time music, though attitudes about musical change varied among my insider informants. In the Clifftop video, traditional West Virginia fiddler Lester McCumbers (then in his 80s) is asked if he is okay with the music changing over time, and he responds:

Oh sure. It has to. Everything changes. The music changes too, you know? I mean, you know, they’s not enough people that plays it – the old-time – now to keep it – keep it really old-time a-goin’, you know? They play what they call “old-time” now, but it’s a modern version of the old-time music’s what it is. There’s been a lot of stuff added to it since way back, you know?

The editors of the video then quickly cut to a group of young musicians playing a tune down in the heavily wooded area of the campsite, dressed in a manner that would likely

get them labelled as “hipsterbillies”¹⁶ by other old-time musicians. The music is sloppy, loose, and, compared to insider jams I have taken part in or observed, there is an extreme display of emotion and body movements in synchrony with the pulse of the music. The musicians are seated very close to one another and are obviously thriving off one another’s energy (or are pretending to do so convincingly).

Footage of this and others similar jams are contrasted with the jams taking place at the Krack family camp. Jake Krack, a young fiddler originally from Indiana who learned directly from older West Virginia fiddlers and who represents a more traditional approach to old-time, tells the camera, “If you study under people – like, I studied under Melvin Wine and Lester McCumbers, who grew up in a totally different age as this – if you understand where they come from and how they approach the tunes, then you can almost go back to the roots.” Not surprisingly, in the footage of Jake playing music, the musicians are a comfortable distance apart from each other, move no more than is necessary to play their instruments, do not whoop and holler during the tune (despite this being the name of Jake’s band)¹⁷, and everybody appears to have on shoes and to have showered recently. The video at one point cuts between Jake Krack playing his version (a straight-ahead, conservative approach) of “Hell Broke Loose in Georgia,” a three-part tune in C made popular by The Skillet Lickers, and two young girls playing the tune together on fiddles in a style that echoes a new aesthetic, made popular by musically-

¹⁶ A portmanteau of “hipster” and “hillbilly” almost always used derisively to describe young outsider musicians who, it is thought, would have been regular hipsters had they moved to Brooklyn or some other city, but instead have appropriated aspects of stereotypical hillbilly clothing, dialect, etc. to reflect their membership in the old-time music subculture

¹⁷ The Whoopin’ Holler String Band

omnivorous virtuosic outsiders Bruce Molsky and Darol Anger, of intense bow emphasis, sharp attacks, and one fiddler playing back-up chords while the other plays the melody.

At one point in the video someone off-camera asks traditional musician Charlie Loudermilk what he thinks old-time music “communicates to a person.” Charlie answers, “Have a good time. Dance. Sing if you want to. I mean get out there and kick em’ up. You ain’t gonna be here but one time.” Charlie also recounts a recent story of how his band’s playing at a recent dance was praised by a local as sounding like they were from a much earlier time period and how much pleasure this comment gave Charlie. Charlie’s comments seem to indicate that he views old-time music as something that, if done well, should imitate a musical approach from long ago and should function as a participatory, interactive event involving musicians, dancers, and anybody else who wants to join in. While this latter statement is probably true for many outsiders, Charlie’s concern with sounding like they were from an earlier time period is probably not a concern of many outsiders who attend Clifftop.

Affect and Affective Difference at Galax

A small book authored by Galax, Virginia native Herman K. Williams collected media coverage, lists of winners, and other information about the first forty years of the Old Fiddler’s Convention. In a few places in the book the focus is on the affective power of the music, though it is impossible to tell to what degree these reporters’ statements reflect what was actually taking place among the audience and to what degree they were hyperbolic or more a reflection of the reporter’s experience than the local crowd’s. For example, an editorial in the Galax Gazette following the 1940 convention (before many or any outsiders would have been in attendance) observed that

ballads were sung that brought tears to the eyes of many in the audience. The tune of the fiddle, the twang of the banjo wafted on the night air to the delight of thousands. The dulcimer and the guitar were played with skill aplenty, and the clog and flatfoot dances received hearty acclaim. Twenty bands competed and all were outstanding. (Williams 1985, 18)

A report from the 1950 convention claimed that “the banjo number by David Lee Wooten almost hypnotized the throngs crowded along the wall and into the bleachers of the new Y.M.C.A. Although his rendition was not quite the fastest, it was the best. He kept a smooth rhythm throughout while trying to affect a rolling melody” (Ibid., 28). This same author then gave the following description of Art Wooten’s performance:

When he played his “Listen to the Mockingbird” on the fiddle, catching so excitedly the warbles of the bird, the audience held its breath, for fear of destroying one iota of the ethereal melody. And whenever Wooten came back to perform in other divisions, people would remember his past performances and get set for another heartwinning rendition. (Ibid.)

A report of the 1965 convention claimed that “as the night moves on the music infects the crowd. The spectators whoop and holler, clap their hands and stamp their feet, and call for more,” and, observing a jam session after the end of the contest, reported the following:

One of the fiddlers plunges into “Ida Red” at flank speed. A banjo rattles in right behind him, the mandolin, bass, guitar, and the other fiddle puck up the furious pace.... A pot-gutted mountain man with his white shirttail hanging over his paunch emits a whoop, hops into the air like a light-weight, and starts a shuffling flatfoot solo. The scrawny little man next to him joins in, and they face off, laughing and dancing. On the other side of the group four teen-age boys kick up dust as their feet fly in dance. The band tears into another chorus, and another. (Ibid., 60)

But as the crowd and the participants began to include more and more outsiders, these reports began to move toward the transcendental. A report of the 1970 convention declared that “the so-called hippies seem to take genuine pleasure in mingling with the rustics....The common bond, of course, is the music....The music itself...is transfixing”

(Ibid.,78). And Andrew Woolf's dissertation cited Wallace White from *The New Yorker* magazine, who visited Galax in 1986 and used the terms "hypnotic" and "rhythmic communal trance" to describe what he encountered there (1990, 86).

Assuming that these reports are at least somewhat accurate, we ought to assume that the music at these conventions was highly affective for the crowd. After all, it defies logic why thousands of people would attend an event in which the main attraction was not something that provoked some sort of response. That the lyrics of ballads might bring some in the crowd to tears is not surprising – they likely had family who sang these ballads and several strong extra-musical memories attached to them. But if we take the reporters at their word and accept that the crowd was "hypnotized" by an instrumental on the banjo, that the audience "held its breath, for fear of destroying one iota of [a fiddler's] ethereal melody," and that the "music itself [was] transfixing" for locals as well as for hippies, this contrasts sharply with what my and others' research has found about what is important in this music for insiders and how they typically respond to it. The aforementioned descriptions characterize the local audience as being focused on subtle nuances in instrumental old-time music and experiencing what some might call "absorption," "trance," or "altered states of consciousness" as a result.¹⁸ Although the description of the spontaneous dancing and shouting while a band plays a fast version of "Ida Red" is entirely compatible with the idea of insiders enjoying the music for its utility in dancing and for overall merrymaking, these other reports seem incongruous with all of the evidence pointing to the contrary, and they call into question taken-for-granted theories of musical difference in this revived tradition.

¹⁸ Though there is much semantic ambiguity here between various reporters' word choice and the way these terms are defined in various academic contexts

Research Aims and Methods

To research something like differences in musical affect, or how musical behavior and experience might be correlated with personality and demographic factors, it was necessary for me to supplement more standard ethnographic research methods with methods borrowed from social and personality psychology, since ethnographic methods alone could not provide the data required for my areas of interest. It is through a combination of scientific and humanistic research methods that we can better answer questions such as: 1) Are there salient differences in the way musicians experience old-time music (cognitively, emotionally, etc.)? 2) If so, how might this reinforce or contest the cultural divide in the old-time music revival between insiders and outsiders? 3) Are there significant differences in certain musical behaviors between the subgroups that constitute this musical world (e.g., Appalachian natives, non-natives, people with certain personality characteristics, men, women, young vs. old, differences in previous musical background, taste in other genres of music)? 4) Does the statistical data align with the classification of the musicians (both by the musicians themselves and by prior research) as “insiders” or “outsiders”? And 5) What other factors might be linked to one’s affective experience with this music? This dissertation, therefore, examines the roles of musical affect, musical perception, and personality in the cultural dynamics of the contemporary old-time Appalachian string band music community using more rigorous and quantitative methods than previous studies, and it provides a sample data set for use by other scholars in this field.

Chapter Outline

Due to the nature of this research, I have laid out the chapters roughly as they might be found in a standard scientific paper, though I have obviously elaborated and speculated much more than would be acceptable in scientific writing. Chapter 2, an extended literature review, addresses classification schemes for players of old-time music, prior research on altered states of consciousness generally in music and specifically in old-time music, links between personality factors and music psychology, and epistemological and methodological concerns with combining music psychology and ethnomusicology. Chapters 3 and 4 explain the specifics of and justification for my research methods and the results of my research. Chapter 5 is a discussion and analysis of my results and includes participant-observation / fieldwork findings, a comparison with Sacred Harp singing (a post-revival music with parallels to old-time music that would be a fertile ground for mixed-methods research), and concludes with methodological considerations. Finally, in Chapter 6, I outline how revival theory could be broadened to include the use of mixed-methods approaches, I discuss how these issues might apply to ethno ensembles, and I suggest some avenues of cross-disciplinary research that could be conducted in the future.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnomusicology and music psychology are both well-established fields that, at present, rarely coalesce in the same research project. Because this dissertation is an attempt at interdisciplinarity, the scholarly literature informing this study focuses on the following areas: 1) musician classification within the old-time revival, 2) “trance,” “flow,” “deep listening,” and “strong experiences with music” generally and in old-time music, 3) possible sources of difference in affective response to old-time music, and 4) epistemological / methodological concerns.

Classification / Terminology Debates

Since the folk music revival in the 1960s, it has been thought by most scholars and musicians that there are two general types who now play old-time music: those who are often called “revivalists” and those who could be called “traditional musicians” or “tradition-bearers.” Both scholars and musicians seem to agree that “revivalist” vs. “tradition-bearer” is primarily a *cultural* (as opposed to a *musical*) distinction, usually substantiated by birthright and geographic circumstance (see Rogers Thomas 2004). “Revivalist” and “tradition-bearer” are folklorists’ terms and concepts, but they have also been adopted by some old-time musicians.¹⁹ The “revivalist” designation is inextricably

¹⁹ The term “revivalist,” for example, is sometimes used as a term of derision by players who consider themselves to be “traditional.” The term is also rejected by some musicians who would meet most folklorists’ definition of a revivalist. Some musicians whom I’ve interviewed have invoked semantic

linked to notions of authenticity, especially when used derisively, with revivalists perhaps being able to play an authentic interpretation of the music, but with the understanding that they are, and always will be, merely interpreters. Musicians who are considered by others and who consider themselves to be “traditional” might take advantage of this perceived authenticity for commercial purposes, especially in the realm of musical tourism. However, this is considered a false dichotomy by some musicians and scholars,²⁰ some musicians reject these labels entirely, and cultural membership (which lacks a standardized method of determination) might not necessarily be the most useful factor in explaining musical differences among different types of old-time musicians.

But other researchers either downplay the distinction between these two groups or go as far as to say that everybody playing this music today is a revivalist. For example, Amy Wooley’s dissertation on the old-time music revival failed to acknowledge the presence of a contemporary community of both young and old tradition-bearing musicians. Wooley listed “parent community” continuation traditions as including musics like bluegrass, hillbilly, and country – implying by omission that old-time music had died entirely among the younger generation of insider musicians:

A case can be made for bluegrass as the authentic heir to the old-time tradition since it is popular with people who are descendants of the parent tradition and have grown up in the geographic communities....the true [old-time] tradition survived only on recordings collected in the 1920s before the break, and in the old musicians who were coaxed out of retirement by young revivalists. (2003, 134)

arguments about what “revivalist” means and insist that they are not trying to “revive anything,” and therefore are not “revivalists.” Some of the more staunch “traditional” players would vehemently reject being labeled a “revivalist” in the sense that they are from a different culture than that which produced the musicians born in the 1800s who were among the first to record old-time music.

²⁰ E.g. Jabbour’s (2014) claim, discussed in the conclusion, that outsider musicians can become insiders with enough effort.

While I don't disagree that bluegrass has supplanted old-time music for most insider musicians today who are interested in acoustic regional music,²² Wooley's claim could be interpreted as evidence of her not realizing that people native to the mountain South were still playing this music. With a home base in California and an outsider-dominated festival like Clifftop as her main research site, it is possible that Wooley is not saying young musicians from Appalachia who play old-time today are just as much "revivalists" as someone from Portland, Oregon; it just might have been the case that she was unaware of their existence at all (or was aware but didn't think the differences mattered).

The old-time music community in Surry County, North Carolina, which includes both insiders and outsiders, was the subject of James Ruchala's 2011 dissertation. Ruchala remarked on the self-segregation of musicians at the annual Mt. Airy Fiddler's Convention, with "obscure, crooked²³ tunes" being played by revivalists up on the hill on the edge of the campground and old-time chestnuts like "Soldier's Joy" being played by mostly local traditional musicians down in the flatlands. Ruchala claimed that the players in these groups are aware of the differences in jam repertoire, but he downplays the significance of this for the general festival dynamic. He remarks on the strangeness of seeing people "playing in little introverted circles, playing for their own pleasure" (290), yet in characterizing the contemporary Surry County scene Ruchala deems it "post-revival," writing that "to talk of revivalists and traditionalists will be increasingly unproductive in the future" (396). But the camaraderie or mutual tolerance that seems to

²² In fact, some of my insider informants for this research are equally comfortable with and proficient at playing bluegrass. Many musicians, both insider and outsider, are fans of bluegrass, and the stylistic influence of bluegrass on old-time music is especially pronounced around the Galax / Mt. Airy areas.

²³ Vernacular for tunes with either an irregular metrical structure (i.e., an inconsistent number of beats per bar in certain places) or with a formal structure that is unorthodox (i.e., AABCB instead of AABB).

be growing between some insiders and some outsiders should not be mistaken for a lack of differentiating factors between musicians from different cultures.

That being said, there are many problems with any sort of taxonomy that is based primarily on cultural membership. For example, geographic methods (e.g., place of birth, location of K-12 school) that fail to consider deep ancestry are doomed to fail in the case of something like old-time music, since enough time has now passed since outsiders from places like New England or Japan moved to the mountain South that many of them have raised children and even grandchildren in the region. Some of those children and grandchildren now play old-time music. Certainly, those children of liberal urban New England revivalists raised among primarily conservative rural Southerners are going to exhibit some of the qualities that make their transplant parents recognizable as outsiders. Even if one has a well thought-out criterion for cultural membership, if that criterion does not include actual response data from a sample of musicians, that researcher might be presupposing too much psychological or musical homogeneity among the members of that culture, or even relying on some sort of *geist*-like notion of certain ineffable cultural factors that make it so one musician is “the real deal” while a cultural outsider will just never “get” the music, though it would be hard to say precisely why. In any case, researcher-collected data alone is probably insufficient, especially if it consistently clashes with a musician’s own understanding of their cultural membership.

In my earlier research I understood outsiders to be those not raised in the tradition, probably from a suburban or urban area outside the rural mountain South, and who are overwhelmingly middle-class, college-educated, and politically liberal. I understood insiders as having either direct or indirect family and community links to old-

time music, as having grown up in the rural mountain South, and overwhelmingly being lower-class, not college-educated or the first in their family to attend college, and politically conservative. Other scholars have slightly different criteria for these two groups. Amy Wooley, for example, refers to “parent” traditions and communities, rather than “traditional,” and for her the distinction primarily has to do with acquisition of musical knowledge: “In a parent community, a person would have grown up within a musical tradition, the musical parameters of which would be second nature. A revivalist musician has grown up with a different musical belief system and approaches the musical tradition from this ‘foreign’ point of view” (2003, 138). Wooley’s definition obscures the geographic component usually applied to these sort of taxonomies and allows for a young musician growing up in a transplant old-time community in Asheville to be considered a member of a “parent” community. Ray Allen characterized this distinction as involving both early musical exposure *and* geographic circumstance, writing in 1981 that an old-time revivalist is “a musician of urban, suburban, or small town (non-agrarian) background who attempts to recreate traditional, rural, vocal and instrumental styles of folk music which were not present in the home or community in which he or she grew up” (66).²⁴

Kara Rogers Thomas, in her research on old-time musicians in western North Carolina, devised a traditionalist-to-revivalist taxonomy which, while still making this a

²⁴ Allen’s attitude about these distinctions was discussed at length in his 2010 history of the New Lost City Ramblers. Allen notes that creating and maintaining this binary has resulted in a dearth of scholarship by folklorists and ethnomusicologists on the revivalists involved in the American folk music revival and that various gatekeeper agencies (e.g., the NEA) have privileged cultural insiders almost exclusively while snubbing urban revivalists. Allen urges folklorists and ethnomusicologists to “abandon their orthodox notions of authenticity and cease constructing overly rigid insider-outsider dichotomies” (250) and to instead take a stance more like Mark Slobin’s idea of “spirals of cultural revitalization,” which acknowledge that concepts like “authenticity” are always in flux.

binary distinction, incorporates more layers of classification. According to Thomas, a *traditional* musician is someone who is "of the tradition who grew up immersed in the culture and worldview that produced the folkloric forms they actively perpetuate" (2004, 277). Within the *traditional* category lie more layers of categorization: traditional musicians are either *continuous*, meaning that those musicians learned to play and have kept playing throughout their lives, or *non-continuous*, which signifies either a lapse in playing the music learned when that musician was young or a late introduction to the music from their region. Thomas further divides this category into *tradition-inspired*, in which local traditional musicians are the catalyst for the non-continuous musician to return to the local music, or *revival-inspired*, where that musician develops an interest in local traditions due to the influence of more popular styles of old-time music (e.g., a movie soundtrack).

Revivalist musicians, on the other hand, are from "outside the tradition [and] participate in a musical genre that was not strongly associated with their own upbringing" (277). Again, there are subcategories within the revivalist framework. *Rural revivalists* became attracted to not only a foreign music, but to a foreign lifestyle associated with that music. As such, when they eventually move to the areas where their music of choice is played traditionally, they attempt to adopt the local lifestyle, and seek out local traditional musicians. While all revivalists are obviously attracted to the music, some rural revivalists are at least as equally attracted to the associated lifestyle. In contrast, *transplanted revivalists* lack this attraction to a simpler, rural lifestyle and moved to the areas where their music of choice was played in order to be around other revivalists – not out of any particular interest in local traditional musicians (281-282).

Conceptually, these distinctions are often useful, though it is up to the author's interpretation how to apply the concepts that delimit the various categories. In fact, I used Rogers Thomas's taxonomy (with a few modifications) in my master's thesis, as it seemed to be useful when dealing with issues of cultural politics, though the more I knew about a musician, the harder it was to justify the use of any of these labels. The main distinction between "traditional" and "revivalist" musicians is the area in most dire need of quantitative specificity, but the entire system could be made much more ecologically valid with some simple survey data. We could also use other terms as proxies for these concepts. For example, I could use "native" vs. "non-native" throughout this dissertation, but that still has semantic issues (e.g., Native to where? How long does one need to live in a place to be considered native? How many generations back must their family go in that area? How do we know that they aligned with the normative values and behaviors of others in that area? Etc.), and that might turn out to be a poor predictor of musical behavior and experience anyway. I could use "liberals" vs. "conservatives," which would remove the strict geographic limitation, but again would be presuming qualities about musicians that I had not yet empirically validated.

The main problem with giving too much weight to where a musician grew up is that (now more than ever) a musician can grow up in a somewhat homogenous cultural area but end up, through some combination of genetics, life experiences, and exposure, having more in common with people from elsewhere in terms of musical taste, the significance and function of the music, and affective response to music.²⁵ Regardless of any one musician's music-psychological characteristics, early exposure to old-time

²⁵ And the sort of deep, prolonged exposure to mass-media that would shape one's musical experiences is more likely the younger that musician is.

music, whether via family or local community, combined with some sort of deep ancestral link to old-time musicians and having the experience of growing up in the region most strongly associated with old-time music historically would seem to distinguish that musician, regardless of his or her actual musical behaviors and responses, from those without those characteristics. And because old-time musicians also tend to think in these binary terms, I find using these terms useful in some contexts. But because the terms “revivalist” and “traditionalist” can confound musical approach (i.e., a musician’s attitude about innovation in traditional music) with geographic/cultural background, I will instead use the terms “insider” and “outsider” to refer to the two main types of musicians in this study. I will use “insider” to refer to musicians with the above characteristics (exposed to live old-time and dance since childhood via family or other locals, some awareness of specific ancestral links to old-time musicians or fans of the music going back several generations, and having grown up in an Appalachian county or close to Appalachia proper in the rural South). “Outsider” will refer to musicians without those characteristics.

It is important to keep in mind that that 1) this insider/outsider distinction does not take into consideration the musical behavior, attitudes, or experience of the musicians, 2) there is no quantitative specificity or weighting to the criteria, and 3) referring to musicians using these terms is probably more useful when comparing some musicians (e.g., a theoretical physicist from Manhattan who discovered the banjo in college but who has never lived outside of New York vs. a truck mechanic from Mt. Airy who has played old-time music since he was a small boy and who learned from his father and grandfather) than it is with others (e.g., a musician originally from New York who has

been playing old-time music for 30 years and who has lived in western North Carolina for almost as long vs. a musician from Surry County, NC who has been playing the banjo for two weeks and heard old-time music for the first time in his late 20s). Each individual musician has certain characteristics that call these labels into question, but they nevertheless remain useful as the broadest brushes with which we can paint the picture of old-time music in the Appalachian South today. Later in the dissertation I will offer a suggestion for a more precise method of classifying musicians which takes into account their individual musical behaviors and experiences. Finally, it is important to consider that some of the outsider musicians in my sample have no investment in or awareness of the cultural politics involved in the outsider/insider distinction in North Carolina and Virginia (e.g., a musician who lives in Japan and just happened to attend Mt. Airy for the first time). In this sense, we might think of a third type of old-time musician (maybe an *outsider outsider*) who not only does not live in this area but also does not in any way aspire towards insider status.

“Trance” / “Deep Listening” / “Strong Experiences with Music” / “Flow”

Music and Altered States Generally

Aldridge and Fachner’s (2006) edited volume on music and altered states identifies several characteristics of altered states of consciousness, including: “alterations in thinking, disturbed time sense, loss of control, change in emotional expression and body image, perceptual distortions, change in meaning or significance, a sense of the ineffable, [and] feelings of rejuvenation and hypersuggestibility” (16). These seem to align with others’ and my research on what happens to some musicians during old-time

jams. Fachner places these altered states on a continuum from extreme relaxation to extreme arousal (ecstasy). If we accept that altered states of consciousness are “real” in more than the subjective sense and can be validated by examining the state of the brain, then it is likely that most old-time musicians’ brains would have more in common with low-arousal meditative trancers than those experiencing hyperaroused ecstatic states.

What follows is a brief discussion of specific manifestations of these various altered states of consciousness. There is a significant degree of overlap in these phenomena, and in some cases the overlap is such that one could find concepts like “trance” and “flow” to be describing essentially the same thing. However, there are important distinctions between these concepts, not just in terms of their academic utility but in how they are understood by old-time musicians. No one concept would be satisfactory in helping us understand the nature of affective difference for old-time musicians, but in combination, they might help clarify our thinking in this complex area.

Trance

The emic term “trance” that is used commonly by players of this music to refer to the general idea of altered states of consciousness that result from playing music with others. It can describe the lived experience one has while listening to, dancing to, or playing this music, but it can also describe the structure of particular tunes (e.g., “that’s a real trance-y tune there”) or a style of playing or rhythmic approach (e.g., “they get into this trance-kinda groove”). Many research questions can be structured around this notion of trance: Does the experience of old-time musicians who claim to experience “trance” align with existing research on music and trance from around the world? If not, is this a special kind of trancing that is unique to this music? Are there common and consistent

components to what old-time musicians are calling “trance”? How common is this among insider musicians? Might it be expressed differently and/or characterized differently verbally but still be occurring to a similar degree? What sort of cultural prejudice might exist against the idea of “tribal,” “hedonistic” behaviors such as trancing? Might this prejudice not only lead to a muted display of affect (i.e., by body movements, playing style) but also to a decreased willingness to *allow* such experiences to happen?

While electro-encephalogram (EEG) would probably be the best technique to use to compare brain states of musicians while trancing, the most widely cited ethnomusicological study on music and trance is Gilbert Rouget’s (1985) work, which examines trance globally from a humanistic rather than a neurobiological perspective. A key claim that Rouget makes in his global study of music and trance is that music “plays no direct role in the onset of trance” (183) other than to “create conditions favorable to its onset” (320). According to Rouget, trancers enter into trance states willingly with the help of a combination of music and its surrounding context. For example, what Rouget calls “emotional trance” seems to occur in the response to the sung poetry of Muslims due to “the meaning of the words and from the perfection of their relation to the music” (315). While having emotional responses to music strong enough to facilitate trance is a universal phenomenon, Rouget claims that the particular emotions, music, setting, dances, etc. seem to be culturally-bound. One wonders what Rouget would have made of old-time revivalist jam sessions. Can we infer that certain old-time musicians have a trance culture and that certain tunes and treatments of tunes are agreed upon implicitly to be most appropriate for use in these trance sessions? Rouget’s discussion of shamans and the Sufi taking drugs in order to achieve “lift-off” (319) also seems to echo some old-

time trancers, but the heavy focus on religious ceremony, dance, costumes, and loud and frenzied percussion elsewhere in the book seem to be less comparable to what occurs in old-time music.

Tony Perman, reviewing three recent ethnomusicological texts dealing with trance (Becker 2004; Friedson 2009; Jankowsky 2010), notes that Judith Becker's approach is the most scientific and biologically-oriented, Friedson's is the most reflexive/humanistic/phenomenological and least biologically-oriented, and Jankowsky's is somewhere in the middle. He notes that "while Becker hopes to overcome the paradox of embracing scientific and humanistic approaches, accepting as true both sides of a seeming contradiction," Friedson "both accepts and asserts the impossibility of fully understanding" the trance phenomena he studied among the Brekete people (2013, 333). In essence, Becker is interested in explanations of trance; Friedson denies that such explanations are possible: "Friedson relies on poetic reflexivity to highlight the indefinable nature of experience; Becker relies on neuroscience to define it" (Ibid., 337). Perman remarks how Jankowsky's approach attempts to understand trance from the perspective of the musicians in question, rather than from scientific or philosophical perspectives that researchers customarily use – any other interpretation is missing the point.

In a 2007 article on the ethnomusicological study of trance, Jankowsky dismisses the further study of whether music has a deterministic role in inducing trance states, citing Rouget's research, the failed attempts of anthropologists in the 1960s and 1970s to reconcile laboratory research on the musical induction of trance with what actually took place in cultures that used music in that way, and John Blacking's claims that the power

of music in spirit possession is grossly overestimated. Jankowsky claims that “any relationship between music and trance is first and foremost culturally conditioned” (188). That being said, Jankowsky concedes that more recent research has demonstrated the special therapeutic quality of particular drum-based rhythms and rhythmic entrainment, though this is also dismissed as mostly irrelevant to the ethnomusicological study of trance because in approaching this scientifically, we “are left at a far remove from the reality of others’ experiences” (Ibid., 190). Proposing a “militant middle ground” via what he calls “radical empiricism,”²⁶ Jankowsky advocates conducting ethnographies that “aim for discovery and understanding rather than universal truths or essences, [and] that seek to establish new kinds of human connectivity across the chasms of differing and seemingly incommensurable traditions” (Ibid., 192).

Ruth Herbert’s article on music and trance also addresses cross-disciplinary issues, but notes that research on trance in disciplines outside of ethnomusicology has been held back by a lack of clear definitions and not enough focus on “European-American secular trancing” (2011b, 201). Noting the difference between how various disciplines define trance, she writes that

ethnographic studies have focused on a variety of cultural contexts, beliefs and associated behaviours, primarily considering trance as situated; whereas the emphasis in hypnosis studies, for example, has been on isolating neurological correlates of the state itself, regardless of context, in order to offer a psychological explanation of trance. (Ibid., 203).

But Herbert’s larger focus is on the need to acknowledge low-arousal trance states such as those that occur during musical meditation, musical hypnosis, and solitary, secular music listening. Contrasting these states with high-arousal trance, she notes some degree

²⁶ Though his description sounds like normal ethnographic interpretive procedure and not anything “radical,” per se.

of overlap, including “narrowed attention, reduction of the critical faculty, time distortion, and dissociation” (Ibid., 211). Herbert’s research on these low-arousal trance states uncovered listeners who had experienced episodes of dissociation, in which they felt removed from their bodies, and she noted that these experiences “tended to take place when individuals felt tired, emotionally overloaded or subject to external discomfort or rumination” (Ibid., 213-214). This seems to align with the multiple reports of old-time musicians feeling like they were on “auto-pilot” while playing music in late-night jam sessions at festivals. Making these sort of links of similar experiences and neurobiological processes across various contexts and musical situations depends on an acceptance of the fact of shared neurobiological equipment across all humans, something that Herbert laments is not yet accepted among those who study trance from a humanistic perspective.

Deep Listeners

Judith Becker’s research is notable not only for her idea of “deep listening” but also for her attempts to reconcile ethnomusicology with modern neuroscience and music cognition like many, such as Herbert (above), have suggested. In *Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion, and Trancing* (2004) Becker defines “deep listeners” as “persons who are profoundly moved, perhaps even to tears, by simply listening to a piece of music” (2) and argues that “deep listening is a kind of secular trancing, divorced from religious practice but often carrying religious sentiments such as feelings of transcendence or a sense of communion with a power beyond oneself” (Ibid.). She integrates the felt experience of trancing with emotional and biological/neurological processes, yet never divorces trance phenomena from the cultural context that facilitates it. Trancing, as Becker defines it,

always involves motion, which makes what she calls “trance” very difficult to study using brain imaging technology or other physiological sensors. Deep listeners, therefore, can only experience “a nearness to trance.”

Applied to old-time musicians, who by virtue of playing an instrument are at least partially in motion, it is not clear whether they would meet Becker’s criteria for trancers. However, Becker notes that a key role that music plays in trance experiences is to facilitate “structural coupling” – in which individual organisms are united into a supra-individual biological process, and for many old-time musicians, it is precisely these feelings of transcendence and communion with others that motivate them to play the music. Continuing with this line of research, Becker conducted an experiment (Penman and Becker 2009) in order to test various hypotheses related to music and strong emotional responses. Becker compared the physiological responses (galvanic skin response and heart rate) of religious ecstasies while listening to their favorite music with those of secular deep listeners and found a high degree of similarity. The source of these similar responses is argued to be a shared biological predisposition to trance, which relies on the “the subconscious mediation of the autonomic nervous system” (Ibid., 51).

Strong Experiences with Music

Alf Gabrielsson and his colleagues’ Strong Experiences with Music (SEM) project, which has now spanned several decades, collected data from interviews and written reports from 965 people – the largest study ever of its kind. Participants were asked to describe “the strongest, most intense experience of music that you have ever had” and to “describe your experience and reactions in as much detail as you can,” in addition to questions regarding the context and possible cause of the experience and basic

demographic data (2003, 163-164). Some participants also completed a questionnaire after completing the free description which asked them to judge how well their experience agreed with statements gathered from an earlier batch of participants. After several academic papers, which focused on the descriptive system that Gabrielsson developed to analyze the responses, the project in its entirety was published in book form in 2011.

Gabrielsson's participants primarily described incidents in which they were listening to (81%) rather than playing music (19%). Even the professional musicians in the study reported experiences as a listener (71%) to a higher degree than experiences during their own performance (29%). Gabrielsson also directly asked whether the participant usually had SEM as a listener or as a performer, and only 14% of those who answered said they had it during their own performances, and 15% reported having SEM equally as listeners and performers (2011, 397–398). In this sense, the findings involving all the participants are not necessarily analogous to what I am attempting to study among old-time musicians, whose strong experiences tend to happen while they are actively involved in the creation of the live musical event. However, there does seem to be a similarity in that 90% of Gabrielsson's performers' SEM occurred in the company of people that they knew,²⁷ and the largest proportion of live experiences (which accounted for 73% of the overall reports) were from performances of folk music. Generally, the frequency of SEM was relatively low, with the most common frequency being once a year (44%), followed by “a few times in a lifetime” (32%). 9% reported SEM occurring once a month, and 6% experienced SEM once a week.

²⁷ Which suggests that SEM is primarily a social phenomenon

The most common locations for experiences were “at home, in a church, a concert premises, an assembly hall, and outdoors” (Ibid., 440). Interestingly, 93% of the experiences took place during the day or evening, and only 5% took place at night.²⁸ Various components of the music were listed as being particularly affective, including timbre, intonation, loudness/dynamics, rhythm, mode, harmony, formal aspects, particular notes and chords, and the importance of the text in lyrical pieces. Those whose experiences involved folk music primarily referenced instrumental music, half of which was Swedish and Scandinavian, and the other half comprised both European and non-European folk music. However, overall, folk music examples made up only 5.7% of the reports. Classical music, in various forms, was the most commonly reported music involved in SEM (30.6%).

Gabrielsson compared how frequently the various reactions occurred for certain types of music, which he reduced to two categories: art-music (i.e., classical, religious, and theatre) and popular music (i.e., folk, jazz, rock, pop, etc.). Reactions such as tears, becoming or being immobile, feeling of being lifted or floating, positive feelings with a relatively low activation level, trance or cosmic experiences, and feeling elevated were reported more frequently in art music examples. Popular music events had higher frequencies of physical engagement, being unaware of one’s body, feeling free and energized, and feelings of fellowship between those present at the event (Ibid, 419-420). However, using factor analysis, he determined that many of the reactions for art-music were coming from religious music experiences. It could be perhaps argued that the types of reactions old-time musicians have are similar to the responses of others to religious

²⁸ In contrast to many old-time musician’s experiences, which tend to happen late at night.

music because old-time seems to have a similar level of importance in the musicians'/listeners' lives, and it could be the case that these ineffable, cathartic experiences that old-time musicians have feel religious or spiritual, despite the tunes not invoking a specific religion or deity.

Gabrielsson found that 24% of participants experienced tears (more often among women than among men), 10% experienced shivers (i.e., chills – not usually reported with tears), about 5% experienced goosebumps (piloerection) during strong experiences with music, and other reactions occurred to a lesser degree. He points out that these reactions involve both the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system (e.g., “shivers, hair standing up on end, pulse going up, breathing affected”), which come from our species’ “prehistoric tendency to act,” and the parasympathetic branch (e.g., tears, crying), which he characterizes as a “deactivation of the organism” (2011, 374–375).

Only 9% of Gabrielsson’s participants described feelings of what he calls “quasi-physical reactions” such as floating, weightlessness. Of 965 participants, there were only 10 (~1%) reports of out-of-body experiences, although approximately 5% reported feeling controlled or taken away by the music, and about 15% reported any sort of transcendental experience (e.g., “spiritual,” trance, out-of body, merging with the universe, experience of other worlds). About 20% of participants reported feeling entirely absorbed by the music – as if nothing else existed. Blissful, ego-dissolution states in which participants experienced a feeling of interconnectedness occurred in about 35% of reports; a smaller number (18%) reported a sense of community or fellowship with others who shared in the same musical event. More common than this was a feeling of losing

control and being overpowered by the music, reported by 42% of participants. Feelings of being on autopilot were reported by about 6% of the musicians in the study.

Concluding this massive research project, Gabrielsson seems to have the attitude that the complexity of these SEMs are beyond any one model or explanatory framework, reminding us that

behind every music experience there is an interplay between three overall factors: the music, the person, and the situation.²⁹ It is an illusion to believe that the music is the only causal factor. Every music experience – just like any experience at all – is connected to a certain person in a certain situation. The same piece of music can be experienced totally differently by different people. Similarly, one can oneself experience the same piece quite differently in different situations.... It would seem that there has to be a unique combination of the “right music for the right person at the right time” in order for SEM to come about. (Ibid., 436)

To what degree Gabrielsson’s findings are culturally-specific is unknown. Though he concedes that it is “apparent that people’s reactions in strong experiences may be modelled according to customs, norms, and values in different cultural settings,”

Gabrielsson also claims that

if similar investigations were to be carried out with people in other countries, cultures, and at other times, the music would certainly be different from that in this investigation. However, the reactions as such might to a large extent be similar. For instance, there is no reason to believe that “automatic” physiological reactions (shivers, gooseflesh, heart palpitation, etc.) would be any different, nor basic perceptual reactions (auditory, tactile, visual), or emotional reactions such as happiness, sadness, anger, and fear (so-called “basic emotions”). (Ibid., 450)

While I can’t comment either way on this claim, my participants’ responses seem to be quite different in terms of frequency, intensity, and type of music involved than Gabrielsson’s participants. I will return to this point in the discussion section.

Flow

²⁹ This idea is consistent with much of social psychology

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (and many others') research into the phenomenology of "flow," sometimes defined as "the subjective experience of engaging just-manageable challenges by tackling a series of goals, continuously processing feedback about progress, and adjusting action based on this feedback" (2014, 240) seems especially applicable to the experience that some old-time musicians have while playing the music in jams. Csikszentmihalyi found that in a variety of both play and work settings, and "across lines of culture, class, gender, and age," (Ibid., 241) the reported experience of people claiming to be "in flow" was similar and included:

- 1) Intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment
- 2) Merging of action and awareness
- 3) Loss of reflective self-consciousness (i.e., loss of awareness of oneself as a social actor)
- 4) Distortion of temporal experience (typically, a sense that time has passed faster than normal)
- 5) Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, such that often the end goal is just an excuse for the process (Ibid.)

These above characteristics are certainly in line with the other research discussed above and with the jam experiences that some, but not all, old-time musicians report, though the term "trance" seems to be more common in old-time discourse in labeling the experience outlined above than "flow" (for now, anyway). So why might some old-time musicians experience flow while others do not? Research indicates that maintaining a balance between one's skills and the challenges of the activity is crucial to achieving a flow state. We would therefore not expect old-time musicians to report attaining a flow state when playing tunes that were beyond their musical capabilities, nor would we expect to hear reports of flow from musicians who were bored due to the music not providing enough challenge or demand on them as a musician.

We might wonder how this idea of optimal skill demand applies to old-time musicians given my observations that insider musicians tend to have a smaller repertoire of tunes compared to outsiders and that they tend to prefer to play familiar tunes with familiar musicians more so than do outsiders. If insider musicians are reporting achieving something like flow less often than outsiders, might this be explained by a mismatch of skill and challenge (i.e., are they bored by playing the same tunes with the same people and maybe don't realize it)? Or perhaps the likelihood of flow is correlated with a musician's level of expertise in the music combined with his or her willingness to adjust their musical challenges to their increasing skill levels. Csikszentmihalyi notes that "as people master challenges in an activity, they develop greater levels of skill, and the activity ceases to be as involving as before. In order to continue experiencing flow, they must identify and engage progressively more complex challenges" (Ibid., 244).

Obviously, flow is as much dependent on context as it is on the person. That is, while a test of one's propensity for absorption (which I used in this study) might tell us something about that person's general disposition, whether or not that person will become absorbed in a task depends on the task itself and that person's perception of that task. But how are we to understand the flow experience of multiple people simultaneously engaged in the same task as occurs during music-making, where each musician's experience of flow is contingent on the behavior of the other musicians? Flow has, in fact, recently been investigated in the domain of musical jam sessions. Hart and Di Blasi (2013) conducted a pilot qualitative study to examine the experience of *combined* flow in these jam sessions and found that while musicians' reports aligned with solitary

flow reports from other domains, these combined flow experiences also encouraged empathy between group members.

Hart and Di Blasi found that for combined flow to take place jammers “need to feel both comfortable and valued in a specific role or position within the group jam setting,” (5) and “each group member [should share] a similar level of skill” (6). Although these combined flow states tended to be fragile and transitory due to the dynamics and duration of the pieces of music being played, when flow did occur “musicians described feeling deeply connected to other group members, while simultaneously feeling mentally removed or separate from the collective experience” (7). The research into combined flow, which is still in its infancy, will perhaps prove as or more important to the understanding of old-time musicians’ experiences as what we know about the nature of *solitary* musical activities.

Affect In Old-Time Music

The affective power of old-time music has been often mentioned anecdotally by both scholars and players and has been discussed in detail by a few (e.g., Woolf and Wooley). However it has not, to my knowledge, been systematically studied. Nevertheless, the available anecdotal evidence is compelling, and much of it aligns with the findings that researchers have dubbed “trance,” “deep listening,” “strong experiences with music” and “combined flow.” Some insider musicians confess to being strongly affected by the music and the act of playing it. For example, one insider musician told Andrew Woolf that his “bow arm reminded him of Frankenstein: it seemed to have a life of its own” (1990, 266). Some, such as West Virginia fiddler Melvin Wine, were moved

to tears by certain tunes even at a young age. Gerry Milnes' (1999) discussions with older West Virginia musicians highlighted the emotional significance of this music to players and the link of the music (for them) to the supernatural. The affective power of old-time fiddle music is evident throughout his work, although the musicians interviewed do not pinpoint specific musical features that produce this affect. Miles Krassen, in his research on older fiddling traditions, claimed that

tunes were like incantations, a form of ancient wisdom that induced high feeling. Of all the best Appalachian fiddlers that I have heard, despite the individual differences, their styles all had one thing in common: the feeling of the music was always primary...their techniques were always developed to better express the feeling of their music. (1973: 42)

And Michael Frisch's research on old-time fiddling mentions "hypnotic repetition" and "lift[ing] the tune off the ground" (1987, 88). Of course, this does not necessarily mean that the insider fiddlers were consciously attempting to make their music more affective and could instead be read that Krassen and Frisch were instead projecting their own reactions to the music onto these older fiddlers, assuming intent when there was none.

Some scholars of the old-time music revival address the transcendent, peak experiences that outsider musicians seem to seek out and create with one another. For example, an unpublished study (Breitag 1985) on trance and fiddlers found that outsider fiddlers around Bloomington, IL demonstrated "a total involvement with and focus on the music, a limited and qualitatively different awareness of outside stimuli and of the performer's own body, and an altered perception of the passage or nature of time" (np). Notice that this aligns perfectly with the definition of a "flow" state. Breitag's informants also mentioned a lack of physical pain and spoke of fiddling in mystical terms. And

Wooley argues that these transcendent experiences are the main reason that outsiders play old-time music in the first place:

The reason people play old-time in jams [is] to have a transcendent or transformative experience. In other words, people jam to have an ecstatic experience, and for many, the purpose of jamming is to achieve a state ranging from mildly-euphoric to trance-like....Musically this is achieved by all the members of the jam locking and coming together into a single entity. (2003, 102)

Wooley writes that jam sessions are “the heart and soul of the old-time festival experience,” (300) and she likens these sessions to sacred “rituals” for musicians, suggesting that “the ecstatic and transformative experience [of jams]... is at the very center of contemporary old-time” (292) and that “old-time is a community held together by not just the love of this musical tradition, but by the ritual act of playing music communally, and the deep spiritual bond that is created through this act” (325). She also observed that during a jam session at the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes in 2000

the jam became larger and larger and more and more fiddlers joined. A few more repetitions into the tune, the tempo began to increase, and the ornamentation in the tune began to be lost.... Fiddlers were swaying. One fiddler had his eyes closed and rocked his entire body to the beat. The rhythm became more and more primal with a version of the hoe-down shuffle I-IV, I-IV rocking section creeping in and becoming more and more accented. The jam went on for about twenty minutes until the blistering tempo became so feverish that the group of musicians was one mass in festival trance mode. (2003, 132)

Wooley’s description highlights many components that are frequently mentioned by old-time musicians and musician-scholars when describing a peak experience jam scenario, such as playing the tune for an unusually long time, a group dynamic that privileges energy and synchrony over melodic nuance, musicians demonstrating physical entrainment to the music, fast tempo, strong emphasis on rhythmic components and accents, repeating chord sequences (particularly those involving the IV chord), and a sense of surrender of self.

To my knowledge, the most in-depth analysis of the link between musical sound and affect in old-time music is a 1990 dissertation by the late fiddler Andrew Woolf. While Woolf did not incorporate formal psychological theory (music perception and cognition was still getting established as a united discipline, and empirical studies of music and emotion or comprehensive theories of emotional response to music were scarce), his work was detailed, comprehensive, and ground-breaking³⁰. And from his writing, it seems obvious that Woolf was extraordinarily sensitive to music, perhaps hyperhedonic, and he was also extraordinarily aware of his lived musical experience. He would have easily met Becker's criteria for being a deep listener.³¹ Woolf, for example, wrote that "these simple folk melodies, repeated, bore some folks. I get shivers and tears" (10) and that "confronted with silence, I filled the vacuum of sound with emotion, causing chills and eye-watering" (34). It is probably for this reason of personal significance that his work focused so heavily on the affective power of old-time music and on the experience of music-making.

His dissertation identifies several affective dimensions of old-time music such as automatic playing, physiological responses to the music (e.g., shivers, chills, and tears), the idea of "peak experiences," "trance tunes," and altered states of consciousness, and a characterization of old-time revivalist jammers as "Dionysian." Woolf lists eight types of altered states that he (and others, he claims) experienced while playing in jams: 1) Prolonged State of Imaginative Excitement (awareness of his part and history in playing

³⁰ Woolf, however, did study psychology to some degree at Tufts but may have decided to not make his writing scientific in nature.

³¹ He was also a poet and a painter.

old-time music), 2) Romantic Entrancement (feelings of expectation, love for other musicians and nature), 3) Rush (“a sudden overwhelming wave of feeling that often prickles the skin on the back of my neck, often accompanied with a sudden overwhelming feeling of joy oddly commingled with nostalgic, cosmic sadness, sometimes causing tears”)³² – can be self-induced by playing with more force and feeling and by certain melodic/chordal changes, particularly from I to IV or V to IV”, 4) High (a continuous state of happy...internal excitement and feeling of well-being, with a bit of giddiness), 5) Vertigo (“an infrequent, sudden giddiness” caused by losing one’s place in the tune or being drawn into many repetitions of a tune, 6) Self-Music-Absorption (usually achieved with eyes closed so that others disappear and one is aware only of the music, forgetting one’s surroundings, who one is playing with, or where one is), 7) Trance (of greater intensity, duration, and deepness, involving a sense of loss of self, with possible religio-mystical states), and 8) Communitas (an existential felt state of being “we,” together as one, yet individual) (209-211). All of these, in some sense, were also mentioned in the SEM project, though the particular mention of the IV chord in old-time music (present in Woolf’s and Wooley’s research and which comes up frequently in discussions with outsider musicians) merits further investigation. Woolf, for example, observed that a player may feel “a rush at the repetition of a change to the subtonic, a chordal-melodic change that often produces a distinctive emotional pleasure in me and other old-time musicians” (258).

³² Music-psychologists would probably understand what Woolf describes here as “shivers” or “chills,” and Gerry Milnes (1999) found that an old insider musician from West Virginia described his reaction to particular fiddle music as “chills of hilarity.”

Woolf asked at the outset of his dissertation: “Why are certain persons drawn to the drone, attracted to the timbre of plucked and rubbed strings, lonesome banjo, weeping fiddle?” His answer was: “To get a rush, a high, rock out, trance” (1990, 4). In line with Wooley, Woolf claimed that “the old-time jam session player is a Dionysian, pursuing excess and out-of-the-ordinary psychological states and peak experience. Mind alteration is a motivation for old-time enthusiasts” (207). And Woolf’s research also compared old-time musician’s trance to other sorts of musical performances around the world, especially the idea of *saltanah* in Arabic music. Woolf addressed Rouget’s research on trance, noting that Rouget’s work mostly dealt with musicians working an *audience* into a trance, rather than the musicians working themselves into a trance, often without an audience. Distinguishing what old-time musicians do from possession trance, Woolf claims that if he is possessed by anything it would be the “the sound of this traditional music,” “the spirit of ancestor musicians” “the music, its rhythm and melody, its repetition,” and by “a certain musical style, developed by [traditional] Southern players” (216). He called this different sort of trance “musician’s trance” (216).

Woolf, like Wooley, identified a “conversion” experience that often takes place the first time old-time musicians hear (usually a particularly good example) of the music. We know that music can activate our brain’s pleasure circuits in the same way as certain drugs (Blood and Zatorre 2001). Perhaps comparing old-time jammers to drug users who are forever chasing that amazing first high is a useful analogy. But old-time musicians do more than just listen. Woolf identifies several other sensory experiences that affect the old-time musician during a jam in addition to the sound waves coming into his or her ears. For example, how players and instruments look, the tactile sensation of playing an

instrument, the entrainment of body parts like legs, feet, and heads, and the conscious knowledge of being listened to and expressing one's self through their playing are all variables in the player's experience.

And, like Wooley, Woolf (whose dissertation was completed 13 years before Wooley's) considered the festival a sacred space for old-time musicians – especially for Woolf himself. He wrote of the first rush of emotion when hearing the music again at a festival after a long drought and that “when the musician finally attends such an event, after looking forward to it with longing, he or she is prepared to have a peak musical experience, and often does” (67). He also described how “at night the effect of hearing a jam, first at a distance, then closer, then right on top of the sound, then slowly fading away...is a very unusual, mysterious, and powerful musical experience....” (52) and that “sleep deprivation, many hours of playing music, alcohol, personal expressivity and verbal creativity from oneself and others, all can produce, in the late hours, some memorable festival moments of heightened feeling” (57).

First-Person Accounts

Many of the most detailed first-person descriptions of these sorts of peak/trance/strong experiences for old-time musicians come, not surprisingly, from musician-scholars like Woolf. Ethnomusicologist Jeff Titon details the first-person phenomenology of this experience from the perspective of a banjo player at a late-night festival jam who experiences the dissociative state associated with strong experiences with music,³³ writing that “the music was being drawn through [him]. [He] wasn't aware

³³ According to Titon (personal communication), this was in reference to an experience at the 1986 Galax festival in which both he and Woolf were playing in the same jam and were joined by some strangers from Alabama.

of making the music at all. The banjo was playing [him] (2001, 10). Titon also described his notion of “musical being-in-the-world” and the ego dissolution that can occur during old-time music jams:

Playing the fiddle, banjo, or guitar with others, I hear music; I feel its presence; I am moved, internally; I move externally. Music overcomes me with longing. I feel its affective power within me..... I feel the music enter me and move me. And now the music grows louder, larger until everything else is impossible, shut out. My self disappears. No analysis; no longer any self-awareness.... (1997, 93–94)

Ethnomusicologist Amy Wooley described the following jam experience that she took part in, characterizing it in a very similar way to Titon above:

Tom started a tune that we had played together at UCLA. Patrick started in on about the second phrase, punctuating the melody and adding energy almost instantly. David felt confident and so he joined in. Since it was a tune from Mel’s repertoire, he was playing full-out, too. Mark joined the fiddles, playing the tune an octave higher. I suddenly felt confident and played a little pick-up bass note and came in just as Bill made his entrance on the bass. That’s when it happened. We were in perfect synch – a lock. I felt a little tickle in my stomach like the feeling when going over a hill on a roller coaster, and suddenly, I felt waves of giddiness and joy and I was no longer self-conscious or nervous. I was *inside* the tune and the tune was inside of me. (2003, 313–314)

Is it worth considering to what degree the self-conscious feelings that some outsider musicians have about playing a music that is not theirs factor into these sort of experiences. Although I have not yet investigated this specifically, it would be interesting to learn whether the thrill of “locking in” in a jam is related to the degree of self-consciousness that one has about their own musicianship and whether this varied among different groups of old-time musicians.

Like Wooley’s roller-coaster, Andrew Woolf wrote that, for him, “Playing fiddle tunes in jam sessions at a fiddle convention is thus somewhat like enjoying a succession of different rides at an amusement park,” (1990, 322) though in this simile, Woolf seems

to be referring more to the structure of the tunes than he is to the conquering of feelings of self-consciousness. But, echoing both Wooley and Tilton, Woolf writes that

“In a trance” is how I, and other old-time musicians, describe what happens to us sometimes when we play fiddle tunes in jams.... I do know some instrumentalists who frequently go into an altered state. My own ability to attain the old-time trance groove has increased, so that if I am not self-conscious and not worried about the impression I am making on others, I can “lose myself” in the jam.

While it probably is helpful that almost everybody who has written extensively about old-time music jams are outsiders who themselves experience these transcendent states / strong experiences as a result of the music, this might actually be a hindrance in understanding the perspective of someone who does not hear or respond to the music in that way and who, instead, is experiencing pleasurable affect via other mechanisms.

Socio-Cultural Consequences of Trancing

My earlier research attempted to investigate the musicians’ conscious experience of these phenomena, and in practice this generally was done by simply asking them what they experience while they play this music. Many of the older outsiders who were Grateful Dead fans were explicitly aware of the links between their fondness for extended jams, the way they approached old-time music, and the resulting “high” that the music gave them. At a place like a fiddler’s convention, entering this sort of trance state will be a public display and can be a matter of cultural politics when the musician trancing is a foreigner and the audience is the locals who live right down the road from the festival campgrounds. Writing about old-time musicians in the late 1980s, Woolf remarks that “a fiddler in a trance is making a statement about how one may live, which is in opposition to the dominant middle and upper class images and models of American society” (353). Certainly, some outsider musicians must find it satisfying to be able to let themselves be

overcome with the musical experience in a public setting, knowing full-well that locals at a fiddler's convention, while not necessarily middle- or upper-class, might think it is bizarre to behave in that way.

One insider musician whom I asked about this considered this deep emotional response to the music a way of "acting," telling me that he "doesn't really act like that" but that "the inner feeling is the same. They [outsiders] just show it in a different way" (Wood, 2009: 115). Another insider musician told me that

I don't know what [trancing] is. None of us do it [and] the people that I grewed up around don't do it. And I don't understand why they would do it. If there's somebody dancin', I'm not gonna have my eyes closed.... I love to watch people dance...and they [outsiders] want to keep it in that little circle – keep it to theyself. (Ibid., 116).

Other insider musicians echoed this sentiment, telling me that their peak experiences while playing old-time music come from crowd or audience reaction (usually at a dance, contest, or festival). One insider old-time musician told me about having an out-of-body experience while playing music, but it was in the context of being conscious of carrying on a local tradition and not due to the structure or sound of the tune being played.

Probably the response most linked to the affective qualities of the sound itself was from an insider musician who told me that he is affected "when you feel everybody's in sync. You get a little adrenaline rush or somethin' – endorphins, I guess. When the bass and the fiddle and the banjo and those hard-hittin' guitars are all together. I mean, I feel it. And I love that feelin'." His father, at the time in his late 70s, concurred, saying "I've been through that. When it gets to soundin' real good, and everybody's in tune real good, and everybody's getting' it like they supposed to – you'll get that feelin'."

Verbalizing the Ineffable

What, precisely, this “feeling” is for each musician and to what degree it is similar or different among musicians is a fascinating mystery. For many musicians, the most intense feeling they can have is one in which they feel they have left their own body. For example, Woolf spoke with a “Southern revivalist male fiddler, a doctor in his thirties” about attaining a trance-like state at the Mount Airy fiddler’s convention in the late 1980s. Among the phrases used by this fiddler were “you forget who you are,” “it’s almost like you’re hovering over above this thing, looking down on it,” “over into another realm,” and he emphasized that for him these states are more likely to occur when physically and mentally fatigued (1990, 215)³⁴. A chapter of a recent DVD, *Why Old Time?* (2009), cuts between several musicians (mostly outsiders) describing the experience of the jam session when it seems to allow musicians to achieve some sort of peak or transcendent state. These range in intensity, but three of these musicians emphasize an out-of-body experience. The producers of the film titled this chapter “The Jam Moment,” and what follows are the quotes from the various musicians:

- “What happens in that all of a sudden – if you listen and just do what you’re doing and listen to what’s happening at the same time the sounds blend together and become, well.... What is it they say?”
- “There’s a sound that comes with everybody playing together and the feeling of playing in concert and listening to other people that just gives one a thrill”
- “It’s one of those things that’s it’s not really a verbal thing, you feel it. There’s a kind of zen that evolves.”
- “Pieces, and it comes together. You feel like you’re part of a whole.”
- “Communion. Literally, it’s communion.”

³⁴ This aligns with empirical studies such as those done by Ruth Herbert (2011)

- “But what I strive for is getting yourself out of the way of the tune.”
- “I don’t know. Sometimes you lock in pretty quickly, and then then it’s gone.”
- “You can feel it, but I don’t know how you get there.”
- “It’s almost – you can have an almost out-of-body experience.”
- “Somewhere out in the ether there’s a place I think that a lot of old-time musicians kind of instinctively search for.”
- “I almost feel myself floatin’ above it.”
- “You just feel like you can do it, you feel like you’re doing it. You’re riding on top of everybody else. Everybody else is just, you know....”
- “I don’t know how to describe it, you know? It just feels right.”
- “You can do it on the lowest level like ‘Boy, I hope that pretty girl over there sees me playin’,’ or it can be this moment where you just get beyond. It’s like any art – it has its functional aspects and it has its transcendent moments. People who play music in any tradition or any style have – know that moment. And that moment of just transcending words or personality or anything – just having the music just catch you that way. Oh, those are beautiful moments.”
- “The first image I have in my mind when I think of people locking in when they’re really playing old-time music. Basically their heads are all down; they’re listening intensely. Their body is focused, steady – and concentration and focus. And we used to go up to Lexington, VA and jam with those people. They would play tunes – I’m sure they went on for 20 minutes, at least. They would get locked into this groove and you can go out and have lunch and come back and they were still playing that tune.”

Notice also the similarity in these comments. Generally, these are vague descriptions, and many of them use the word “it” (e.g., “you feel it”) to reference some aspect of this experience, though we are left to guess exactly what “it” is. These descriptions address the presence of other musicians, the rhythmic synchrony that occurs, the sense of connection that results, a sense of being outside of one’s self or body, and intense focus

that can seem to alter the passage of time.³⁵ Might these be different ways of verbalizing what is the same sort of experience (e.g., combined flow or absorption leading to low-arousal trance) and even the same sort of neural processes at work in these musicians (albeit at different intensity levels)? How much of these experiences are due to the awareness of attaining group synchrony in a coordinated task, and how much is due to the experience of hearing the sound and structure of the music that results from this group synchrony?

Immunity to Altered States?

Although it would appear that old-time musicians in general are trance- and flow-seekers and are strongly affected by feelings of rhythmic synchrony and by the structure of the music, certain insiders I encountered had different criteria for what made “good” old-time music. One of my thesis chapters was focused on a particular young musician, “Carter,” from Mt. Airy, North Carolina who was outspoken about his frustration with outsiders playing the local “Round Peak” old-time music incorrectly. Carter told me that his hostility toward most outsider musicians was not due to where those musicians grew up, their political beliefs, or their socioeconomic status, but was due to their less-than-faithful musical interpretations of local tunes. Carter valued exact replication of the way the local music sounded on early recordings and limited his repertoire to the tunes played by local musicians on those old recordings, similar to how some musicians in other genres (e.g., early music, classical) value “historically-informed performance” (see Butt

³⁵ Saying that a long jam went on for “20 minutes” is an oddly specific time estimate for long jams that I’ve encountered both in scholarship on old-time music and in conversations with other musicians. One jam that I recorded at Mt. Airy went on for 10 minutes, and that felt extraordinarily long to me. Historically, there are anecdotes of musicians playing the same tune for 20 or more minutes for a square dance, but jams of that length when there is no external audience must be doing something profound for the musicians involved for them not to lose interest well before the 20 minute mark.

2002 for an examination of this phenomenon). He ended up befriending and recording an album with a woman from New York because she learned the tunes of (and was able to mimic the particular instrumental stylings of) Benton Flippen, a revered Mt. Airy fiddler, to Carter's liking, and "didn't try to put too much crap in it" (Wood, 2009: 95). I assumed that this "crap" was meant to mean subtle variations in the melody, rhythm, or harmony of tunes which would be especially enjoyable for some (outsider) players but would be annoying distractions or even errors to Carter.³⁶

In many ways, Carter represented the antithesis of the archetypal trance-seeking outsider musician. Taken at face value, we could understand Carter as evidence of the variety of factors that determine one's musical taste and emotional response to music. In his case, faithful adherence to what is essentially a historical musical artifact trumps any positive response that changes to this music (e.g., sonic manipulations which would likely increase activity in the brain's pleasure circuits) might induce. Carter would likely claim to be immune to the sort of musical stimuli that would be highly affective for trance-seekers / deep listeners. In fact, Carter attended the Clifftop festival one summer and told me: "The music [there] was different. They had a different approach to it... I mean just hearing the banjo players play, and I mean goin' way down the neck and doin' stuff like that and all that old hippie stuff..." (111). Carter also told me about a jam at a wedding he attended in Kentucky where the other musicians played "this weird stuff that nobody else really knowed.... And I tried to play along, and I never could get it. Then I

³⁶ Jabbour (2014) wrote that "based on many interviews and conversations, I would say that local musicians themselves judge non-local musicians principally on who they learned from and how well, not on their family name and birthplace" (118). Carter would potentially support Jabbour's observation, while other musicians in my study would not.

just laid my banjo on my lap while they're still playin', and I was just gettin' madder and madder.... I said 'I can't play this shit,' and I got up and left" (94).³⁷

In contrast to the outsider musicians who thrive on the challenge of learning new tunes, and who are seemingly always searching for "new" old-time tunes, Carter has a set repertoire of old-time music and, though it is hard for many old-time musicians to relate to, he has no interest in even *hearing* some of the most beloved (and highly-affective) old-time tunes from outside his home region, much less learning to play them or allowing himself to be affected by their psychological power. This is not to imply that Carter or others like him are broadly representative of insiders before gathering evidence in support of that claim, and it is also important to note that there are certainly a significant number of outsiders who also exhibit a similar musical purism.

Brown String Band Pilot Study

In the spring of 2012 I conducted a modest survey of the musicians in the old-time string band class (made up of students and Providence area locals) at Brown University. My goal was to better understand the attitudes of the jam musicians toward old-time music and to better understand what they were getting out of the weekly jam experience. My hypothesis was that the outsiders who comprised the class/jam group would rank musical factors (e.g., its affective power or cognitive appeal) as being more important to their jam experience than extra-musical factors (e.g., a link to tradition or an interest in Appalachian history). Twenty-five musicians who attended the weekly string band class/jam on Brown's campus completed the survey. Ages ranged from 19 to 64, with a mean age of 33 and a median age of 22 (reflecting the mostly undergraduate make-

³⁷ Another insider musician told me: "I don't enjoy playin some obscure, crazy, complicated tune with five different chords and four different parts from some place in wherever."

up of the group). Experience playing old-time by the time the survey was distributed ranged from 2 months to 50 years, with a median of 3 years.

Participants were first asked to rate the importance of 10 factors, representing four categories, to their enjoyment of their jam experience using a 5-point Likert scale. On average, socialization and musicianship / repertoire building were rated equally high ($M = 4.16$) in terms of importance the musicians' jam experience, followed by hearing/playing tunes that were emotionally affective ($M = 4.08$). Appalachian heritage/tradition was the least important category ($M = 2.60$). The item with the highest rated importance was "Making/experiencing music with other people" ($M = 4.64$, $SD = .49$), and the item with the lowest rated importance was "Feeling that I'm emulating particular old-time musicians" ($M = 1.88$, $SD = .89$). Next, they were asked about how frequently they experienced a "trance-like state" while playing old-time and how intense, on average, that experience was. Fourteen (56%) participants reported achieving a trance-like state often, 7 (28%) reported achieving this sometimes, 3 answered "rarely," and 1 answered "always." Thirteen (52%) reported moderate average intensity levels, 7 (28%) reported high average intensity levels, 4 (16%) reported very high average intensity levels, and 1 reported low average intensity levels.

I was not surprised that the questions about Appalachian heritage / tradition were rated so low in importance for these musicians' jam experience – not many of them had spent any time in the region, heard living insider musicians play live, or knew any living insider musicians, their families, etc. Basically, few of these musicians would have had the experiences necessary to make this factor very important to their music making. The importance of emotionally affective tunes was about where I would have guessed, but I

had not anticipated the supreme importance of the socialization aspect of the music class for these musicians, which ranked as more important (on average) than any other survey item.³⁸ Also surprising was the number of musicians who reported experiencing trance-like states while playing (though “trance” was not formally defined and was therefore left up to each musician’s interpretation). Twenty-two (88%) reported experiencing this at least sometimes, and 25 (100%) reported ever experiencing it. The average reported intensity level ($M = 3.55$, $SD = .81$) translated to between “moderate” and “high,” and these were from relative newcomers to the music. I could not conceive of getting results like this from the insider musicians whom I knew in North Carolina and Virginia.

Structural Features Conducive to Altered States

Wooley, Woolf, and other scholars have identified components of old-time music that seem to be especially effective at facilitating these altered states in musicians, including its repetitive quality, pulsing rhythms, the constant droning timbre, and particular harmonic progressions (esp. involving the IV chord). Repetition, in various forms, is one of the most frequently-mentioned components. Wooley, for example, claimed that “basic circular-motif building blocks can be found in many popular tunes, and operate as a mantra-like deepening, with a feeling of spiraling into the tune itself. Again, this kind of repetition can operate as a deepening of the ecstatic experience as well” (Wooley 2003). Woolf also likened old-time tunes to a “chanted mantra” that have a hypnotic effect on players and claimed that “repetitive practice...defines this music” (1990, 261).

³⁸ Because of the way the item was worded, it is unclear whether to understand this as an extra-musical factor (emphasis on the “with other people” part), as a musical factor (“making/experiencing music”), or as a mix of both.

Some old-time tunes contain more of these circular motifs than others, and musicians seem to have, consciously or not, found these tunes, learned them, and have made them popular to play at festivals. Wooley cites the Fuzzy Mountain String Band's records of 1971 and 1972 as being especially full of these sorts of melodies and also having an overall fuzzy timbre that complemented their musical approach. Repetition is also important in that it often takes multiple passes through the tune for musicians to feel a marked change in their conscious state. Woolf reported that the greatest intensity of trance occurs after several repetitions of a tune, and he contrasts this practice with Irish session players, who don't play each tune long enough, and with bluegrass musicians (the breaks and song format, which dictates length, interrupt any build-up to a trance state) (1990, 219–220).³⁹ The magic number of 20 minutes on one tune during these intense jams comes up again when Wooley claims to have personally played in and recorded jam sessions in which some tunes are played for almost twenty minutes, the tune spiraling around and around, taking the musicians deeper and deeper inside of it" (Wooley 2003).

Woolf devoted a chapter of his dissertation to "jam style," and he identified several types of styles particular to old-time music, often with a regional basis. Those familiar with old-time know of the "Galax" sound, "Round Peak" tunes, Ithaca (New York) style, north Georgia style, etc. While there are players today who play in these styles, and connoisseurs will claim that all the Round Peak fiddlers have their own style, it is the "festival" style that seems to be the most common today among revivalist jam sessions, especially where the implicit goal is to attain a trance state. Festival old-time is

³⁹ Incidentally, Woolf also claimed that "bluegrassers may find some, if not all, of the old-time tunes boring" (286). We might then ask the question what else psychologically do bluegrassers have in common that is not shared by old-time musicians, and vice-versa.

characterized by fast tempo, dense texture,⁴⁰ and “a characteristic jazzy phrasing... that manifests itself in more dramatic pauses, stresses and anticipations” (Higginbotham 1987, 11). It is distinct from other types of old-time music (e.g., obscure tunes played solo) in that it has broad appeal, is easily accessible, and lends itself well to large groups in a party atmosphere. Jeff Titon characterized it as a transformation of old-time music by “dedicated younger musicians attracted to the sound and style of the older repertoire, yet raised on the rhythms of jazz and rock ‘n’ roll” (2001, xiv).

But what this music seems especially tailor-made for is to facilitate peak and trance experiences for players. Banjos might use a particular plucking pattern involving a flurry of plucks on the fifth-string, and fiddlers tend to give more notes their own bow stroke rather than combining slurs of notes on a single pull or push of the bow. These banjo and fiddle techniques add to the rhythmic drive, and the addition of an upright bass, when played by a skilled musician, can make the overall aesthetic seem almost like rock music or even reggae if the backbeat is emphasized enough. Wooley, writing about a version of the tune “Sandy Boys” – which most old-time musicians learned from the recordings of the Hammons family of West Virginia or via Alan Jabbour – notes how a festivalized version that spread around outsider musicians at Clifftop also resonated particularly well with the Anglo-American Ensemble at UCLA:

Our “Clifftop” version... of “Sandy Boys” became a favorite with the entire UCLA Anglo-American Ensemble. The group loved the tune not just because it was easy to learn to play, but because its simplicity enabled us to concentrate on the driving rhythm in the tune, with its many ‘push’ beats and the wonderfully satisfying I-IV-I-IV harmony⁴¹ accompanying the deliciously idiomatic-sounding hoe-down shuffles in the second bar of the second half of the tune. (2003, 129)

⁴⁰ i.e., many instruments playing together, including multiple guitars, fiddles, and possibly multiple banjos – though this is usually frowned upon. I can’t ever recall seeing a jam with two bassists.

⁴¹ Yet again, specific mention of harmonic oscillation involving the IV chord!

Wooley then gave her theory as to why this variant became so popular among outsider musicians, who told her that the tune “rocks”:

It is a simplified version, and it does “rock” in that the melody is simple, repetitious and made up of a lot of accented over-the-bar anticipations that players love to “lean into,” and which give the music a feeling of rhythmic urgency that is exciting. Although quite simple and basic, the almost primal rhythmic drive is exciting. (Ibid., 130-131)

Notice that many of these enjoyable musical features identified by Wooley (e.g., “push beats,” “hoe-down shuffles,” “over-the-bar anticipations”) could also be called “syncopation” (a violation of rhythmic expectation).⁴²

Wooley and Woolf identify other musical components that are important to achieving these states, such as timbre and rhythmic insistence: “The sound of the humming, buzzing, plucking strings, with the banjo fifth string chime-drone, and the pulsing, tick-tock rhythm of the ensemble can put musicians and bystanders alike into a more or less intense altered trance state,” (Woolf 1990, 218–219) simplicity of the melody line: “A simple tune may be more effective in inducing altered states among the players and listeners, like a chanted mantra,” (Ibid., 291) and arrangement of the musicians to ensure maximum rhythmic synchrony:

The musicians sit facing each other in a circle. Often, they sit quite close to each other, heads leaning in, negotiating instrument necks and bows. The goal is rhythmic tightness, or an interlocking of all the instruments so that the music fuses into one tightly woven fabric. When this happens, the music seems to propel itself forward. (Wooley 2003, 316)

Woolf also found, like I have observed and experienced myself, that melodic mode is especially effective at inducing particular moods. The vernacular expression of this might be that such key/mode has a certain “feel” to it. Different tunings on the banjo and the

⁴² The psychology of expectation as applied to musical affect is the subject of David Huron’s (2006) *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation*.

fiddle to accommodate these keys and modes highlight particular voicings of notes that tend to strike people as having a distinct emotional character.⁴³ The tunings of DDad or AEac# on the fiddle, not commonly used in jam settings, are noted by players as particularly powerful. Bruce Molsky once told me that while touring around northern Europe he learned that they call the AEac# tuning the “devil’s tuning,” not because it sounds Satanic, but because it seems to be so emotionally affective that it seems supernatural or sinister.⁴⁴

In my personal experience (i.e., in playing with, observing, and talking to other musicians), I have found all of the things that Woolf, Wooley, and others identify to be generally true (at least, for the type of musician who would approach the music as a way to experience a transcendent state). Because I and the researchers mentioned above observed different musicians in different settings and locations during different time periods, the combination of our anecdotes supports the reality of these phenomena among old-time musicians. There are many other musical factors that can also facilitate these experiences, depending on the musician and the context, and, of course, not all of these are equally effective even for all outsider trance-seeking musicians. But the musical components discussed above seem to “work” for a large majority of musicians who seek out these experiences in jams.

Rouget’s theories on music and trance could also apply here. While he did not explicitly suggest that the ability to experience trance due to music might be biological (due to shared neurological mechanisms common to all humans – which some musicians

⁴³ This is addressed by my survey and interview participants in later chapters.

⁴⁴ For me, hearing the unison 3rd scale degree played on the highest two strings and then hearing the notes separate out to form a major third when the strings are played open, like in the tune “Grigsby’s Hornpipe,” usually gets me thinking about something transcendental.

are better able to access than others – or due to shared neurological mechanisms common to people with particular types of brain structures & cognitive systems – i.e.

personalities), his work does not necessarily negate that idea. But Rouget does claim that the specific musical devices used in any one culture to induce these states are culturally-constructed, and if trancing is a case of primarily *learned* associations between musical structure and affect, those musicians who seem to trance to old-time music could certainly have, over a long period of growing up listening to other music that seems to suit this purpose, come to make certain emotional associations with certain musical sounds, which they then unconsciously apply to old-time music once taken up later in life.

James Ruchala's 2011 dissertation addresses the musical creativity and aesthetics of the "Round Peak" style (a particular corpus of tunes and playing styles from Surry County, North Carolina now very popular among outsiders), and the particular way in which the sound and structure of old-time music was modified to work for this community touches on the above issues. While there have been altogether new melodies composed by Surry County musicians (e.g., Benton Flippen's "Benton's Dream" and "Benton's Haystack Blues"), the more common expression of musical creativity was to modify existing tunes in ways such as adding extended low parts (perhaps to create more tension and release when finally switching back to the high part), varying the number of times a particular part was played in any given cycle of the tune, adding or modifying existing lyrics (perhaps to make the songs more personal or as a vehicle for some personal philosophy), using short motifs that are melodically simple yet rhythmically complex, and inserting "frequent across-the-bar anticipations and off-beat accents"

(480).⁴⁵ One could read these musical changes as pragmatic – they make sense in light of practical concerns of the older Surry County players, who would find ways to modify tunes to make them easier to play for extended lengths for square dances. Or, one could read them as suggesting a shared fondness for musical devices that would lead to heightened affect for players, dancers, and listeners. Although one would be hard-pressed to find an older Round Peak musician (in general – most of Tommy Jarrell’s generation are dead) who would be able to weigh in on this question, this is true of folk musicians generally. As Marc Perlman has argued,

a focus on cognitive process can also bring us close to the experimental texture of musicians’ thinking. In particular it reminds us how opaque a music can seem even to its own master practitioners.... Musical knowledge, like all human knowledge, is not a homogenous body of exhaustively cross-referenced cognitions but is quite disparate and incompletely interconnected; it is, so to speak, partially disarticulated. (2004, 7)

Highwoods String Band

If the Fuzzy Mountain String Band emphasized a more laid-back, hypnotic, mantra-like approach to old-time tunes, the highly influential Highwoods String Band can be credited with popularizing a more full-tilt, groove-based approach to playing old-time music and with allowing oneself to be affected by the music and being demonstrative about that affect. Centered around twin fiddles (which were uncommon in early string bands) and with a booming, pulsing string bass that was also rare in old-time music, Highwoods in a sense translated the full-range, soaring sound of 70s rock bands (e.g., The Allman Brothers) into an old-time music idiom. So not only did the music sound bigger, denser, and more powerful than a normal three-piece string band, but the band

⁴⁵ These are almost certainly very old practices not unique to white Round Peak musicians but instead learned from black musicians in the NC Piedmont and elsewhere.

and their fans seemed to have come to an understanding that their music was, above all else, a means to achieving an ecstatic state. John Bealle characterized Highwoods as standing out among the other acts one might encounter at a festival:

In stark contrast to the tight, tense, competitive sound of bluegrass and contest fiddling, Highwoods exuded defiant looseness – in tattered blue jeans, in the signature ‘Highwoods bounce’ of their stage presentation, and in the self-absorbed manner in which they succumbed to the intensity of the music. (2005, 145)

The following quote from band member Mac Benford describes the effect of exposing people (“tourists”) with no prior exposure to old-time music to the Highwoods style of old-time music:

The band grew out of a bunch of people who were playing old-time music on the streets in Berkeley and San Francisco. We were playing to the tourists who knew squat about old-time music and what its real roots were, but there was something about the music that they liked, just simple as that. To hear it was uplifting somehow, so we had to emphasize things like its humor, its energy, sometimes its strangeness – those more universal qualities that it has. The ecstasy that we achieved became our trademark, the thing that we could use to make an impact. It came out of the music and spread to everybody. We were able to emphasize the spiritual energy of the music, which made it possible for us to affect equally audiences who had grown up with old-time music and those who had never heard it before. (Gerrard 1992, 29)

Again, without empirical evidence, we are left to guess what the “something” was about the music that tourists in San Francisco liked about their music, but Benford seems to think that this was partly a matter of emotional contagion: the band attempted to first please themselves, and this pleasure transferred onto those observing them. That he claims to have been able to “affect equally audiences who had grown up with old-time music and those who had never heard it before” is made more complicated when we think of *what* about the musical experience might have resonated with those audiences – what about the music and the performance affected all audience members, what affected

only certain members (e.g., those who had grown up listening to rock and roll), and how were individual members' responses both similar and different from one another's?

Differences in Affective Response to Music

Various theories for the general affective power of music have been offered since the establishment of the discipline of music psychology (e.g., Huron, 2006; Larson, 2012; Meyer, 1957), but those theories were focused on either a particular dimension of music (e.g., melodic contour) or a particular psychological principle (e.g., expectation).

Recently, scholars such as Juslin & Västfjäll (2010) have outlined a more holistic model of emotional response to music which acknowledges the following mechanisms:

- 1) Brain stem reflexes
- 2) Rhythmic entrainment
- 3) Evaluative conditioning
- 4) Emotional contagion
- 5) Visual imagery
- 6) Episodic memory
- 7) Musical expectancy

Of these mechanisms, *episodic memory* (the music evokes a personal memory of a specific event in the listener's life) and *visual imagery* (emotion is induced because the listener conjures up visual images) seem to be the most amenable to contemporary ethnomusicological research methods since they concern extra-musical factors, are accessible to conscious awareness, and are therefore heavily reliant on self-reporting methods (i.e., asking the listener if the music conjures any particular memories or images will yield the best results for these factors), but these are but two of seven factors.

Certainly, the other five factors are at work in old-time musicians' response to music, and it is easy to imagine how these might work in the context of the old-time jam session.

However, it is the difference in the relative weight of these mechanisms for each

musician that concerns researchers attempting to understand group-level musical affect. Determining these relative weights, what sort of stimuli activate each mechanism, and how this changes depending on the situation is no easy task (as Gabrielsson also points out).

Several of Amy Wooley's outsider informants, for example, told her how important the *sound* of old-time music was in attracting them to old-time music in the first place – what Wooley calls “conversion experiences.” She learned that when Bruce Molsky got his first fiddle, he heard a recording of “Indian War Whoop”, and he “became so obsessed with the *sound* that he listened to it over and over again” (2003, 196). Another musician told her: “I was hooked on hillbilly music the second I heard it. It was the sound of it, that intensity and the otherworldness of it, its timelessness, that grabbed me” (Ibid., 272). Yet another told her: “I found exactly what I was looking for: a cryptic sound. An ancient energy. Rustic melodies molded by the hands and ears of generations of individuals, communities, regions. I couldn't believe what I was hearing” (Ibid., 321). Of course, while these descriptions start with the sound of the music, that sound is immediately imbued by these musicians with extra-musical meaning reflective of their values and their notions of the history of traditional music. The “sound” of old-time music for most old-time musicians almost always refers to more than the mathematical structure of sound waves.

For example, many old-time musicians, both insiders and outsiders, claim that having links to the traditional sources of tunes and playing styles changes the significance of the music for them. One old-time musician told a researcher:

I know Bill Birchfield.⁴⁶ I've been to his house, we went to the lake fishing, whatever. I know him as a person. And that gets carried into your music. When you hear something off a record, you don't know anything about their lives. You got a piece of history there if you don't have a piece of their life. It carries into your music; it's got a different feeling. (Wishnevsky, 150)

It's possible that this musician is implying that the "it" that is carried into the music is some ineffable, yet audible, musical and sonic essence – transferred via musicians like Bill Birchfield as if they are conduits. It could also be that this musician is referring more to the lived experience of playing the music (and to having the conscious knowledge of passing on something learned from a source musician), rather than to anything that could be detected in the playing of the music. Taken this second way, and in the context of the multiple mechanisms theory, we would expect the addition of other mechanisms to increase the music's affective power. Certainly, a musician who is already having a strong experience from mechanisms related to the processing of musical sound is going to have that experience made more rich and intense if those sounds are paired with strong extra-musical associations (in this case, socializing with the source musician).

Another insider musician told this same researcher: "The Yankee bands don't have the mountain soul. That's the only thing they are missing. I've heard people who've learned from mountain fiddlers, Benton Flippen, Tommy Jarrell and they can play just beautiful, but they're missing mountain soul" (Ibid., 154), again referencing some unarticulated essence, linked to particular life experiences and geographic circumstance,

⁴⁶ Bill is an insider musician from Roan Mountain, Tennessee who plays in the Roan Mountain Hilltoppers (an old-time string band that used to be led by Bill's father and uncle). For many old-time musicians, the Hilltoppers represent the zenith of "authenticity" in this music today.

that changes both the sound and affective power of the music they play.⁴⁷ And Merle

Watson, Doc Watson's son, opined in the late 1970s that

there are a lot of good musicians coming up, but they aren't going into the old-time music, or at least playing it real well. I think one problem is they just don't feel the music. The old traditional type folk-tunes are really a music of the people, and if you didn't grow up with it and don't know the feeling of what you're playing, it's hard to play it. (Stambler and Landon 1987, 779)

Music psychologists and neuroscientists have struggled to incorporate factors like the ones mentioned above into their understanding of the nature of affective differences due to music. For example, a 2013 paper in *Music Perception* reviewed recent prior studies and found that

music elicits emotional responses that are accompanied by physiological changes Several neuroimaging studies have shown the activation of emotion and reward-related brain networks during pleasurable music listening....More recent data indicate the involvement of the mesolimbic dopaminergic reward processing in association with musical pleasure....Several lesion studies have shown the selective involvement of the amygdala and the medial temporal lobe (parahippocampal cortex) in the evaluation of emotional responses to music.

and yet:

These affective responses are highly specific to cultural and personal preferences, and large individual differences are observed across individuals in how music is experienced. Indeed, little is known about the sources of this interindividual variability in musical reward experiences, or to what degree the differences in the amount of pleasure experienced in music listening are related to personality variables, or other temperamental dispositions, or to individual differences in reward experience in other domains. (Mas-Herrero et al., 118–119)

This is an area in which collaboration between ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and neuroscientists could help fill in these gaps, and this dissertation is an attempt to begin this exploration in the domain of a traditional music revival. Judith

⁴⁷ Titon (personal communication) hypothesizes that this “soul” comes from playing that is “accomplished enough but slightly irregular and unpredictable,” whereas those musicians thought to lack “soul” are “more regular and predictable but less subtle in their inventions.”

Becker's essay on anthropological perspectives in the *Handbook of Music and Emotion* addresses the importance of understanding that musical affect is strongly influenced by culture but also that musical affect and behavior are probably not best understood at the level of the individual musician. She first argues that "emotional reactions in musical situations are experienced within individuals, but the musical expressions that trigger those emotions are framed within a historically determined, culturally inflected complex of musical conventions known to musicians and listeners alike" (2010, 146) but then argues for the existence of "culturally constructed categories of affect" (Ibid., 136) and declares that "in the case of music and emotion, the ethnographic approach involves... looking closely at the cultural construction of emotion" (Ibid., 127).

Determining to what degree certain emotions and affective responses are innate and to what degree they are learned is difficult and is the subject of much debate in cross-cultural psychology, anthropology, and other disciplines. There seems to be general agreement (at least among psychologists and neuroscientists) that basic emotions (i.e., those with corresponding facial features and physiological responses) are hard-wired and universal to humans and a fact of biology and neuroanatomy, while complex emotions seem to be more subject to cultural and individual variance.⁴⁸ Becker conceives of musicking as too complex to involve basic emotions or even probably universal cognitive processes, instead arguing that *all* of one's involvement with and response to music is affected by cultural factors:

A given community will foster a particular comportment to listening, a comportment not only of attitude, affect, and expectation, but also bodily gesture. Emotional responses to music do not occur spontaneously, nor "naturally," but rather take place within complex systems of thought and behavior concerning

⁴⁸ Of course, *what* provokes the basic emotional responses varies considerably from person to person and from culture to culture.

what music means, what it is for, how it is to be perceived, and what might be appropriate kinds of expressive responses. (Ibid., 129)

Variation can also exist even when expressive responses appear identical. Comparing Western classical music concert listeners and Hindustani classical listeners, Becker found that “while the quiet stance and introverted demeanor of the listener in the proto-typical Western case and the Hindustani classical listener is similar, the understanding and interpretation of what is supposed to happen in each case differs” (Ibid., 137). We can imagine that the inverse (intensity of the affect from the music could be relatively similar although the expressive response differs considerably) could also be true – for example, in the case of old-time insiders and outsiders.

And although Becker argues that

while it is the individual who experiences the emotion, it is the group and its domain of coordinations that triggers the emotion. The changes in the neurophysiology of the listener are not attributable simply to the brain/body of a self-contained individual. They occur through the group processes of recurrent interactions between co-defined individuals in a rhythmic domain of music, (Ibid., 149)

she also supports the idea that cultural conventions for the interpretation of music can be violated by members of that culture who literally cannot help but respond to it in a different way. Giving an example of Sufi Muslim religious singing, Becker writes:

Sufi doctrine interprets the music as supportive, as secondary to the all-important text, the religious poetry.... Yet the question remains: to what degree is the arousal stimulated by the sensual overload of intensifying rhythms and soaring phrases sung over and over again at the top the *qawwal's* range? (139)

In the case of old-time music, we might ask similar questions about something like ballads and to what degree arousal is stimulated by the interpretation of the lyrics (they are, after all, supposed to tell a story) and to what degree arousal is stimulated by the structure of the melody, the phrasing, the timbre and accent of the singer's voice, etc. In

the case of outsider Sacred Harp singers, we might ask similar questions of every song they sing.

Affective Display

As mentioned in earlier, one of the things that got me interested in this research topic was the difference that I and others have observed in affective display from different types of old-time musicians. Wooley, writing about outsider jam sessions, noticed commonalities in movement across fiddlers, banjo players, and guitarists. Until these are recorded and analyzed in the way a scientist would (i.e., by having independent coders record various aspects of their movement and comparing them statistically to other musicians), we will have to assume that there is some degree of truth to what she (and others) observed:

I have... observed certain specific types of body movement in musicians deeply engrossed in a jam. The motion has to do with the rhythmic aspect of the music and also the physical act of playing. Therefore, although the motion is usually some variation of a kind of circular swaying or rocking, fiddlers rock in a way that is driven by the idiomatic motion of rhythmic old-time bowing, in a kind of circular side-to-side motion. Banjo players tend to rock forward and back as their hands move up and down in a kind of rolling motion, playing clawhammer style. Guitarists strum in a rather controlled way in old-time, and I have observed that many will rock their heads back and forth. While by no means universal, I have been struck by how many musicians do seem to move in these general patterns. (317-318)

Insider musicians, in my experience, do not usually move in this way while playing.

Assuming that the lack of physical entrainment of these musicians is a legitimate indication of a muted affective state while playing music, could it be that there is a straightforward neurological explanation for both their muted affect and for other musicians who seem to be emotionally overwhelmed by the music? It is common

knowledge among psychologists, psychiatrists, and neuroscientists that the range and intensity of emotional experience varies highly between individuals:

Some people virtually have no ability for the conscious experience of emotions, whereas others can observe and describe in detail a variety of their feelings. Put another way, there are “emotionally blind” persons, for whom everything is obvious and rational; and there are others whose world of feelings is so rich that they have difficulties in making any decision. (Kokoszka 2007, 45)

Assuming that the reward networks involved in musical enjoyment would be shared by other pleasurable stimuli, it would make sense that individuals with a limited emotional capacity would be missing out on the appeal of music as organized sound – tones and timbres and rhythms – and would therefore not engage in musical activities with the same frequency or fondness as people with normal emotional capacity.

But anthropological approaches to the study of emotion cross-culturally provide other explanations for these display differences that do not involve pathologizing certain old-time musicians as “emotionally blind.” Lutz and White (1986), reviewing anthropological approaches to emotion, noted that Paul Ekman, a psychologist famous for his work on the universality of facial expressions and basic emotions, also acknowledged “*cultural display rules*, or acquired conventions, norms, or habits that dictate what emotion can be shown to whom and in which contexts” and that “the specific situational *elicitors* of emotion are... culturally variable” (411). Lutz and White also address the debates over the significance of the ritual (i.e., performed – not genuine) display of emotions, whether or not “adequately understanding others’ emotional lives... through cognitive means” is even possible, (415) and the utility of using language to describe emotions between and within cultures. Any one of these issues can result in

misunderstandings when comparing emotion cross-culturally, such as what might be at work with old-time musicians.

In a more recent review, Beatty (2013) argues that “so far as anthropology is concerned – only detailed narrative accounts can do full justice to the complexity of emotions” (414). For Beatty, reliance on self-report or autobiographical narrative depends entirely on “articulated feelings” (420) and therefore often fails to capture the reality of a subject’s emotional story, since which feelings are articulated and how varies so much from person to person and from culture to culture. Beatty’s approach requires attention to the temporal dimension of emotions and an outside observer (i.e., ethnographer) to contextualize the subject’s behavior and experience in light of past experiences. Beatty seems to be arguing for the importance of observing the consistency of a subject’s emotions across different contexts and over time. This is surely crucial to any holistic understanding of a person’s emotional life, but one caveat to this approach is that it privileges the individual over the group and would make group research entirely impractical since each group member would require his or her own ethnographer.

Personality Differences

One of the most glaring socio-cultural differences I have observed between most insider and outsider musicians is their political/ideological orientation,⁴⁹ which we know to be strongly correlated with personality factors (e.g., Hirsh, et.al, 2010). Insider old-time musicians, at least those whom I know in Appalachian Virginia and North Carolina, are mostly conservatives; the outsider musicians whom I know (from all over the U.S.

⁴⁹ This is not to say that all old-time musicians necessarily have a *political* ideology that strongly inclines them to one party or another. I know several musicians who don’t vote or otherwise participate in politics but who, via other means, express their ideological beliefs.

and abroad) are mostly liberals/progressives. Assuming that conservatives and progressives have different personality characteristics, we might examine whether these personality characteristics correlate with affective responses to music or with other musical preferences, behavior, and experience. The conservative/liberal divide is quite glaring in the old-time music community, and, coincidentally, it is around this personality factor that much music-psychological research has been conducted.

One popular way psychologists assess variance in personality is to use the “Big Five” model. The Big Five personality domains (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism), more formally known as the five-factor model of personality, are nearly universal across cultures (McCrae and Allik 2002), are thought to explain “most of the personality-based characteristics in behavior,” and are “presumed to represent the topmost level of a personality hierarchy in which narrower traits and even narrower behaviors represent the lower levels” (Paunonen and Ashton 2001, 524). Music psychology research focusing on the Big Five has primarily explored correlations between Big Five factors and genre preference.⁵⁰ Personality factors, especially the domains and facets included in the Big Five model have been correlated with musical preferences and other music-psychological factors, though not, to my knowledge, in the folk music domain. However, these are links waiting to be made. For example, Glasgow, Cartier, and Wilson (1985) found a positive correlation between conservatism and a preference for both familiar and simple music. Though it is unlikely he was familiar with the psychological research on conservatism and music, folklorist Simon Bronner, writing about the aesthetics of Anglo-American

⁵⁰ Though genre is a fuzzy, semantic concept

folk music, argued that the symmetrical structure of the music and “its rhythmic regularity and evenness... represents politically a conservative attitude” (1989, 459).

There are other ways that psychological research into personality and music correlates could be applied to old-time musicians. Chamorro-Premuzic (2007) found that “open and intellectually engaged individuals, and those with higher IQ scores, tended to use music in a rational/cognitive way, while neurotic, introverted and non-conscientious individuals were all more likely to use music for emotional regulation (e.g. change or enhance moods),” which seems to align with what I and others have observed in the old-time music community.⁵¹ For a particular subgroup of outsider musicians, old-time music might appeal to their sense of mathematical order and logic. Performance of the music by these musicians might appear unemotional if their main source of affect from it seems to be the music’s structure or particular melodic and rhythmic nuances. The “neurotic, introverted, and non-conscientious” old-time players, in contrast, are more in line with what musician-scholar Andrew Woolf called “Dionysian,” pleasure-seeking musicians. Not much conscious analysis of the music takes place, yet they willingly allow the music to push emotional buttons and are profoundly moved by playing and listening to it.

Openness to Experience also has particular importance when applied to physiological response to music. Robert McCrae’s research suggests that “the experience of chills or goosebumps in response to aesthetic stimulation is a universal emotion uniquely related to the personality dimension of Openness to Experience” and that “data from the Personality Profiles of Cultures Project show that [chills are] one of the best

⁵¹ Though, of course, I have no test data supporting the validity of any IQ correlation I think I may have observed. Also, it is important to keep in mind that these are correlational studies which do not necessarily imply causation.

definers of Openness in most of the 51 cultures examined” (2007, 5). Other studies (e.g., Kopacz, 2005; McCown, Keiser, Mulhearn, & Williamson, 1997; Rawlings, Hodge, Sherr, & Dempsey, 1995; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003,) have attempted to link preference for particular musical features (e.g., complexity or bass presence), rather than entire genres, to personality factors (e.g., psychoticism or neuroticism). The domain of harmonic accompaniment, so commonly mentioned by musicians as contributing to the affective power of old-time music, has, to my knowledge, not yet been linked to particular personality factors but would make for fascinating research.

Another aspect of personality with a high degree of potential for illustrating difference among old-time musicians is absorption. Tellegen and Atkinson (1974) defined “absorption” as

a disposition for having episodes of "total" attention that fully engage one's representational (i.e., perceptual, enactive, imaginative, and ideational) resources. This kind of attentional functioning is believed to result in a heightened sense of the reality of the attentional object, imperviousness to distracting events, and an altered sense of reality in general, including an empathically altered sense of self.

The scale they constructed to assess this construct is known as the Tellegen Absorption Scale (TAS). Absorption has been a component of the ethnomusicological study of music and altered states, such as with Herbert’s research on secular, low-arousal trancing with music in the West (2011a), but more often it has been involved in studies by music psychologists. Kreutz et al., for example, found that

many items of the TAS indicate a strong emotional involvement, e.g. “I can be deeply moved by a sunset.” In the case of music listening, such identification with the feelings expressed through the music is essential for emotion induction. The trait of absorption includes the openness to being deeply affected by stimuli such as music and [can be] expected to explain part of the inter-individual variability in emotional responses to musical stimuli. (2007, 105)

Concluding their experimental study involving participants' ratings of the intensity of felt emotions, pleasantness, and arousal in response to musical excerpts, Kreutz et al. found that "absorption was significantly correlated with induced activation and global intensity of emotions and, to a lesser degree, with the intensity of sadness and happiness" (Ibid., 119).

Stories of musicians like Surry County native Kyle Creed becoming so distracted by thinking about how many bricks it would take to finish an uncompleted chimney that he saw in the distance that he stopped playing banjo in the middle of a tune align with my own observations of musicians' body language and behavior which seem to indicate a low degree of absorption and a limited conscious emotional engagement with the music they play. This is contrasted by body language and behavior from other types of musicians (e.g., closed eyes, expression of concentration on the face, subtle movements of the head and body synchronously with the pulse of the music) which suggests a high degree of absorption and engagement with the music they play. Recall that this was also referenced by Woolf, though he did not cite any psychological literature. He described "the player, who, while keeping the tune going, may be 'on automatic,' letting his musical mind and fingers, which know the tune, do the work, while he or she is in an altered state, eyes closed, totally absorbed in the sound..." (1990, 32) and defined "Self-Music-Absorption" as something that was "usually achieved with eyes closed so that others disappear and one is aware only of the music, forgetting one's surroundings, who one is playing with, or where one is" (Ibid., 210).

In the anecdote above, it would *seem* that Kyle Creed became more absorbed in brick masonry rather than in the live music that he was actively involved in making, but

as Becker and others observe, these differences in emotional display generally between insiders and outsiders could also be 1) learned (and therefore not the “natural” behavior of the musician in response to the music), 2) dependent more on context than on individual personality factors, or 3) inconsistent for any one musician across different situations, across the lifespan, and at various stages of their involvement with old-time music. There is not yet any compelling evidence to suggest that Kyle Creed’s behavior (if the anecdote is accurate) or the way insiders and outsiders generally externalize affect while playing is correlated with their *internal* experience of the old-time music jam session.

Caveats of Personality and Its Relationship to Musical Behavior and Experience

First, as in any correlational research, I am not setting out in this study to imply causation. Even if there were unequivocal support for personality factors 1) being consistent and 2) reliably explaining some amount of the variance in musical behaviors and experiences, correlational research does not typically control for confounding variables that could possibly better explain the observed variance. In addition, personality psychology has been and remains embroiled in debates as to the nature of the relationship between personality and behavior. The “person-situation” debate, for example, has addressed “the relative ability of person variables versus situation variables to predict behavior, the importance of cognition, the degree of emphasis to place on process versus structure, and the meaning and validity of between-person and within-person variance,” and, most importantly, “whether – and how much – individual differences in behavior are consistent” (Fleeson and Nofle 2009, 151). This issue of consistency manifests in discrepancies between retrospective, self-report data and what is observed in actual

behavior. There is not yet enough understanding of how trait and situational factors interact to influence behavior. Furthermore, personality development is a “lifelong process,” and “the stability of interindividual differences...in personality traits tends to increase with age until it plateaus in middle adulthood and finally decreases in old age” (Kandler 2012, 290).

Together, these and other issues regarding the causes and stability of personality factors and their relationship to behavior require any conclusions drawn from the results of my study to be interpreted with great caution. This is not to discount the merit of my research approach, but rather to emphasize that whatever relationships emerge between personality and musical behavior and experience must be understood as inherently limited by our current knowledge of how to unpack the immensely complex equations explaining why people do what they do and why they are the way they are. Potential improvements to my research design that could be used in future research to help address the issues above will be discussed in the conclusion.

Epistemological / Methodological Considerations

Researching the Old-Time Music Revival

Most scholarship on old-time Appalachian music has focused on the revival as a socio-cultural phenomenon without much focus musical sound and structure or on differences in musical meaning and affective response. For example, Tom Turino, an ethnomusicologist and old-time musician, identifies a “middle-class old-time” which is a “unique and separate tradition with its own evolving values, practices, styles, and participants” (2008: 161). Linking this middle-class old-time with progressive politics

and a cosmopolitan, musically omnivorous type of musician, Turino argues that the cultural difference alone between insiders and outsiders is so vast as to make “middle-class old-time” a separate tradition— never mind any of the musical or music-psychological differences between insiders and outsiders, which he does not address.⁵² Other scholars have focused on the link between the punk subculture and old-time music. Wooley (2003) and Miller (2005) both highlight the West Coast old-time scene as being heavily based on former punk rockers who have switched to old-time music on acoustic instruments with fans who are the same sort of “hipsters” that would be found at an indie rock concert. The common tropes of seeking authenticity, the participatory nature of the music, rejection of mass culture, and a truthfulness in expression are all cited by their informants, yet there is no discussion in Miller’s article of the actual music or its affective quality.

Part of the reason for this lack of focus on musical and music-psychological differences might be because the cultural differences between insiders and outsiders and the links between the old-time revival and social movements of the 1960s and 1970s were so obvious (and more accessible to researchers in the humanities). That young musicians from outside the tradition were playing this music at all seemed interesting enough in its own right. Musician-scholars, representing an inside line to what was happening, have also emphasized the socio-cultural elements of the revival more than what was happening with the changing structure, function, and reception of the music. For example, musician and old-time scholar Alan Jabbour declared:

We, in our revival sought – and created – a music to express simultaneously our quest for cultural roots, our admiration of democratic ideals and values, our

⁵² Though he does describe his own banjo playing, which takes extensive liberties with the melody, as being an aberration compared to the normal role of the banjo in a string band playing for a dance

solidarity with the culturally neglected, and our compulsion to forge our own culture for ourselves. (1993, xi)

Most of Wooley's dissertation takes this approach. For example, she asks: "Did a group of people decide to create a society with a specific ethos and then look for cultural expressions of that ethos, or did the newly formed society seek a culture from which to derive its ethos and value system?" (2003, 5). But suppose there was a third possibility: that it is shared cognitive and personality factors that drive both the attraction to old-time music and to the accompanying value system.⁵³ Woolf's characterization of the socio-cultural significance of revivalists, which addresses both musical affect and shared personality characteristics, can be read as supporting this third possibility:

[Revivalists] used and continue to use drugs occasionally for the enhancement of experience (alcohol, marijuana); they play a particular type of music, not rock, but old-time, to which they have an almost religious devotion, deeply affecting; they gather in communal settings to participate in a kind of tribal life with an extended (musical) family; they advocate, through their ethos, a humble, non-aggressive lifestyle lived close to Nature, (into which their acoustic music harmoniously fits), an anarchistic or socialistic way of living, based on sharing music (and possessions). Thus they take a critical stand against mainstream American culture. (1990, 350–351).

Surveying the scholarship on the old-time music revival from folklorists, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, and non-academic musician-scholars reveals that a focus on musicological analysis is uncommon and that music-psychological discussions linking structure to affect are exceedingly rare. This is not to say that no scholars have written at length about the sonic features of old-time music, or that they aren't capable of

⁵³ This is not to say that a musician with certain (partially genetic) predispositions cannot have his or her personality and attraction to a certain music reinforced by exposure to the social world surrounding that music. That is, someone who hangs out with old-time musicians because of extra-musical similarities might, over time, grow to like old-time enough to take on playing it themselves. The many musicians whom I know who came into old-time music by first dancing to it for years might be evidence for this process.

it, but rather that the affective power of the music is rarely mentioned or linked to specific sonic features. For example, a recent article written by a music theorist and published in *Ethnomusicology* examined “isochrony, meter, and disruption in old-time country and bluegrass music” (Rockwell 2011) and mainly focused on the “crooked” (i.e., metrically irregular) music of the Carter Family. While claiming that the goal of the article was to “investigate and provide an explanatory basis” (55) for the presence of these metrical disruptions, the only mention of the affective power of crooked tunes or songs comes from a quotation from an outsider banjo player, Tony Trischka, who characterizes crookedness as a “time quirk [that] harkens back to the old players who would add or delete beats *because that was just the way they heard it in their heads* [my emphasis]” (56). How might we examine *why* that was the way they heard it (or if such a claim is empirically true)?

While Trischka’s quotation reveals that the extra beat in Ralph Stanley’s “Clinch Mountain Backstep” is, for Trischka, “a delicious part of the tune,” (Ibid.) Rockwell’s article does not address why these metrical disruptions might have been psychologically desirable to the musicians who created them in the first place or who (like many old-time musicians) continue to find these tunes to be among their favorites but instead focuses on identifying and describing these various metrical disruptions in the music and, to a lesser extent, the cognitive mechanisms by which musicians might perceive them – topics that Rockwell explains adeptly. His inclusion of data such as the frequency and type of metric disruptions in the majority of the Carter Family’s recorded output (290 songs) is to be commended and is certainly important for the future study of this phenomenon, yet those

expecting some attempt at the “explanatory basis” promised at the article’s beginning will be disappointed.

There are other examples of the use of formal musical analysis (or at least extended discussion of sonic structure) in pre-revival old-time music research. Dorothea Moser’s M.A. thesis (1963) can be considered pioneering in this regard, and other scholarship such as Cece Conway’s history of black banjo styles (2005) and Thomas Carter’s essay on the gradual shift from British Isles fiddling to what came to be a distinctive American fiddle (and banjo) style (1990) are good examples of the application of historical musicology, transcription, and analysis to old-time music. Yet they too leave the affect question mostly unaddressed. In post-revival old-time research, Ray Allen’s study of the New Lost City Ramblers (2010) frequently focuses on the sonic features of the Ramblers’ music and how the Ramblers’ music differed from their original insider sources (though this was usually attributed to lack of experience on the instruments and with trying too hard to replicate the early records and not to any music-psychological differences that might have differentiated the Ramblers from their rural source musicians). A few times in the book Allen does address the music’s affective power. For example, he writes that, for him, insider musician Roscoe Holcomb’s “angular, modal vocal lines evoked a sense of ancient mystery, especially when sounded against his droning, repetitive banjo riffs, which rarely moved off the tonic chord” (2010, 92) and that “the city players... were simply mesmerized by the sounds of traditional music and the exotic cultures and bygone eras those sounds evoked. City musicians... felt transformed when they first heard the shuffle of an old-timey fiddle” (5), but there is no

further analysis of these ideas. I will return to this issue of how we might benefit from incorporating affect into our scholarship on music revivals in the conclusion.

Benefits of a Mixed-Method Approach

A small but vocal group of academics advocate for a restructuring of the wall dividing science and the humanities and have encouraged incorporating cognitive science into what has for decades been the domain of humanistic research. Beginning with E.O. Wilson (1998), scientists like Pinker (2002) and humanists-turned-scientists like Slingerland (2008) and even ethnomusicologists like Harwood (2012) have tried to build bridges of collaboration between the two epistemologies. A few contemporary ethnomusicologists (e.g., Bakan 2009; Becker 2009) have attempted to conduct scientific experiments and publish them in scientific journals, and a recent issue of the *Ethnomusicology* journal (volume 58, no. 1) contains an article in which the authors (one a musicologist and the other a professor in the department of psychology, neuroscience, and behavior at McMaster University) apply an advanced statistical method (cluster analysis) to “song-type frequencies within and between cultures” (Savage and Brown 2014).

But statistics about geographic distribution of song types is at a different level of inquiry than the conscious experience of music. It is in this area where the most intense recent debates have focused. Titon (2009), for example, argues against any sort of empirical, brain-based research that would be too reductionist to “save the phenomenon,” and in a context-dependent phenomenon like strong experiences with music, even the clearest data from laboratory fMRI scans would be severely lacking in ecological validity. There is still much work to be done in understanding the neural basis of

consciousness before these technologies will give us a clearer understanding than can an articulate musician (using language, visual art, or other mediums) of what the experience of music is like for him or her. As Alf Gabrielsson observed at the conclusion of his SEM project,

after we have studied hundreds of accounts of strong music experiences, it is now even more apparent that such “objective” measurements can never replace the person’s own description of the experience. It is impossible for such measurements to do justice to all the perceptions, cognitive processes, feelings, and much else that can be a part of the experience.... On the other hand, such measurements can, of course, be important complements and contribute to the understanding of, and further research into, such experiences. (2011, 456)
Bringing empirical data and a more scientific approach back into

ethnomusicological studies can be crucial in helping to answer questions that, investigated with traditional fieldwork methodology, would never be answered. One way I have explained to others what my dissertation is about is that it is an extension and repeat-study of Andrew Woolf’s research but extended to both outsiders *and* insiders and which uses surveys, statistics, and other methods with an attempt at more rigor than is found in standard ethnographic research. So much of what ethnomusicologists publish is the only academic study of that particular musical culture or phenomenon. As such, it would make sense to make sure that what is being published is objective enough to help counter the single researcher’s bias and to make the findings somehow compatible with the results of other studies in order to build general theories. Sampling methods and statistical analysis borrowed from the social sciences can help with both of these goals, yet they are seldom used in contemporary ethnomusicology. Mervyn McLean, pulling no punches, observed:

It has always been a source of some bewilderment to me that formal statistics has been so little taken advantage of by ethnomusicologists.... One seriously wonders whether ethnomusicologists are either mostly innumerate, or feel that something

so akin to mathematics is inappropriate for the humanities. Perhaps part of the reason is the move away from analysis in general and comparison of bodies of data, as statistics is at its best in such a role. (2006, 299)

To be fair, acquiring the sort of background in statistics and experimental design required for an ethnomusicologist to, on his or her own, competently conduct mixed-methods research is challenging, to say the least. Scientific methodology, in some regards, represents an entirely different epistemology from humanistic approaches and cannot be absorbed in a matter of a few readings of scientific material (nor could a trained scientist be expected to internalize the epistemology and methodology of ethnomusicology on his or her own with the help of an ethnomusicology textbook).

Furthermore, the use of statistics does not necessarily mean an abandonment of core disciplinary principles regarding the nature of evidence. To that end, any variable or construct that I ended up operationalizing (i.e., turning into a number for use in statistical calculations) for this dissertation was based on self-report data from my sample population. This means that, epistemologically, I was still asking musicians questions and taking their verbal or written responses (generated through the filter of their consciousness) as valid. This is different from methods which would bypass musicians' conscious appraisal of music-psychological elements and instead rely on physiological data (e.g., fMRI brain scanners, EEG, galvanic skin response, etc.) or on experimental data (e.g., listening tests in which musical variables were manipulated and musicians would rate their responses, though without necessarily knowing what was being measured or how the stimuli were being manipulated) and is, despite the many charts and statistical measures, more similar to standard ethnomusicological practice than it is to experimental psychology or neuroscience.

Deciding which epistemological approach(es) is/are appropriate in ethnomusicology and how to best make use of more rigorous statistical and scientific methods depends on the goals of the researcher and the particular questions he or she seeks to answer. In the case of examining cross-cultural musical difference, does it make sense to define “culture” as something that does *not* include personality or music-psychological factors, establish who belongs to each culture based on some other factors (e.g., where they live), and then determine where those musicians fall on various other measures for the sake of comparison? In some more obviously binary situations (e.g., German college students and Aboriginal Australians), it might. We would probably expect German college students and Aborigines to respond differently to a piece by Schubert, for example.

There are different and often competing ways of placing someone into a cultural cohort. We can ask them directly, we can assign them to some cultural group not because of their unique personal data but instead due to demographics (e.g., the musician grew up in West Virginia), or we could ignore demographics and instead use their unique personal data (e.g., a musician from Canada might respond to tests and survey instruments in a more “Appalachian” way than the example musician above who grew up in West Virginia).⁵⁴ Although my experience thus far with this community seems to indicate that where someone was raised *is* often a good predictor of the manner in which they approach old-time music, there are enough exceptions to this that some other mechanisms must be at work in explaining why musicians respond to this music differently.

⁵⁴ Of course, nobody would make the claim that Appalachian culture, if there is such a thing, is constricted by the county boundaries determined by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

If “culture” (used in the loosest, least-specific sense) is really just a proxy for or a poorly-designed predictive factor of something else we’re interested in measuring, and we have the tools to measure what we’re interested in measuring, why not measure that thing directly and use those results to illustrate similarity and difference in our sample populations? I will therefore argue that the classification of these musicians ought to come from a combination of personal data (e.g. responses to psychometric tests and to musical preferences surveys), demographic data, and the musician’s own idea of their cultural membership. I will therefore use a mixed-method approach combining participant-observation, semi-structured interviews, and empirical data (including personality factor inventory, questionnaires regarding jam experiences, musical background, and other data). Neither method alone is sufficient, nor should either method be privileged over the other, but in combination they should give us a richer and more accurate picture of the music-culture being studied.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

I used three main research techniques (data analysis of survey responses, semi-structured interviews, and participant-observation) in an attempt to cover a wider epistemological ground than any one method alone. As this was exploratory work, the research design was not intended to formally test any particular hypotheses but was instead intended to pave the way for those sort of more formalized, focused methods in the future. Put another way, while the design of the research instruments was informed by my own prior research and that of other scholars, there was not enough prior empirical evidence that these musical and psychological differences (which chiefly came from biased, speculative observations) were true in any meaningful sense in the old-time music community, or true enough for us to operate under the assumption that there are two or more general types of musicians in the old-time community. Therefore, the goal was not to focus on any particular differences under the presumption that my sample population was already divided into two general types of musicians (i.e., insiders/outsideers; traditionalists/revivalists), but it was instead to see on what measures there would be an indication of substantial differences that would support the theory that sub-groups within old-time music experience old-time music differently, and that this difference in experience is correlated with other aspects of the musician's personality and demographics.

Overall Selection / Procedure

Participants in the survey and interviews were mainly drawn from musicians attending the 2014 Mt. Airy Fiddler's Convention (Mount Airy, NC), the 2014 Grayson County Fiddler's Convention (Elk Creek, VA), the Wednesday night jam at Murphy's restaurant in downtown Boone, North Carolina, and the Thursday night jams at the Jones House (also in downtown Boone). Because there was no practical way to randomly sample the old-time music community, I made my best effort to achieve some sort of stratified sample by distributing surveys to musicians representing various levels of expertise, age, and family or community link to the music, and I attempted to give an equal number of surveys to men and women (though male old-time musicians outnumber females).

In practice, this was more difficult than I had anticipated. At Mt. Airy, I soon realized that when walking around with Ziploc bags full of stamped envelopes and "pitching" my research, some musicians would actively avoid me, but others would ask me what I had in the bag before I had a chance to say hello. As mentioned earlier, musicians tend to self-segregate at Mt. Airy, and the camping area outside the gate is called "mini-Clifftop" by some because it is primarily older outsiders from New England or other places outside of the mountains (almost all of whom also attend Clifftop), who camp there. A good number of these musicians are or were involved in higher education, and I found them to be sympathetic to my need for data, interested in my research, and eager to introduce me to other people who might want to complete a survey. The two more difficult groups to approach about filling out my survey were older musicians from around the Mt. Airy / Galax area and the younger "gutter-punk" musicians who camp up

on the hill, neither of whom were particularly interested in filling out a 16-page survey packet. The fact that I was acquainted with so many of the musicians who filled out packets was a blessing and a curse: I likely got a larger number of participants than a stranger would have, but it certainly skewed my sample to reflect musicians whom I know and who are primarily from North Carolina or southwest Virginia, and it certainly influenced the answers that I received to some degree.

Questionnaire

Data were collected via a 16-page printed packet (Appendix A) in a self-addressed and stamped envelope. Page 1 provided instructions, a timeline for completion of the packet, and asked if participants would be available to participate in a follow-up interview. Page 2 was the informed consent form. Pages 3-4 gathered demographic data and musical background. Pages 5-6 asked for self-reported frequency of various physiological responses to old-time music and also contained a 23-item instrument of my own design which asked questions specifically about the old-time jam experience. Page 7 asked participants to list 10 of their favorite old-time tunes and to then describe what it was they liked about one of those tunes in particular. Page 8 contained a 44-item Big Five personality inventory. Pages 9-10 contain 48 items taken from a 120-item short form of the IPIP NEO. These items were used to assess facets of the Openness and Conscientiousness domains. Forty-five items from the Systematizing-Empathizing Scale span pages 11-13. Pages 13-14 contained 12 items from the Tellegen Absorption Scale, page 15 contained the Range and Differentiation of Emotional Experience Scale, and page 16 contained a self-categorization scale assessing musician type.

Survey Instruments Justification

Demographic Data

Participants reported their age, gender, primary instrument, current and former residence, where their parents were from, educational background, and current and previous employment. This collected data would allow for a more rigorous description of the old-time musicians in my sample and would be useful in statistical analysis. For example, this data would tell us the percentage of musicians who had moved to the mountain South from elsewhere in the country, what percentage had lived their whole lives there, etc. This would also allow me to identify participants who were raised in the mountain South but whose parents were actually transplants (e.g., from New England). Although employment data is interesting in its own right, it can also function as a proxy for economic status. I did not include any questions explicitly related to finances, as I was uncomfortable asking this information of people whom I know personally.⁵⁵

Musical Background

These questions were intended to help illustrate differences in my sample population in the amount and type of formal musical training, number of family members who also play old-time music, when musicians began playing old-time music, and differences regarding what other types of music these musicians play and listen to.

Physiological Responses

The frequency of physiological responses due to old-time music were measured using a self-report Likert scale. Musicians were asked for the frequency with which they experienced nine different physiological responses as a result of listening to or playing

⁵⁵ As it turned out, I did not end up using employment data as a variable in any statistical operations in this study

old-time music. The nine responses represented those most frequently cited by participants in Alf Garbrielsson's (2011) research on strong experiences with music. There was no limitation to the style of music that provoked these responses for Gabrielsson's participants; in fact, there were dozens of different genres listed. While this suggests that this instrument should also be appropriate for old-time music, a crucial difference exists in that Gabrielsson's participants' experiences mostly took place while listening to (not necessarily playing) music, while I constructed this scale to include both listening to and playing old-time music.

Music Primacy Factors

Page three of the survey packet included an instrument that I created to measure "Music Primacy," meaning, to what extent the musician privileged the music itself versus extra-musical factors during the jam experience. The instrument contained 23 items and used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." This was an experimental instrument informed by my prior research in the field and by others' scholarship on the old-time music revival. Items in the instrument were all designed with the intention of illustrating a bi- or multi-modal distribution between different types of old-time musicians. The items (listed below) represented five areas in which I predicted I would find differences between musicians' responses. Seven reliability items (*) were also included.

Affective power of musical structure

- Q2: Can identify favorite parts or structural features of favorite tunes
- Q3: Like favorite tunes mainly due to extra-musical factors
- *Q4: Like favorite tunes mainly due to musical factors
- Q10: Favorite tunes have music structure that has emotional power
- Q21: Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord

Formal musical training/musicianship

- Q5: Do not have a strong grasp of music theory
- Q7: Not very particular about “right” or “wrong” chord progressions
- Q13: Refer to chords by name instead of by number
- Q18: Majority of skill and repertoire from lessons, workshops, videos

Emotional Character of Tunes

- Q6: Each old-time tune has a distinct emotional character
- *Q11: Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced
- Q9: There are “good” and “bad” tunes, from a musical standpoint

Attitude toward variation / musical approach

- Q12: Prefer to play tunes I already know
- *Q20: Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns
- Q17: Sometimes hear “weird” tunes that I don’t like or want to learn
- *Q23: Like “crooked” or rare tunes more than standard/popular ones
- Q22: Like when guitar players use unexpected chords that still “work”

Jam attitude (music vs socializing; intimate vs open)

- Q1: Play in jam sessions more for the music than for the company
- *Q15: At jams camaraderie is more important than good musicianship
- Q8: Ideal jam is small, talented group who take the music seriously
- *Q19: Prefer to have audience/dancers rather than playing for myself
- Q14: Enjoy playing with strangers (if the music is good)
- *Q16: Prefer to play with familiar people who are from where I’m from

Question 13, for example, is based on a difference in terminology and in how harmonic structure is conceptualized that I have observed in my discussions with and observations of old-time musicians. I had observed for years that almost all the insider old-time musicians I met would use chord names (e.g., “It goes to a D there.”) whereas outsider musicians, especially those with extensive musical experience in other domains and/or with formal training would refer to chord positions (e.g., “It goes to a five chord there.”). Using Roman numerals rather than names is certainly more efficient when generalizing across multiple tunes or when speaking about music in general. Question 17 was based on comments I had heard such as one from an insider musician⁵⁶ who told me

⁵⁶ “Carter” from the previous chapter

about a jam at a wedding he attended in Kentucky where the other musicians played “this weird stuff.”

The question regarding “good” and “bad” tunes (#9) was in-part inspired by Woolf’s observations. Woolf described a “personal aesthetic relationship with tunes,” although his stance was that all the tunes were good for him in some way, declared that “when we examine the repertory, we are hard-pressed to find a really bad tune in the lot,” (306) and he claims that insider musicians “may criticize playing style (though not the player), but they rarely disparage any of the music of their chosen genre,” (308) which is certainly not true for some insider musicians whom I know. But more importantly, the rationale behind a musician’s answer to this question could be linked to personality factors, particularly with Openness to Experience. We might expect more open musicians to be less likely to label tunes as “bad,” even if those tunes are unfamiliar or not a personal favorite.

The questions regarding tunes expressing a variety of emotions and each tune being distinct in this regard (#6, #11) also came from Woolf, who wrote that “the old tunes expressed different feelings than could be found in urban centers” (374) and that “each has a unique effect on the listener, and this effect may be somewhat or greatly different for each listener, and different at each playing and at each listening” (322). Woolf also remarked about the tunes “known for their lovely chord changes,” and noted that the experience of “rush” could be “self-induced by playing with more force and feeling and by certain melodic/chordal changes, particularly from I to IV or V to IV” (209) or during “certain ‘places’ in the tune which are repeated; for example, whenever a low part comes around again” (258). Also, many a jam conversation has centered on the

use of particular chords in particular places. These prompted questions 2, 7, 21, 22, and 23.

Questions regarding the social nature of the jam versus musical expertise (#1, #8, #15, #19) were based on my earlier research, experiences, and on observations like that of Wooley (2003):

There has also been a natural evolution in fiddling since the 1970s in which there has been an emergence of highly skilled musicians among revival generation fiddlers who play with precision and ornamentation that is better heard in a smaller ensemble. Likewise, as the revival community has matured and general musicianship has evolved, there has been a shift in preference from a looser texture to a tighter rhythmic texture, with many musicians preferring to play in smaller jams, and with musical peers and friends. (104)

Also informing these questions was Kara Rogers Thomas's study of traditional Appalachian music in western North Carolina (2004), in which she found that musicians had self-segregated into groups based on the importance of the music itself for their jam sessions. Insiders from outside of the city of Asheville, for example, put a higher priority on human interaction and camaraderie than they did on musical proficiency. In contrast, the musicians who play in the city and who moved to the region specifically to be around old-time music place much more importance on musical skill in assessing a fellow musician's worth. Her research suggests that the outsiders in downtown Asheville require expert musicianship in order to best achieve the strong experiences the musicians are seeking. The musicians outside the city limits who play a mixture of old country, bluegrass, and old-time are likely not as concerned about expert musicianship because they are not using the music as a means of achieving catharsis or anything similar but rather as a catalyst for social interaction and affirmation of rural community identity. I

predicted this would transfer onto my sample population, some of whom live in Asheville currently.

Favorite Old-Time Tunes and Description

As another possible method of measuring participants' aesthetics about old-time music, participants were instructed to list 10 of their favorite old-time tunes. In most music-cultures, an experienced musician, upon seeing a top-10 list of a stranger who also plays or listens to that same music, will try to infer certain qualities about this stranger based on what he or she knows about the particular music the stranger listed. In old-time music, for example, a list of 10 favorite tunes can illustrate the obvious (e.g., the 10 tunes are all rags in C from Mississippi – ergo, the person likes C rags from Mississippi) or can be more subtle and illustrate qualities unknown to the musician and invisible to the researcher until advanced musical and statistical analyses are used (e.g., most of the tunes contain a particular harmonic sequence, contain particular rhythmic patterns, use a particular melodic device, etc.). Tune lists can also potentially mark a musician as “localized” in some way if they represent the traditional repertoire associated with a geographic area.

The description of the favorite tune was included for two reasons: 1) its potential for illustrating the diversity of the main source of affect (musical vs. extra-musical), and 2) its potential for highlighting patterns or commonalities among musicians (e.g., if particular structural features were mentioned by several musicians). This free description method has been used in other studies of music and emotion (see Zentner and Eerola 2010) and was the primary method used by Alf Gabrielsson in his large-scale research on strong experiences with music. The responses were then coded in order to calculate the

ratio of extra-musical factors to musical factors mentioned in the description. Time constraints limited the number of tunes I could ask participants to describe, and although one tune is not a large enough sample to draw conclusions about to what degree a musician's favorite tunes are liked due to musical vs extra-musical factors, one tune description from each participant does at least illustrate the variety of affective factors at work within this musical tradition.

Big Five Personality Inventory

In order to respect my informants' time and willingness to participate and in light of my research focus, I used the 44-item Big Five Inventory (John, Donahue, and Kentle 1991) rather than the longer, 240-item NEO PI-R developed by Costa and McCrae. My prior research and several published studies suggested that Openness to Experience would likely be a distinguishing factor between musicians in my sample, and it also seemed possible that I would see a divide on Conscientiousness (which seems to be more highly valued by certain sub-groups of old-time musicians than by others). I therefore also included the questions from those two domains from the short form (120-item) IPIP-NEO (Goldberg 1999) so that I would have facet data from those domains. Facets of Conscientiousness include self-efficacy, orderliness, dutifulness, achievement-striving, self-discipline, and cautiousness. Facets of Openness include imagination, artistic interests, emotionality, adventurousness, intellect, and liberalism. The 48 items (24 from each domain) were listed in alternating order (i.e., Conscientiousness item, Openness item, Conscientiousness item, etc.).

Systematizing / Empathizing Scale

As another possible means of highlighting difference in affective response among these musicians I included the music-empathizing and music-systematizing scales developed by Kreutz, Schubert, and Mitchell (2008). Based on Simon Baron-Cohen's Empathizer-Systematizer Theory,⁵⁷ which distinguishes two general cognitive styles, this tool measures the extent to which music listeners are moved by musical structure (systematizing) and by the emotional content of a piece of music (empathizing). It is generally accepted within the old-time music world that some musicians are "cerebral" musicians. Usually highly experienced and skilled musicians who play in a more restrained and subtle style, these musicians seem to be more introverted and are rarely demonstrative while playing. Instead, they might have a look of intense concentration on their face. These musicians seem to appreciate the cognitive challenge of complex tunes – especially those with irregular structure. The enjoyment seems to come from the appreciation of the musical structure as a mathematical concept rather than from the "feelings" that might be present in the music, lyrics, or extra-musical associations. In contrast, there are some musicians who exhibit a more demonstrative style of playing characterized by obvious physical and vocal displays of enjoyment. These musicians seem to prefer songs and less complicated tunes that better facilitate socialization and participation by many musicians of various skill levels. As specified by the designers of this instrument, these 45 items were answered using a 4-point Likert scale, which leaves out the neutral middle choice and forces respondents to either agree or disagree with each statement.

⁵⁷ This was mainly focused on this scale illustrating innate differences between men and women and was linked to "male" behaviors exhibited by those on the autism spectrum.

Range and Differentiation of Emotional Experience Scale (RDEES)

The purpose of this 12-item Likert scale was to investigate how musicians differed in their emotional complexity. To my knowledge, this scale has not been used previously in music-psychology research, but for my study this scale could reveal a distribution which would reflect the variety of emotional expression (or lack thereof) that I witnessed in my earlier fieldwork research. The designers of this scale (Kang and Shaver 2004) intended for it to measure emotional *experience* rather than emotional *expression*, and because it seems likely that emotional expression is more influenced by cultural norms than is individual emotional experience, this scale could help to clear up the incongruity between insider musicians' musical investment and their seemingly unaffected demeanor while playing. While conducting interviews for my master's thesis I remember being frustrated at my inability to elicit the same sort of responses from certain musicians (especially older musicians native to the rural mountain South) on questions of musical meaning and felt experience as I was able to get from younger outsiders, and perhaps a written format like the RDEES would better capture participants' emotional experiences than would an interview.

It is useful to note that it took formal, sit-down interviews for me to get even the younger outsiders to open up about these experiences, as the jam setting is not conducive to this sort of introspective analysis. Andrew Woolf observed that "musicians do not often talk about their altered states. One does not ordinarily find this kind of self-reflection about personal states in sessions among revivalist musicians" and that words might not be appropriate for what they experience: "Some old-time musicians, including myself, have a resistance to talking about our inner, ineffable experiences with old-time

music, not wanting to cheapen our experience with words.” (1990, 209). Woolf goes on to describe the revival in general as “anti-intellectual, cultic [and] secretive, and anonymous [and] communal” – all barriers to a researcher trying to understand what are personal, private experiences.

This scale was therefore chosen to give individual musicians the opportunity to convey their emotional complexity without feeling as much pressure to conform to cultural norms of emotional expression (though this cultural convention might transfer onto this scale, nevertheless). In addition to emotional expression, this scale could also be related to one’s approach to meaning and affect in old-time music: perhaps the higher one scores on this scale, the more likely he or she might be to have richer and stronger emotional experiences via old-time music. Two drawbacks to this scale are that it lacks face validity (i.e., the questions do not specifically address music, which is argued by some to be a separate domain), and that Lindquist et al (2013) found evidence that the RDEES might better measure the subject’s *beliefs* about the nature of emotions than it does his or her actual experience of emotion. Because this is exploratory research, it still seemed worthwhile to use this scale, since any division it was to show in my sample (whether reflecting *actual* emotional experience or *attitudes* about emotional experience) would be an interesting contribution to our understanding of the old-time revival.

Tellegen Absorption Scale

The twelve items I used from the TAS were the twelve items used by Garrido and Schubert (2011), who borrowed the items from Glisky and Kihlstrom’s (1993) Absorption, Intellectance, and Liberalism Questionnaire. The scale items were answered using a 5-point Likert scale.

Musician Type Self-Categorization Scale

The final scale asked my respondents to place themselves on a continuum of musician type. Characteristics of a “Type 1” and “Type 2” musician were listed, and respondents placed themselves in relation to these two types, which were on opposite sides of a 7-point Likert scale. “Type 1” musicians fit most folklorists’ criteria for “tradition-bearers” and would represent the “insiders” in my insider/outsider distinction. “Type 2” musicians represent “outsiders,” and I also added characteristics specific to old-time musicians which, based on my prior research, seemed to be shared by a number of outsider musicians (e.g., “plays tunes from all over,” or “playing style works well for playing a variety of old-time music but is not identifiable as being from a certain place”). I had used a similar method in my earlier research in asking musicians to use their own words to describe their musical identity within the world of old-time music, but that used free verbal description rather than a scale position. In contrast, this scale allowed me to perform statistical analyses on participants’ responses.

Interviews

Following the receipt of surveys, I conducted semi-structured follow-up phone interviews with 11 musicians (7 men and 4 women, representing ~20% of those who volunteered to be interviewed) selected at random from the 58 musicians who volunteered to participate in an interview. The goal of these interviews was to supplement the survey packet and to allow the musicians to explain in their own words more specific information regarding their attitudes towards and experience of playing old-time music. I was also interested in to what degree the musicians’ responses aligned with their

responses from the survey. Interviews were conducted using a 14-question guide (Appendix B), but in some cases questions were added spontaneously or skipped depending on the direction of the interview.

Some interview questions were written to allow musicians to expand on their survey responses, but others were about topics not covered in the surveys. Admission of illegal drug use, for example, is something that I felt musicians would be uncomfortable attaching their real name to and sending through the USPS but which they might be more comfortable discussing over the phone. This topic was of great interest to me, and Woolf also addressed this in his research. Other questions were things that, under ideal conditions, I would have had my entire sample population answer. For example, several of these questions asked musicians to attempt to verbalize the “it” of their experience of old-time music – no easy task, but perhaps easier to do for some of my participants using spoken language rather than the written word. Because the packet was already 16 pages long, I felt that the addition of these questions, which would have required a long-form answer, would have been too much to ask of participants.

Participant Observation / Fieldwork

Since moving to western North Carolina in 2007 I have attended the following fiddler’s conventions (and probably others, though these are the ones I am certain of):

Table 3.1

Old-Time Fiddler's Conventions Attended by Author

Festival	Location	Years Attended	# of Times Attended
Johnson County Fiddler's Convention	Laurel Bloomery, TN	2007 - 2014	8
Mt. Airy Bluegrass and Old-Time Fiddler's Convention	Mt. Airy, NC	2008 - 2012, 2014	6
Appalachian String Band Music Festival	Clifftop, WV	2007 - 2011	6
Musicalia (Private)	White Hall, VA	2008 - 2012	5
Appalachian State Old-Time Fiddler's Convention	Boone, NC	2009, 2013, 2014, 2015	4
Old Fiddler's Convention	Galax, VA	2008, 2010, 2011	3
Annual Grayson County Old-Time and Bluegrass Fiddler's Convention	Elk Creek, VA	2011, 2014	2
Happy Valley Fiddlers Convention	Happy Valley, NC	2008	1
Independence Fiddler's Convention	Independence, VA	2009	1
Hoppin' John Old-Time and Bluegrass Fiddler's Convention	Silk Hope, NC	2013	1
Surry County Old-Time Fiddler's Convention	Dobson, NC	2014	1

Starting in 2003, when I began playing this music, I have also attended hundreds of old-time music jams (public and private), parties, potlucks, concerts, dances, workshops, and other music festivals (e.g., Merlefest) where old-time musicians jam in the overnight campgrounds. At various points in my academic career I have taken different approaches to research at these events. Obviously, in the time period leading up to a research project (e.g., a course paper, thesis, or dissertation) fieldwork became a bit more formalized in

that I was looking for particular behaviors that would align with my research aims. Other times I would attempt to code-switch into non-researcher mode, though this was never easy.

At several events over the last few years I made field recordings of jam sessions (some that I played in and others that I did not), observations of behavior in and around the jams, and I had countless informal conversations with fellow musicians. Participant observation in old-time music has quirks that make it both easier and harder than participant observation for other musics. For example, since the fiddle is understood to be the lead instrument, my choice to play fiddle in a jam, especially if I was to be the only fiddler, would influence not only the selection of tunes but also the almost every sonic dimension of the music that we made together. Playing fiddle also is cognitively demanding for me and requires all of my conscious attention. Because I tend to make subtle variations throughout the tune, a constant creative process that requires my aural feedback loops to be on full alert, I find it difficult to concentrate on the details of what is happening around me while playing the tunes. Guitar, on the other hand, is less cognitively demanding for me. I can carry on a conversation with someone while playing guitar on most tunes, and it is in this role that I prefer to observe jam behavior. If one's goal is to be a participant in the jam session but to affect the jam as little as possible, being one of two guitarists is a great way to do so.

When I was in researcher mode and the only fiddler in a jam I got into the habit of asking the other musicians for suggestions on what tune we should play next, so as to limit my influence on the tune selections, though this is never truly decided democratically. For example, there are musicians with whom I've played music for years

and have never heard them suggest a tune in a jam, even when directly solicited. In contrast, I used to frequently request tunes in jams while I was the guitarist. Becoming a fiddler finally put me in a position to determine which tunes to play, so long as I could actually fiddle them. Extraversion and aggression certainly play a role in which musicians will speak up and suggest tunes, though more introverted musicians have more passive ways of suggesting tunes. For example, a mandolin or banjo player might start noodling on a melody during a break in the music in hopes that the fiddler will take notice. Another common technique is to play a snippet of a melody and ask the group what the name of the tune is, in hopes that this will result in the group playing the tune together. At public jams, where the musicians may have never played with one another before, the micropolitics involved in tune choice are complex. Deferring to the fiddler is the default, but usually a sensitive fiddler will also defer to the capabilities of the group. Shared repertoire of “standard” tunes is also a good bet if the fiddler determines that the other musicians would struggle to learn unfamiliar tunes on the fly. It is for these and many other reasons that using the tunes played in a jam are often poor indicators of the preferences of the musicians in that jam.

I mention this particular issue as but one example of how my personal biases and my presence influences my observations. This became especially apparent on each successive fieldwork excursion as I was developing my hypotheses and the various survey instruments I would use to help validate those hypothesis as being worthy of empirical inquiry. I will return to this idea in more detail in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Over 150 packets were hand-delivered to musicians, and 76 were returned by the cut-off date. Surveys were then transcribed and the paper packets destroyed. The following sections present descriptive data on each section of the survey, followed by statistical analyses which illustrate relationships between different survey items. After this, the results of the 11 interviews are aggregated and discussed by question topic.

Descriptive Data

Age & Location

The mean age of the participants was 45.21 years ($SD = 16.33$), comprising 50 men (65.8%) and 26 women (34.2%). Age distribution appeared bi-modal, with peaks centered around ages 60 and 31. Ten participants (13%) were either 60 or 61 years old. This age distribution (Figure 4.1) is roughly representative of different waves of revivalists (1970s, 2000s) within old-time music who began playing the music in earnest in their 20s. The youngest participant was 18, and the oldest was 72. Participants currently reside in 11 different states, with North Carolina being the current home of 41 participants (54%) and Virginia being the current home of 15 (20%) participants. Forty-seven participants (62%) currently live in Appalachian counties. Table 4.1 provides a list of the number of musicians currently living in each state. Of those, 23 (49%) also grew up in Appalachia, and 24 (51%) moved to Appalachia from elsewhere.

Table 4.2 lists the locations where the participants grew up (i.e., attended K-12 school). Twenty-six participants (34%) grew up in an Appalachian county (as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission) and 50 participants (66%) grew up outside the region. In all, 21 states (plus the countries of Japan and Canada) were listed as states in which participants grew up. 88.5% of the participants who grew up in Appalachia still live in the region today, whereas only 52% of the participants who did not grow up in Appalachia still live outside the region. Nine participants had moved to non-Appalachian North Carolina or Virginia from other non-Appalachian states (though some of these non-Appalachian counties in North Carolina and Virginia are on or right outside of the Appalachian border). Adding these people to the 51% who moved to Appalachia from elsewhere means that 66% of the participants who grew up outside Appalachia moved either into the region or to areas in Virginia or North Carolina that would put them in easy driving distance to festivals and other old-time music events or into locations with thriving old-time music scenes (e.g., the Raleigh / Durham / Chapel Hill triangle). The location with the most participants, 7 (9.2%), living there currently was Asheville, North Carolina, and 6 of those 7 (86%) grew up outside of Appalachia.

Instruments

The fiddle was the most commonly listed main instrument, followed by equal numbers of banjo and guitar – the other two core string band instruments. Eight participants listed more than one instrument as their main instrument, and, had this been specified as an option in the directions, this number would likely have been higher. That fiddlers outnumbered the second most common instruments by over 2:1 is surprising and

should probably not be understood as the normal ratio in the old-time music community at large. Table 4.3 provides statistics on my participants' main instrument.⁵⁸

Figure 4.1

⁵⁸ This did not specify whether this meant one's favorite instrument or the instrument one most-often played

Table 4.1

Sample Population Current Location

State / Country	Frequency
North Carolina	41
Virginia	15
Alabama	3
Massachusetts	3
New York	3
West Virginia	3
Georgia	2
Japan	2
Hawaii	1
Illinois	1
Pennsylvania	1
Tennessee	1

Table 4.2

Sample Population K-12 Location

State / Country	Frequency
North Carolina	17
Virginia	14
New York	8
Ohio	5
Alabama	4
Maryland	4
Japan	4
California	2
Florida	2
Illinois	2
Minnesota	2
South Carolina	2
Tennessee	2
West Virginia	2
Canada	1
Colorado	1
Connecticut	1
Georgia	1
Kansas	1
Michigan	1
New Jersey	1
Pennsylvania	1
South Dakota	1

Note. Total is larger than 76
because some participants spent
time in multiple locations

Table 4.3

Distribution of Sample Population: Main Instrument

Main Instrument	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Fiddle	32	42.1	42.1
Banjo	15	19.7	61.8
Guitar	15	19.7	81.6
Bass	5	6.6	88.2
Fiddle/Banjo	3	3.9	92.1
Banjo/Bass	2	2.6	94.7
Other Combination of Above	3	3.9	98.7
Other Instrument(s)	1	1.3	100.0

Education

My sample population was, compared to national averages, highly educated. Fifty-six participants (73.7%) had at least a bachelor's degree (compared with a national average of 28.5%) (United States Census Bureau 2014), 18 (23.7%) also had a master's, and 8 (10.5%) had earned a Ph.D. Including those without a bachelor's degree but who had had some college, 67 (88%) had pursued higher education after high school. Arts and humanities fields were the most common type of degree. This is also disproportionately high compared to the national data on degree field, which suggests that after a spike in humanities bachelor's degrees in the late 1960s to approximately 17% of all bachelor's degrees earned, the number is now closer to 12%. Since 1987, bachelor's degrees in arts and humanities have averaged ~16% of all bachelor's degrees awarded, master's degrees in arts and humanities have averaged ~6% of all master's degrees awarded, and in that same period doctoral degrees in arts and humanities have averaged around 10% of all doctoral degrees awarded (Humanities Indicators 2014a; Ibid., 2014b; Ibid., 2014c).

Table 4.4 provides statistics on degrees earned/attempted, and Table 4.5 provides statistics on degree field.

Table 4.4

Distribution of Sample Population: Formal Education

Highest Degree Earned / Attempted	Frequency	Percent
GED	1	1.3
High School Diploma	7	9.2
Some College	9	11.8
Associate's	2	2.6
Bachelor's	26	34.2
Some Grad School	4	5.3
Master's	18	23.7
Doctorate	8	10.5
Blank	1	1.3

Table 4.5

Distribution of Sample Population: Degree Field

Field	Frequency
Arts, Humanities	30
STEM	14
Education	11
Technical / Professional	4
Business / Communications	4
Social Sciences	4
Health Sciences	3
Not Specified	1

Occupation

My sample population represented a variety of occupational fields, but education was by far the most common, followed by retirees, musicians, health care providers, those in design and entertainment fields, and luthiers. Including retirees whose last occupation was in education, this field was more than twice as popular as the second

most common occupation (musician). National data from 2013 suggests that those employed in education-related fields make up ~6.1% of all workers, which makes my sample disproportionately high in this field (United States Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014). Office and administrative support professions made up the largest employment field in 2013 (16.2%), and they are disproportionately underrepresented in my sample. Sales, which was the second most common occupation in 2013 (10.6% of all workers) (Ibid.), was entirely absent from my sample. Five of the nine musicians listed “musician” as their sole current occupation, and three of the six luthiers listed “luthier” as their sole current occupation. These two occupations were given their own categories due to their relevance to the musical community being examined. Of the 63 participants currently employed, 24 (38%) listed job descriptions that involved music in some way, and 12 participants listed more than one current occupation. Table 4.6 lists the frequency of various professions by my sample.

Table 4.6

Distribution of Sample Population: Current Occupation

Industry Type / Occupation	Frequency	Including Most Recent Occupation of Those Not Currently Working
Education	17	20
Retired	10	n/a
Musician*	9	9
Healthcare	7	7
Arts, Design, Entertainment, & Media	6	8
Luthier†	6	6
Architecture & Engineering	5	5
Management	4	4
Business & Financial	3	4
Community & Social Service	3	4
Food & Beverage	3	4
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	3	4
Library	3	3
Unemployed / Full-Time Student	3	3
Computer & Mathematical	2	2
Farming	2	2
Office & Administrative Support	2	2
Production	2	3
Building & Grounds Maintenance	1	1
Military	0	1

Note. *, 5 listed "Musician" as their only current occupation. †, 3 listed "Luthier" as their only current occupation.

Musical Background

Time spent playing old-time music ranged from 1.5 to 65 years, with a mean of 22 years, median of 16.5 years, and *SD* of 15.9. The age at which musicians began playing old-time music ranged from age 6 to age 51.5, with a mean of 23.2, median of 21, and *SD* of 10.9. Of those who had taken music lessons, 25 had more than five years total of instruction. Of the 16 who had classical strings training, 14 (87.5%) now play either fiddle or bass as their main instrument. Seventeen (22.4%) participants had elders in their

family who also played old-time music. Table 4.7 shows the frequency of various types of musical instruction.

Table 4.7

Distribution of Sample Population: Type of Musical Instruction

Lessons/Instruction Type	Frequency	Percent
Any Type	57	75.0
Band / Orchestra / Music Theory	46	60.5
Classical Strings (i.e., Violin, Viola, Cello, Bass)	16	21.1
Old-Time Music	16	21.1

The range of other styles consistently listened to or played was broad but leaned heavily towards commercial genres of traditional or folk, rock, country, and bluegrass. Table 4.8 lists the number of times these genres (either explicitly or through particular musicians or bands) were mentioned by participants.

Table 4.8

Distribution of Sample Population: Other Genres Frequently Played / Listened To

Genre	Frequency
Traditional / Folk	46
Rock	35
Country	35
Bluegrass	30
Blues	24
Jazz	23
World	19
Classical	16
Swing / Big Band	10
Soul/Funk	9
Hip-Hop / R&B	9
Current Pop (Top 40)	7
Older Pop	6
Punk	6
Only Old-Time Music	2

Physiological Responses

Seventy-five of my 76 participants answered this section. Several interesting observations can be made about this data when looking at frequency distributions for each type of response. Goosebumps, chills, and change in breathing rate had somewhat normal distributions, but the other six responses resulted in abnormal distributions. Sensation of warmth was the response that happened the most frequently for the most participants (27, or 36%, reported that they experienced it often; 5, or 6.7%, experience it always). The response with the highest number of people reporting ever having experienced it as a result of old-time music was goosebumps ($n = 64$; 85.3%), followed by change in breathing rate ($n = 61$; 81.3%), sensation of warmth ($n = 59$; 78.6%), shivers, shudders, or chills ($n = 58$; 77.3%), tears or crying ($n = 52$; 68.4%), and so on. Table 4.9 displays the frequencies for each type of response.

Table 4.9

Frequency of Particular Physiological Responses Due to Old-Time Music

Response Type									
Frequency	Tears, Crying	Shivers, Shudders, Chills	Goosebumps	Tingling	Sens. of Warmth	Change in Breathing Rate	Change in Chest Pressure	Lump in Throat or Stomach	Dizziness
Never	23	17	11	27	16	14	38	28	66
Rarely	35	22	18	23	8	15	15	17	8
Sometimes	16	25	29	16	19	31	15	26	1
Often	1	11	15	9	27	9	5	4	0
Always	0	0	2	0	5	6	2	0	0
Ever Experienced	52	58	64	48	59	61	37	47	9

Musical Primacy Factors

A few of these items (Q1, Q15, Q23) had normal distributions, but most were skewed positively (Q2, Q4, Q6, Q8, Q10, Q11, Q14, Q20, Q21, Q22), and a few were skewed negatively (Q12, Q17, Q18). Questions 5, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17, 19 illustrated a larger spread of responses. Q5, in particular, showed an inverted, U-shaped curve. One possible reason why more of these items did not demonstrate multi-modality is that my sample was not stratified in the sense that there were equal numbers of musicians representing the various attitudes and typologies that seem to be present in the old-time music community. Instead, musicians who grew up outside the tradition significantly outnumber those who did at the festivals such as the ones I attended in order to pass out survey packets. While there might well be 10 or so insider musicians who answered similarly on these items, this might not be revealed by the distribution of scores on individual items because that leaves another 66 outsider musicians to dominate the rest of the scoring data. This disparity in sample representation might explain why a few questions (e.g., Q2, Q4, Q14, Q20) showed a high mean (i.e., most people agreed to a high degree with the statement) and also a small *SD*, suggesting that my sample population (but not necessarily old-time musicians in general) had a high degree of homogeneity regarding their attitudes to those items. Table 4.10 shows the frequency distributions of the item responses, and Figure 4.2 lists the MP item descriptions for easier referencing.

Table 4.10
Frequency Distribution of MP Scale Item Responses

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Strongly Disagree (1)	3	1	6	0	23	0	14	3	20	2	1	30
Slightly Disagree (2)	13	0	6	1	16	6	29	7	17	4	6	20
Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	31	3	27	5	7	9	10	11	19	12	18	12
Slightly Agree (4)	21	24	25	28	15	29	16	20	15	31	18	10
Strongly Agree (5)	8	50	12	42	15	32	7	35	5	27	33	4
<i>M</i>	3.24	4.61	3.41	4.46	2.78	4.14	2.64	4.01	2.58	4.01	4.00	2.18
Median	3	5	3	5	2	4	2	4	2	4	4	2
<i>SD</i>	.98	.59	1.06	.70	1.52	.92	1.28	1.17	1.19	1.00	1.06	1.21

	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23
Strongly Disagree (1)	9	1	3	20	30	50	22	2	3	4	4
Slightly Disagree (2)	12	1	10	19	7	13	12	2	6	13	14
Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	21	7	27	21	14	7	18	8	21	19	26
Slightly Agree (4)	11	16	25	12	16	6	15	24	28	27	21
Strongly Agree (5)	23	51	11	4	9	0	9	40	18	13	11
<i>M</i>	3.36	4.51	3.41	2.49	2.57	1.59	2.70	4.29	3.68	3.42	3.28
Median	3	5	4	2	2.5	1	3	4.5	4	3	3
<i>SD</i>	1.28	.75	1.04	1.17	1.38	1.00	1.43	.83	.99	1.12	1.02

Figure 4.2

MP Item Descriptions

MP Item	Description
1	Play in jam sessions more for the music than for the company
2	Can identify favorite parts or structural features of favorite tunes
3	Like favorite tunes mainly due to extra-musical factors
4	Like favorite tunes mainly due to musical factors
5	Do not have a strong grasp of music theory
6	Each old-time tune has a distinct emotional character
7	Not very particular about “right” or “wrong” chord progressions
8	Ideal jam is small, talented group who take the music seriously
9	There are “good” and “bad” tunes, from a musical standpoint
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced
12	Prefer to play tunes I already know
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number
14	Enjoy playing with strangers (if the music is good)
15	At jams camaraderie is more important than good musicianship
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I’m from
17	Sometimes hear “weird” tunes that I don’t like or want to learn
18	Majority of skill and repertoire from lessons, workshops, videos
19	Prefer to have audience/dancers rather than playing for myself
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord
22	Like when guitar players use unexpected chords that still “work”
23	Like “crooked” or rare tunes more than standard/popular ones

Favorite Old-Time Tunes

Participants listed up to 10 of their favorite tunes, which I defined in the packet as “instrumentals, or anything you could play as a fiddle tune without anybody singing.”

The responses in this section yielded 395 different tune titles, 274 (69.4%) of which were mentioned by only one musician. 54 (13.7%) tunes were listed by two musicians, 28 (7.1%) tunes were listed by three musicians, and so on up to a maximum of 21 musicians (27.6%) listing some version of “Lost Indian.” In old-time music it is not uncommon for there to be multiple versions of a tune with the same title which differ enough that they could be either thought of as a variation or as a different tune (musically-speaking)

entirely. Some participants specified a particular version and/or key for each of his or her ten tunes, but most did not. But even with the sometimes ambiguous relationship between tune title and musical structure, some favorite tunes emerged from my sample population. After “Lost Indian” came “Sally Ann,” and “Cumberland Gap,” which were mentioned by 17 (22.4%) and 16 (21.1%) participants, respectively.⁵⁹ These tunes and others frequently mentioned are old-time “standards,” to be sure, but they also reflect the North Carolina / Virginia orientation of my sample population. Many of them were born and raised in these states, a majority of them live there now, and the tunes historically associated with the Mt. Airy / Galax region are heavily represented in these musicians’ repertoire, despite other differences in musical approach, affect, personality, etc. Table 4.11 lists the 26 tunes mentioned by at least five musicians.

The first 10 tunes listed in this table represent this association with northwestern North Carolina and Southwestern Virginia, and most of the ones further down the list also fit this criterion. However, some of these frequently-mentioned tunes (denoted with * on the table) are not historically associated with this region, and they represent the tastes of more musically-omnivorous musicians who learn tunes from other places like Kentucky, West Virginia, Georgia, etc. or who compose their own tunes. “Big Scioty” is usually associated with West Virginia musicians. “Benton’s Dream” is a recently-composed tune by Surry County native Benton Flippen that is now played by both insiders and outsiders. But “Whiteface” is an example of a recently-composed tune from an outsider that has entered the tradition (i.e., people learn it from jam sessions and might not know the identity of its composer) yet, in my experience, is played almost exclusively

⁵⁹ There are numerous versions of these tunes in many different keys and tunings. Some of them are altogether different tunes, structurally, that share the same title.

by outsiders. “Five Miles from Town” is usually associated with Clyde Davenport, a Kentucky fiddler. “Farewell Trion” is most associated with James Bryan, an Alabama fiddler, and was made popular in the outsider community via a recording on a Bob Carlin album from the 1980s. “Indian Ate a Woodchuck” is usually associated with Ed Haley, a fiddler from West Virginia and Kentucky. “Lost Girl” comes from many Kentucky fiddlers, including Clyde Davenport; most players know “Rocky Pallet” via the Skillet Lickers (from Georgia); “Tennessee Mountain Fox Chase” comes from Dudley Vance of Tennessee; and “Whiskey Before Breakfast” is probably a Canadian tune. Some of the aforementioned tunes are played by insider musicians in the NC/VA area, but I can think of one insider fiddler from Virginia (not a participant in my study) who plays several of these tunes with equal gusto as the traditional repertoire from his home region.⁶⁰

Interestingly, some musicians were careful to distinguish between the version of the tune they intended and other versions it could be confused with for reasons that argued for the superiority of their intended version. For example, one insider musician from Surry County, North Carolina indicated that the “Grey Eagle” he meant was the one in the key of A (which is standard around Mt. Airy / Galax) and “not that hippie C shit.” In fact, the main sources of the C version of Grey Eagle that this musician associates with hippies are J.D. Harris and Manco Sneed, two now-deceased fiddlers who lived in Western North Carolina. This C version is especially popular among outsiders who now live in Asheville, which is where J.D. Harris made his home. Unknown is to what degree this musician’s disdain for the C version is due to its association with a disliked type of

⁶⁰ Incidentally, some insider musicians whom I know say that this fiddler “fell in with the hippie crowd” in a derisive way – perhaps implying that this fiddler should have stuck to the tunes and style from his home area only.

musician (i.e., “hippies”), its association with a non-local region, or due to the structure of the tune and/or the style with which it is usually played.

These tune lists can be evaluated in other useful ways. For example, we could notice that one participant’s list (Table 4.12) contains only tunes found in the traditional repertoire of musicians from the Mt. Airy / Galax area, and it also contains mostly popular (both within my sample and generally among players of old-time music) tunes. The second participant’s list, in contrast, contains no tunes which are common in traditional musicians’ repertoire in that area, and this musician also contributed 6 tunes that were mentioned by nobody else in my sample. Reviewing the tune lists, I found several examples of musicians like Musician 1 in Table 4.12 – their favorite tunes not only mark them as localized to a specific region and repertoire (mainly SW Virginia & NW North Carolina), but in their omission of certain popular tunes frequently mentioned by outsiders, their lists also mark them as probable cultural insiders. When cross-referencing this with where the musician grew up and where they currently live, overwhelmingly it is Appalachian natives with some history of old-time music in their family whose favorite lists are similar to Musician 1’s.⁶¹

Of the 15 musicians whose tune lists included at least eight Round Peak / Galax area standards,⁶² 12 (80%) were Appalachian natives.⁶³ Their mean self-rated type score (1-7 scale) was 2.07 (Median = 2.00, *SD* = 1.16), and their mean MP Factor 1 (Musical &

⁶¹ This is not to say that an outsider could not end up liking Surry County / Round Peak standards more than the dominant repertoire of other outsiders. Two of my participants who grew up far outside the Round Peak area listed Round Peak standards for all 10 of their favorite tunes.

⁶² Whether or not these tunes are “standards” to the area was not objectively validated in any way, since there is not a comprehensive collection of the tune repertoire from musicians in this area. The decision as to whether a tune fell into this criteria was made based on my experience in this old-time community for the past 7 years, and is therefore my informed (and fallible) opinion.

⁶³ *t*-tests using this cut-off as a grouping variable will be discussed later in this chapter.

Social Conservatism)⁶⁴ score was 1.08 (Median = 1.24, $SD = 1.02$). This MP Factor 1 score mean sits at about the 85th percentile for the entire sample, and the self-rated type score sits at about the 17th percentile for the entire sample. This indicated that those who listed more than eight of these tunes tended to be musically and socially conservative and to have rated themselves as mostly “traditional” musicians. Ten of the 15 (66.7%) of these musicians had elders who played old-time music. Four grew up in Virginia, 10 grew up in North Carolina, and one grew up in Georgia.

⁶⁴ Discussed in the section on Principal Component Analysis

Table 4.11

Favorite Tunes Mentioned by at Least Five Musicians

Tune	Mentions	Percent of Musicians
Lost Indian	21	27.6
Sally Ann	17	22.4
Cumberland Gap	16	21.1
Fortune	9	
John Brown's Dream	9	11.8
Cacklin' Hen / Hen Cackle	9	
Fly Around / Western Country	9	
Forked Deer	8	10.5
Breakin' Up Christmas	8	
Benton's Dream	7	
Big Scioty*	7	
Billy in the Lowground	7	9.2
Five Miles from Town*	7	
Mississippi Sawyer	7	
June Apple	6	
Leather Britches	6	7.9
Sugar Hill	6	
Farewell Trion*	5	
Grey Eagle (key of A)	5	
Old Joe Clark	5	
Paddy on the Turnpike	5	
Sally Johnson / Sally Ann Johnson	5	6.6
Soldier's Joy	5	
Arkansas Traveler	5	
Backstep Cindy	5	
Indian Ate a Woodchuck*	5	
North Carolina Breakdown	5	
Chilly Winds	4	
Grey Eagle (key of C)	4	
Lost Girl*	4	
Pretty Little Girl	4	
Ragtime Annie	4	5.3
Rocky Pallet*	4	
Sail Away Ladies	4	
Tennessee Mountain Fox Chase*	4	
Whiskey Before Breakfast*	4	
White Face*	4	

Tune	Mentions	Percent of Musicians
Rockingham Cindy	4	5.3
Whoa Mule	4	
<i>Note.</i> * = Tune not associated with NW North Carolina, SW Virginia traditional repertoire		

Table 4.12

Comparison of Two Top 10 Favorite Tunes Lists

	Tune	Other Mentions	Associated with NC/VA Region
Musician 1	Cindy	2	Y
	John Brown's Dream	8	Y
	Western Country	8	Y
	Mississippi Sawyer	6	Y
	Lost Indian	20	Y
	Sail Away Ladies	3	Y
	Angeline the Baker	1	Y
	Cumberland Gap	15	Y
	Poor Liza Jane	1	Y
	Sally Ann	16	Y
Musician 2	Polly's Mountain Kettle	0	N
	L&N Rag	2	N
	Golden Chain Tree	2	N
	Jenny on the Railroad	0	N
	Money Musk	0	N
	Ways of the World	1	N
	Roaring River	1	N
	Cuffy	0	N
	Get Off Your Money	0	N
	Avalon Quickstep	0	N

Favorite Tune Descriptions

Seventy-three participants provided descriptions of what they liked about one of their favorite tunes. As this section was the only place on the survey where participants

were asked to write at length about their relationship to this music, many participants seemed eager to provide long and rich descriptions of their favorite tunes. In these descriptions many participants mentioned not only what about the tune they enjoyed but sometimes even the particular affective responses that they experienced as a result of these tunes or characteristics that they noticed they like generally about old-time tunes. The descriptions were first coded to reveal the ratio of musical (e.g., “I like this tune because it has good drive”) factors to extra-musical (e.g., “This is a tune I learned from my girlfriend”) factors. To be considered a musical factor, the participant had to address something about the particular sonic or structural features of the tune(s). Anything not specifically about the music of the tune(s) was considered an extra-musical factor. The mean percentage of musical factors listed was 80, meaning only 20% of the reasons for liking favorite tunes, on average, were due to extra-musical factors. Only four (5.5%) participants’ descriptions were exclusively extra-musical factors. Twenty-nine (39.7%) participants did invoke both musical and extra-musical factors, but the majority of participants, 40 (54.8%), listed exclusively musical factors.

Descriptions were then coded to measure the frequency of specific factors mentioned. Table 4.13 lists the frequencies of these factors. Notice that the 10 most frequently-mentioned factors are all musical. It is not until the 11th most common factor (Associated with Specific Memories) that extra-musical factors begin. Of course, liking a tune and liking what happens when you play that tune in a jam with others are not the same thing. If our area of focus is on variables influencing a musician’s *experience* of the music, we should be careful not to forget that the social context of the live jam is not highlighted by the way this item was worded in the survey packet. That is, that so many

participants listed musical factors for why they liked their favorite tune does not necessarily mean that those factors directly map onto the affect resulting from playing that tune live with other musicians. It could therefore be the case that the musical interaction afforded by the jam could make a tune that lacks some of these musical factors (and is not listed as a favorite) more enjoyable than a favorite tune played in a lackluster jam.

Eight musicians specifically mentioned movement to the IV chord as something that they especially liked about the tune, which is in line with the research of Woolf and Wooley and aligns with my own field research, and 7 mentioned something to do with trance or altered states. The words “drive” and “rock” also came up frequently, which is not surprising given that so many of my participants have been attracted to and influenced by the rhythm-heavy Round Peak string band sound and, the rock stylings of the Highwoods String Band, and rock music generally. Also, the style of old-time music around Galax and Mt. Airy is often considered something of a transition between bluegrass and old-time, and some of my insider participants are also accomplished bluegrass musicians. It therefore is not surprising that various aspects of rhythm was the most frequently mentioned factor. As Wooley⁶⁵ noted,

Just as old-time music was the right music at the right time for revivalists, Jarrell was the right musician with the specifically right sound for them....The 1970s revival generation had been raised on jazz and rock and roll, and the driving syncopation of Jarrell’s down-bow playing, along with his almost shouted-out singing...caught the ear of the revival generation. (2003, 188)

⁶⁵ This idea was not original to Wooley but had been circulating for decades among old-time musicians who were trying to account for the differences between the “festival-style” rhythmic approach and the rhythmic feel of the old string band music from the 20s and 30s.

For those who followed the directions and limited their discussion to one tune, 57 different tunes in total were given. “Benton’s Dream” was chosen by 3 participants, and “Grey Eagle,” “Train 45,” and “Yew Piney Mountain” were each chosen by 2 participants. This coincidence provides an opportunity to compare how participants’ reasons for liking tunes are both similar and different. One musician’s description of “Benton’s Dream,” for example, manages to take a swipe at outsiders and even suggests a (possibly) tongue-in-cheek battle over whether insiders or outsiders are the rightful stewards of this tune. The description relies evenly on musical and extra-musical factors:

It was written by my close friend and mentor. There's no words despite some no-soapers trying to put some to it, so it's 100% instrumental bad-assery. It is not whimpy-sounding at all. It sounds incredible backed by Scruggs-style banjo. If one wanted to storm hippie hill⁶⁶ in an all-out war this would be the tune to do it to.

A second musician, writing about the same tune, said:

A great tune to flat-foot to. I love the fact that one of the most traditional fiddlers from Mt. Airy wrote this most unusual tune. It does NOT follow the usual I-IV-V chord structure, and it gives jams a chance to really get into a trance-like groove that can build and build. I would rather play this tune for a long time than any other!

Because this description references Roman numeral chord positions, praises how “unusual” the tune is, and describes the tune as being good for getting into a “trance-like groove,” this second musician would probably be considered a “no-soaper hippie” by the first musician.⁶⁷ The concept of “groove,” as contrasted with “drive” is something I have encountered often in informal conversations with old-time musicians. As will be

⁶⁶ “Hippie Hill” in this description is referring to the hill above the main camping area at the Mt. Airy convention, which is filled with mostly young outsider musicians.

⁶⁷ The terms “trance” and “groove” tend to throw up red flags for certain insider musicians who are outspoken in their disdain for “hippie” old-time music. Not surprisingly, Andrew Woolf referred to this tune as “a trance tune in A” (1991, 111).

discussed in the interview section, one insider musician told me that “Good old-time music has drive, [and] bad old-time music has groove.” And it seems to be the case that these are not different words for the same thing: many old-time musicians understand these terms as describing different musical approaches, and they can identify which approach most appeals to them. Perhaps tellingly, while both terms were used by my participants in these descriptions, no one tune description contained both terms.

A third musician wrote:

I'll never forget the first time I heard “Benton’s Dream.” The whole song is wonderful, but I especially like the parts where it goes to the G chord. Every time I play Benton's Dream, I usually get goosebumps or cold chills and my heart rate always increases. I really just enjoy the whole tune, but especially when it goes to G, but of course the melody is really great too. I really enjoy it when songs go to a G chord. It seems unexpected to me, especially since Benton's Dream is in A. And even though Lee Highway Blues is in D, and it follows in the chord progression to go to a G, it still seems unexpected, and songs like that seem to have more energy.

Here we have a special memory attached to the first exposure to the tune, discussion of a particularly affective chord change, and multiple physical responses. This musician also mentions melody, structure, expectation, “energy,” and a pattern that of liking “G chords” generally in this music. She also uses the word “song” interchangeably with the word “tune,” which, similar to using numerals instead of letters to label chords, is another way of possibly illustrating difference in my sample by means of linguistic conventions.⁶⁸

This particular musician, who happened to be also selected for an interview, represents an anomaly among my sample because while her responses to questions related to emotion and musical affect align with the responses of the people with the highest levels of

⁶⁸ Musicians with formal musical training, for example, might be less prone to use the term “song” to describe a piece of music without lyrics. The term “session” compared to the term “jam” would also likely divide my sample along similar lines. How the two-word “jam session” became split with outsiders using “session” and insiders using “jam” is unknown, but there have been dozens or hundreds of times that I have heard outsiders talk about “great sessions.” I can’t think of a single insider who I have heard use that term.

Openness to Experience and least traditional self-type classification, this musician's Liberalism facet was among the lowest of the entire sample, and she rated herself a 1 (the most "traditional") on the self-type scale. Her scores on the Openness facets of Artistic Interests, Imagination, Emotionality, and Intellect and on other scale items such as Absorption and RDEES put her in the top percentiles compared to my overall sample. That her tune description is almost entirely related to particular musical factors and the cognitive, emotional, and physical responses to those factors (e.g., what seems to be goosebumps as a response to violation of musical expectation) only makes her responses on the other survey items more puzzling and interesting. Ought we to take from these results that this musician's responses give support to the possibility that the relationship between personality factors and musical experience is better explained by other confounding variables? That is, is this musician's low Liberalism score indicative of how she was raised and socialized in a small, rural town in southwest Virginia and not necessarily related to her general disposition when it comes to her interest in and reaction to art and music? Follow-up research using regression analysis would be needed to parse out these sort of questions. But, if nothing else, this musician's responses highlight the importance of looking at the components (e.g., Liberalism) of these larger constructs (e.g., Openness to Experience).

The two participants who chose the "Grey Eagle" in C invoked both musical and extra-musical factors. One participant wrote: "The melody covers 3 octaves of the C scale. I think this adds to the excitement of the tune. There are some subtle note choices in the melody. The key of C is very warm sounding on the fiddle. This tune is from

Western NC where I live.” The other musician’s description was longer but also invoked a sense of place attached to the tune as especially meaningful:

Listening to “Grey Eagle” lifts me up. It sounds so elegant even though the recording I have is terribly scratchy. The melody as I understand is likely older than the story of the race horse named Grey Eagle. The melody makes me think of an eagle soaring through the mountains and I guess that's how I imagine it. This tune became more precious as I listened to it often as I would make the drive between Asheville & Johnson City over the mountains where I know J.D. Harris spent much of his time in Flag Pond, TN. As I researched more about him, I discovered that he influenced other area fiddlers that I admired - namely Manco Sneed & Marcus Martin, and of course the Helton Brothers. J.D. Harris plays this tune at a perfect speed and seems to have such ease with it. Additionally, this tune makes me remember my dear friend who plays this tune. I accompanied him playing this at a contest in Knoxville at the Mead School and it remains a wonderful memory.

This musician’s description of the eagle soaring is an example of visual imagery, which 7 participants wrote about in their descriptions. This description also involves two different special memories associated with the tune, the history of the tune, and musical factors (tempo and tone / overall sound).

The two “Train 45” descriptions both reference the same source band and both focus exclusively on the music, though with minimal overlap in the specific factors mentioned. The first description:

Very "groove"-oriented, powerful, gritty (as opposed to "pretty"), crooked in funny way, builds drama with the low parts, very rhythmic as opposed to melodic. I love that it sounds like a train. I love the way Hilltoppers play it with such a Big sound -- loud, raucous, perfectly imperfect!

again uses the term “groove,” even though the terms that follow (powerful, gritty, raucous) would seem to suggest a different aesthetic appeal (i.e., “drive”). The second description:

I love this tune because: 1) love cross tunes, 2) not really square tune in terms of beats & measures which makes it interesting, 3) if you listen to Roan Mountain Hilltoppers play it, the tune sounds deceptively simple, but if you slow it down it's

very advanced in the fiddle playing. He's doing a lot. 4) I love modal tunes. This tune always gives me goosebumps.

also mentions the unusual metric structure of the tune but also mentions the deceptively simple sounding fiddle part and that this tune has characteristics (played in cross-tuning and “modal”) which this musician tends to like. We also learn about a particular physical response (goosebumps) to this tune.

The two “Yew Piney Mountain” descriptions also differ in the sense that the first musician identifies particular musical features that he finds enjoyable: “I really like the high part (A) for the melody and because it is fun to play. The B part has a nice driving rolling sound and is basically all Em's, which gives the tune a lot of drive,” while the second musician focuses more on the context and experience of first hearing his favorite version: “I know three versions: McCumbers, French Carpenter, and Melvin Wine.

However, when I first heard Lester's version in Gerry Milnes' film *Fiddle, Snakes and Dog Days*, I just fell in love with that version, though it took me many years before I got it under my belt” and does not mention any specific musical factors that lead to his liking of the tune. While uncommon (5.5%), these exclusively extra-musical descriptions nevertheless illustrated the rich affective power of the tunes for these musicians. Notice in the following musician’s exclusively extra-musical description that the tune mentioned could have been any tune – it was the person playing it and the situation that made it special: “When I started to play fiddle Dwight Diller took me to [the] Hammons. We visited with Sherman Hammons at night. Sherman didn't have his own fiddle any more. I handed my fiddle to him, and he played ‘Old Christmas Morning,’ and it was the only tune he could play.” And another musician, writing about the tune “Old Baldy Kickin

Up,” doesn’t reference the music at all but instead the historical events associated with the tune:

It’s a Civil War tune about a horse that did not like his new general. There are actual accounts of the horse being shot several times throughout the course of the Civil War and memoirs between owners describing how the horse was faring throughout the battles he partook in. Now that’s history and really cool stuff!

Another musician’s description, an example of an even split of musical and extra-musical factors, doesn’t focus on a particular tune but rather on the potential of these tunes to foster connections with other musicians – not only with the musicians you actually play music with, but also with the musicians who carried these tunes on until they reached the musicians of today:

That’s hard. There are some tunes that you can get lost in, a place where your brain shuts off and you are only connected to other humans across time and space through wordless music. It’s really the artistry of intimately connecting creatively to other people who are listening deeply through precise rhythmic alignment that is appealing to me. I also enjoy the lower Big Ego Bullshit factor in old-time... Most OT musicians see themselves as a link in a chain, and that cross-generational respect is really great. For example, I love how Clyde Davenport’s tunes have an element of humor and difficulty, and when you meet Clyde, he’s cantankerous as hell! But what I love about all of those tunes is that they provide a framework to rhythmic synchronicity with other humans, thereby creating a profound sense of joy and connectedness.

This idea of needing tightly synchronized rhythm in a jam group to facilitate getting “lost” or achieving an altered state aligns with the research on combined flow, was mentioned by other musicians, and will also be discussed in the interview section. Woolf, in his research, found others who felt the same as the musician quoted above, and he noted that these sorts of jam experiences “lead old-time musicians to believe in the existence of a group mind or a kind of subtle, perhaps telepathic communication among them” (1990, 115). The following musician’s mixed description captures musical features that are appealing, notes the pleasure of attempting to learn the tune, and how it is a good

dance tune, and concludes with the emotional and physical effects of the tune on this musician and the inspiration he draws from it:

Every tune is unique. In "Tennessee Girls" the soaring high part and gritty low part knock me out. A lot of the impact comes from Dyke's superb drive on fiddle and Hub Mahaffey's rhythmic bass lines on guitar and, yes, the rock-solid autoharp chunk of Myrtle Vermillion, barely audible but present to the brain. The band flat-out rocks. When I play the tune on fiddle -- I've worked on it quite a bit with the slow-downer -- I just can't capture what Dykes does -- but I have the band sound in my head and just keep going on it, getting better at the tune. Whew! What a treat/challenge. It's as rousing a dance tune as I can recall. Sends me into the ozone. I sometimes weep, imagining hearing them in person. I haven't mentioned that he's calling a dance while fiddling. The recording inspires me to keep on keeping on.

And this next musician's response also illustrates multiple factors at work in imbuing this tune, "Cricket on the Hearth," with emotional significance:

1) It reminds me of a time when I first started clogging with the Cane Creek Cloggers and the friendships I formed with other musicians and dancers from that group. 2) It's upbeat, melodic, and happy. 3) There are breaks on the B-part that dancers like to dance to. 4) The breaks become a playful interaction between dancers and musicians and within the band. Other tunes I like because they are dance tunes and/or are associated with Western North Carolina, where I'm from.

This musician had a special memory of clogging with others associated with this tune, appreciated the tune's structure, emotional character, and the way the form of the tune worked well for dancers. And this musician was careful to mention that he enjoys other tunes because of their utility as dance tunes or because of a geographic link to his home.

Finally, the following musician's description of multiple tunes (several musicians chose to describe more than one tune) illustrates exclusively musical factors (rhythm, "drive," melody, structure, chords, the IV chord, harmonic changes, "haunting" character, timing, etc.):

Several tunes are tunes that have tunes (or color change) within. One of these is "Five Miles from Town." It can be started with a rhythmic, driving funk and then break into a haunting, melodic B-part. It is this mood shift or change that makes

these type of tunes so interesting. Another one is “Wild Horses”/ “Stoney Point,” where the rhythmic A-part is followed by (often) two parts each having a different personality. Of course, any time there is a minor or IV chord involved in one of the other parts it makes the tune more interesting, as they define the mood or color changes. So often it's a vi chord that gives me the haunting nuance I seem to enjoy so much. But I also love more primal tunes, which depend on timing and rhythm more than complexity. “Money in Both Pockets” and “Leather Britches” come to mind. I express these (or try to) with some Afro-American feeling.

But not all exclusively musical descriptions read like they were written by a musicologist.

Some were quite simple and succinct. For example, one musician wrote the following about “John Brown’s Dream,” a popular 4-part breakdown: “Love the structure of the song and how you can do runs on the guitar.” A different musician wrote about “Old Joe Clark,” one of the most well-known old-time tunes: “Good dance tune. Good speed and timing. Good to sing.”

Other musicians went above what was asked of them and described factors that applied to most tunes that appealed to them (some became aware of those similarities while thinking about this section of the survey) and had both identified the musical structures at work and characterized the affective quality of those structures. For example, one musician wrote:

This is difficult because it varies from tune to tune. I tend to either like tunes that are driving and major (often with prominent four chords) because I like that feeling of just going full-tilt. It's joyful (“Cumberland Gap,” “Grey Eagle,” “Katy Hill”). I also love bittersweet tunes. These walk that line between happiness and sadness. I'd count “Lost Girl,” “Queen of the Earth,” and “Still Run” (barely) in that category. There are lots of memories associated with these tunes as well. I just noticed there aren't really any modal tunes. That's not because I don't like them, but they don't make the top 10 cut.

In this response this musician listed both rhythmic (e.g., “driving”) and harmonic components (“major” and “prominent four chords”) that were at work in his affective response, but also noted that “there are lots of memories associated with these tunes, as

well.” But still another musician, demonstrating a Buddhist-style attitude, did not list any favorite tunes. He instead wrote, “I don’t really have favorite tunes (or colors). ‘So many tunes, so little time’ is an idiotic dictum. ‘One tune, all the time in the world’ is more like it. Just don’t be too clever. Stay in the groove.”

Despite the level of detail in some of these responses, these results should not be interpreted as a stable representation of how any one musician finds meaning in this music. First, I specifically excluded songs for the very reason that the lyrical content significantly complicates matters and tends to pull attention away from other musical factors. Regardless of the background and psychological profile of the musician, song lyrics can be meaningful as poetry, and the music the lyrics are set to can seem to be of marginal importance. Restricting the musical selections to instrumental tunes (which often have no programmatic meaning except for whatever can be gleaned from the title) was intended to better focus on how the sonic and structural features of the music would vary in the degree to which they are related to affect across my sample. It also aligns with Wooley’s observation that “the tradition has evolved into a tune-based, fiddle-centric repertoire” (2003, 102). And although a few musicians noted that some tunes they like for musical factors and others they like more for extra-musical factors, this could potentially be true for a substantial number of musicians. For example, one musician concluded his description with:

You may get from this that I’m more drawn to the deconstruction of tunes than I am to the history and emotion, but I think that’s only with certain tunes that I like. There certainly are tunes that I really enjoy because of the deep history behind them. But since this tune has been stuck in my head for some time, I gotta write about it.

Out of a respect for my participants' time, they were only asked to provide a description of what they liked about one of their favorite tunes, but to further investigate whether the ratio of musical to extra-musical factors is consistent for any given musician we would need to increase the number of tunes for which they could give explanations. To increase the ecological validity of this measurement, this might also be expanded to include both tunes and songs. Nevertheless, the percentage of musical factors listed for their chosen tune, as well as specific factors mentioned in the descriptions were operationalized and used in statistical analyses that will be discussed in a later section.

Table 4.13

Frequency of Features Listed in Favorite Tune Descriptions

Feature	Frequency
Rhythm (Any Aspect)	37
Structure / Arrangement of Parts	35
Harmonic Elements (inc. chords)	29
Melody (Any Aspect)	27
Specific Emotion (Felt or Perceived)	24
Energy (any aspect)	21
"Crooked" / Unusual‡‡	19
"Drive" or "Rock"†	17
Specific Instrumental Technique	17
Tempo (Any Aspect)	16
Associated with Specific Memories	14
Good for Dancing	13
Complexity (Any Aspect)	12
"Simple"‡	10
Joy / Happiness††	10
Associated with Historical Events	10
"Fun" or "Fun to play"	9
Experience Physical Response	9
Allows for Creativity / Improvisation	9
Geographic Link	9
Instrumental Tone / Overall Sound	8
IV Chord†††	8
"Beauty" or "Beautiful"	7
Expectation (any aspect)	7
"Trance" / Altered States	7

Feature	Frequency
Experience Visual Imagery	7
Good for Jams or Playing w/ Others	7
Challenging	7
Family / Personal Link to Tune Source	6
Mode	5
"Groove"†	4
Memory of Learning Process	4
"Complex"‡	3
Lyrics / Song Meaning	3
"Haunting"††	2

Note. †, included in Rhythm total. ‡, included in Complexity total. ††, included in Specific Emotion total. ‡‡, included in Structure / Arrangement of Parts total. ††‡, included in Harmonic Elements total.

Big Five Personality Factors

Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness scores were calculated from the facet scores taken from the 120-item form of the IPIP-NEO, while Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Extraversion means were taken from the 44-item short form. Table 4.14 displays the statistics for these factors, and Table 4.15 displays statistics for Openness and Conscientiousness facets. On average my sample scored slightly higher than the middle value for Extraversion, substantially higher on Agreeableness, slightly lower on Neuroticism, substantially higher on Openness, and slightly higher on Conscientiousness. Looking at the facet scores for Openness, we see that the sample population's score on Artistic Interests was very high and had a small range and amount of variance. This indicates that my sample population overall (despite the many differences between them) are all quite high on this construct. Given the nature of this community (a musical-affinity group, essentially), this is not surprising. After all, it is the fact that they all play music which is the defining factor of their status as an old-time

musician.⁶⁹ Emotionality and Intellect both had an above mid-point mean, but also with a much larger range of responses and *SD*, suggesting that these were facets on which my sample population differed to a larger degree. Liberalism had the largest *SD* and range of any facet and the largest discrepancy between the median and the mean (suggesting, in this case, that some very low scores pulled the mean value down significantly). This also makes sense, given the cultural and political backgrounds of the different musicians who constitute this community.

Table 4.14
Distribution of Sample Population: Big Five Factors

	Openness to Experience	Conscientiousness	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Neuroticism
<i>M</i>	3.88	3.62	3.64	4.05	2.52
Median	3.9	3.6	3.8	4	2.5
<i>SD</i>	.49	.53	.78	.57	.77
Range	2.2	2.5	3.6	2.9	3.5

Table 4.15
*Distribution of Sample Population: Openness and Conscientiousness
Facets*

	Openness to Experience Facets					
	Imagination	Artistic Interests	Emotionality	Adventure- Seeking	Intellect	Liberalism
<i>M</i>	3.84	4.46	3.78	3.62	3.85	3.83
Median	4.00	4.50	3.80	3.80	4.00	4.30
<i>SD</i>	.76	.46	.65	.74	.82	1.08
Range	3.5	2	3.7	2.7	3.7	4

⁶⁹ Though some might argue that the similarities stop there.

	Conscientiousness Facets					
	Self-Efficacy	Orderliness	Dutifulness	Achievement-Striving	Self-Discipline	Cautiousness
<i>M</i>	3.94	3.16	4.12	4.08	3.48	3.04
Median	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.50	3.00
<i>SD</i>	.62	.96	.53	.72	.87	.84
Range	2.5	4	2	3	3.5	4

Music Systematizing – Empathizing

Women’s mean Music-Empathizing score (-3.0 to 3.0 range) was .77; men’s was .54. An unpaired, two-tailed t-test comparing the Music-Empathizing scores of women ($n = 25$) to men ($n = 50$) failed to reach significance ($p = .07$, $t = 1.826$, $df = 73$). While the women’s higher score (though not statistically significant) aligns with the hypothesized prediction from the researchers who developed the instrument, (Kreutz, et al. 2008), there was no significant difference between women ($M = .66$) and men ($M = .65$) for Music-Systematizing. The overall means and *SDs* for Music-Empathizing (.63; .53) and for Music-Systematizing (.64; .38) on a -3 to 3 scale and the high degrees of kurtosis suggest that my participants were fairly homogenous on these scales. Only 8 participants had negative Music-Empathizing scores, none of which were less than -1, and only 2 participants had negative Music-Systematizing scores (the lowest of which was -.40). Music-Empathizing and Music-Systematizing were also significantly positively correlated ($r = .39$, $p = .001$), which was unexpected.

Range and Differentiation of Emotional Experience

The sample mean for this scale was 3.44, median = 3.60, *SD* = .66. The distribution was positively skewed, and 56 (73.7%) of the participants’ scores were greater than 3.0 (the mid-point response). Three participants’ scores were more than two standard deviations lower than the mean. Overall, my sample population reported a

relatively large range and differentiation of emotional experience. Figure 4.3 illustrates the frequency distribution of scores on this scale.

Figure 4.3

Tellegen Absorption Scale

Scores on this item were calculated using the sum of the responses, as was done by the developers of the scale. On a 1-5 scale with 12 items, this meant the possible range of scores was 12 to 60. The overall mean was 45.2, with a median of 46 and *SD* of 9.57. This scale was also positively skewed, but had a large range of scores (46). The participant with the lowest score on this scale (14) might be considered an outlier since his score is more than 3 standard deviations lower than the mean, but because he also had the lowest Liberalism score, lowest Openness to Experience score, second highest Conscientiousness score, and highest MP Factor 1 (Musical and Social Conservatism) score (also more than 3 standard deviations from the mean), we should assume that this participant did not answer this scale differently than he did others. Instead, he represents an example of an extremely conservative musician. Overall, my participants tended to

report high levels of absorption. Figure 4.4 displays the frequency distribution of scores on this scale.

Figure 4.4

Musician Type Self-Categorization

The data from this scale resulted in a relatively flat distribution, with the largest difference in type frequency between Type 2 (8 or 10.5%) and Type 5 (17 or 22.4%). The mean Type score was 4.26 (a value that doesn't actually occur in the data), median = 5 and $SD = 1.92$. There were almost as many Type 1s and 2s (17) as there were Type 6s and 7s (22), but Type 5 was by far the most common choice. Each prototypical musician (who were to represent to poles on opposite ends of a continuum) had six characteristics: 1) birthplace / K-12 location, 2) presence of old-time music in the family, 3) method of learning to play, 4) diversity of repertoire, 5) versatility of playing style, and 6) role he/she plays in the transmission of tradition. The first characteristic can be objectively determined and requires no interpretation from the participant. The next three characteristics (2, 3 & 4) also could be determined with a high degree of objectivity, though there seems to be more potential here for semantic distinctions (e.g., what he/she

thinks “old-time” music is). The last two characteristics are almost totally subjective and depend on a high degree of reflexivity in the musician. Also, someone might think their playing style is based on a certain musician (e.g., they attempt to channel Tommy Jarrell because Tommy was their mentor) but also works well for playing a variety of different music with different people.

The last characteristic, especially, depends on that musician’s definition of “tradition.” A musician with outsider musicians as parents, who grew up going to fiddler’s conventions and maybe even grew up in Appalachia, could certainly argue that she is continuing a “tradition” that she was born into. Likewise, an insider musician by every other metric could feel that because he made the choice to get into old-time music as an adult, despite his peers and immediate family having little or no interest in it, and because his life is so different from the lives of the parent tradition musicians, that he is joining *someone else’s* tradition. Because this wasn’t a mathematical determination of checking off characteristics and coming to a total, participants may have decided that certain characteristics were more or less important than others and adjusted their number accordingly. The musicians selected for an interview were asked about the factors that led to their choice on this item, and these factors will be discussed in the interview section. Table 4.16 provides the frequency distribution for this scale, and Figure 4.5 displays a histogram of this same data.

Table 4.16

*Distribution of Sample Population:
Self-Reported Musician Type*

Type	Frequency	Percent
1	9	11.8
2	8	10.5
3	9	11.8
4	11	14.5
5	17	22.4
6	11	14.5
7	11	14.5

Figure 4.5

Distribution of Sample Population: Self-Rated Musician Type

Eight musicians, despite there being no instruction to do so, felt it necessary to explain their choice on this scale – some so much that they attached an additional page to their survey packet to do so. This was obviously a contentious issue, and the various types represented in these explanations (four Type 3s and one each of Types 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7) represent the full spectrum of this scale. The lone Type 7 musician who annotated her score wrote simply: “Maybe an 11!”, and the sole Type 4 musician wrote: “This is a

hard one.” But most of these explanations were much longer. One musician, who rated himself a 1, wrote:

[The example characteristics under Type 1] certainly applies to me in my role as an old-time musician, but I don’t like to limit myself to that singular role. This isn’t 1850 in the backwoods, so no one can be outside the influence of modern media. These hobo kids & etc. running around in depression-era clothes are no different than Civil War reenactors. The same applies to any musician today. One can pretend to be “authentic” to a musical genre/era, but in the end it is simply a lie. We are who we are and are the product of what we are around, either by choice or not.

Although not written out on the survey, the concept of authenticity colored many of these explanations. In this case, it appears as a disdain for those who this musician feels are pretending to be something they are not. By this musician’s description, he would argue that a Civil War reenactor and the “hobo kids... running around in depression-era clothes,” who we can assume are certain old-time musicians, are equally inauthentic. The difference is that the Civil War reenactor doesn’t expect others to believe that he is actually a Civil War soldier. Also interesting in this description is that this insider musician brackets his musician type to old-time music, noting that he doesn’t like to “limit [him]self to that singular role.” Another of my survey participants, also a young insider from Surry County, has played electric bass and has sung for years in pop-punk bands, some of which have had some commercial success. Watching one of their music videos, one would have no visual or auditory clues that this musician can easily code-switch into a Type 1 insider old-time and bluegrass musician with family credentials linking him to the most well-known traditional Round Peak string band.

Another musician (Type 3), originally from Florida but who now lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, struggled with meeting some criteria from both type examples and wrote:

This is difficult because I learned most of my music from visiting older musicians and listening to 78 recordings from the '20s and field recordings. I've gone to fiddlers conventions since 1971. Every one of my relatives is from Georgia, even though we were raised in south Florida. I had a very Southern upbringing. I did go to Augusta to learn more banjo in 1974 and earlier had some banjo lessons. I have played music with older and younger traditional musicians throughout my life.

In this description, this musician seems to be attempting to counteract his childhood in southern Florida by invoking family connections to the rural (?) South, noting that he had a "very Southern upbringing," and that he has visited and played music with traditional musicians. A fellow Type 3 wrote: "Born in Appalachia. Learned from old peeps in mountains during college. Got serious in NYC." Yet another Type 3 was not born and raised in the mountains but considers Appalachia to be his spiritual home and felt that his musical choices, time spent in the area, and interaction with older Appalachian natives moved him closer to the prototypical traditional musician:

This is hard to answer. I wasn't born or raised in the area, but moved there when I was 17 and learned from a lot of older musicians. While I like to play stuff from all over, most of my repertoire is from SW VA, NW NC and NE TN. I am not on the inside but feel a part of that community to the extent I can. Being raised in a bunch of places I hated, Appalachia feels like my home now, but I recognize that is not the same as being born and raised in it.

Another musician (Type 5), approached this question as a matter of "authentic personae," which can be contrasted with the musician above who mentioned Civil War reenactors:

Being human involves adopting different personae for different situations/purposes. "Authentic" human beings adopt "authentic" personae, meaning they are true to themselves (and hopefully to others) in each sphere of their life. I have many passions/pursuits and strive to remain true to myself/others in each, whether teaching; writing poetry; kayaking; inline skating; playing lacrosse, hockey, football, baseball (all in the past now); cycling; hiking/backpacking; editing manuscripts; playing fiddle or guitar; singing; being a father, grandfather, brother, partner, ex-husband, etc. I hope I'm correct in observing that my persona as an old-time musician has evolved "authentically" over these many decades of passion for trad. Appalachian music.

Some passionate insiders might accuse this musician of using rhetorical trickery to somehow change the significance of “authenticity” so that anybody, so long as they decide themselves to be, can be “authentic” in any domain, since this is a matter of “different personae for different situations.” Had this musician felt that his proper old-time personae was to dress and act like a moonshiner/fiddler from the depression era, he would be acting in a manner true to himself (i.e., “authentic” by his own definition). However, the Type 1 musician from the beginning of this section also claims to have authentic personae in that he seems to easily move between different domains, some where he probably feels he is more “authentic” than in others, or might say that one can grow into being authentic in what he or she is doing.

It is especially in responses like these that the music psychologist in me wants to dismiss the rhetoric of these musicians’ various musical identities as irrelevant to the deeper issue, which is to what degree their affective response to musical sound and to making live music with others is consistent across these different styles of music and settings (some far removed from the old-time jam experience), to what degree they are similar to others in their cultural subgroups, and what about their brains might explain these responses. Yet the ethnomusicologist in me wants to consider the reasons that a musician provides for why in one particular musical domain (e.g., old-time music) he or she might be operating under a different set of rules when it comes to deriving meaning from the music. That is, even if we found experimental evidence that an insider musician (although himself unaware of this) especially enjoyed I-IV harmonic motion across multiple musical domains, when that musician is playing “Fortune,” which he learned from the playing of his father and uncles, in the parking lot at Galax on Saturday night

with other musicians whom he considers to be friends and fellow insiders, and they have attracted a large crowd, some of whom spontaneously start to dance, and he overhears an onlooker say that he fiddles “just like his daddy used to,” that the particular harmonic motion which that musician tends to enjoy in the music he listens to over the radio (for example) is likely to have only a slight bearing on that musician’s experience during the playing of “Fortune” in the context above.

Additional Data / Participant Comments

In addition to the above comments, my participants also commented on both the wording of the items and to elaborate or explain their responses to the times. Participants commented on the unclear nature of some scale items (not from any I created), especially from the Music-Empathizing-Systematizing scale. Participants’ comments were helpful in other ways. For example, next to the response line for one of the Absorption questions (“When listening to powerful music I sometimes feel as if I am being lifted into the air”) one musician wrote: “Many years ago West Virginia fiddler Ernie Carpenter said that listening to another famous WV fiddler, Jack McElwain, made him feel like he was ‘riding an elevator’,” suggesting that Ernie might have scored high on some of my survey items related to musical affect and emotionality. One musician also included with his survey a printed list with short biographies of 23 traditional musicians whom he was related to.

The physical reactions section also generated several participant comments, some in jest but some sincere. Tears, Crying prompted one participant to write: “Only when it’s bad!” and another to write: “More frequently, during particularly focused playing sessions, time slows down, seemingly expanding the space between the beats, creating an

almost surreal sensation, aural chronostasis (I've been told), at which point the music becomes magical. New tunes are learned quickly and old ones played perfectly, IMHO.” Next to the response to the Sensation of Warmth choice, another musician wrote: “from drinking while playing,” and another musician added a 10th physical response (“Inadvertent drooling while playing”) and gave his response: “often.”

Statistical Analyses

Principal Component Analysis of 23-Item Musical Primacy Scale

“Musical Primacy,” because it is a complex, multi-faceted construct that is impossible to measure directly, is what statisticians call a “latent” variable. We might, however, be able to measure various facets of musical primacy, which is what my 23 items were intended to do. Principal component analysis (PCA) helps illustrate to what degree these items are related or collinear – that is, to what degree different scale items might be measuring the same thing – and it helps reduce the size of this set of data by “explaining the maximum amount of common variance using the smallest number of explanatory constructs” (Field 2009, 629).

A principal component analysis was performed on the 23 items of the scale with oblique rotation (oblimin). After the first analysis, three items with no correlations greater than .3 on the correlation matrix (Q7, Q9, Q11) were removed. The mean Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was “mediocre,” (Field 2009, 647) $KMO = .62$.⁷⁰ This value was only .38 for Q20, so it was removed and the analysis run again. On this subsequent analysis, Q23’s KMO value was .45, so it too was removed. Performing these

⁷⁰ Principal Component Analysis is typically performed on very large data sets.

operations lowered the mean KMO to .58 but ensured that all variables had a score above .5. Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi^2(153) = 251.77, p < .001$, indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. Seven factors⁷¹ with eigenvalues greater than 1, in combination, explained 65.7% of the variance. The scree plot showed an inflection that would justify retaining seven factors, though there was another inflection that would justify retaining just five factors. However, my sample set did not meet all of Kaiser's criteria for determining the number of factors. Although I did have less than 30 variables, my sample size ($N = 76$) was far less than the 250 recommended for Kaiser's criteria, and my resulting communalities (after extraction) were not all greater than 0.7 (Field 2009, 641). Following the recommendations of Field, I performed a parallel analysis using permutations of my raw data set, which confirmed seven as an appropriate number of factors to retain. Table 4.17 shows the factor loadings after rotation.

Interpreting why items grouped onto the same factor was difficult due to the nature of the data I collected. Looking at the rotated pattern matrix, some factors have obvious item-loadings in that the items seem to be related, while others, lacking a theoretical reason for clustering, might have been grouped instead due to the similarity in score distribution within the item. The items that loaded on factor 1 (Q16, Q5, Q14, Q12, Q13) suggest that this represents a preference for playing familiar music with familiar people and a tendency to lack formal training in music theory (or at least, don't apply it to old-time music) – two seemingly separate (but related) constructs. The items that loaded on factor 2 (Q2, Q4, Q14, Q21) suggest that this represents a mode of listening that attends to structural features of tunes, which in turn enables affect to come from those

⁷¹ I will be using "factors" in this section, but technically these would be considered "components"

structural features. Q14's loading onto this factor means that this factor also involves enjoying playing with strangers provided the music is good. Factor 3's items (Q6, Q3, Q10, Q21) all have to do with tune preferences, but, conceptually, I would not have predicted that questions 6, 10, and 21 (which were significantly positively correlated with one another) would have been related to Q3. But, in fact, Q3 and Q6 had a moderate positive correlation ($r = .34, p = .001$) – stronger than the relationship between Q3 and any other question. Q3 was not significantly correlated with questions 10 or 21.

Factor 4's items (Q18, Q19) are also difficult to reconcile. There might be a relationship between someone having learned old-time music in more formal instructional settings and preferring to have an audience while playing because those who put in the effort required of formal instruction enjoy showing off their hard work or receiving public recognition of their attention to detail, but it has been my experience that those who prefer playing for dancers are usually those who learned in a more casual, naturalistic manner (i.e., without attending workshops, watching videos, etc). While I could certainly be wrong about this, it is worth pointing out that the relationship between these items is not due only to the factor analysis and rotation; even before these operations they still had a significant weak/moderate positive correlation ($r = .31, p = .003$).

Factor 5's items (Q15, Q1, Q8) all reflect privileging socializing and the camaraderie aspect of musical gatherings over high-caliber musicianship. Factor 6's items (Q22, Q12, Q14) represent an enjoyment of musical novelty (unexpected chords or new tunes) and an openness to playing with unfamiliar people. Factor 7's items (Q3, Q21, Q17, Q13) represent a privileging of extra-musical features over musical features.

Someone with high scores on factor 7 would: 1) like tunes primarily for extra-musical associations, 2) not feel emotions strongly due to chord movement, 3) not like “weird” tunes, and 4) would refer to chords by name rather than by harmonic position.

Testing the internal consistency (reliability) of factors requires determining if the scores from randomly selected items from that factor are consistent with mean score on that factor. High reliability does not necessarily mean that the factor items are measuring the same underlying construct (unidimensionality), but it does indicate that the items are similar enough that they contribute evenly to the mean score on the factor. Alpha scores of .7 or higher are usually considered good in most psychological research, though lower scores are usually expected with social science data (Field 2009, 680). Two factors showed (almost) good reliability: Factor 1, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .64$; and Factor 5, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .63$. Factors 2,3, and 7 had Cronbach’s α of .52, .52, and .56, respectively. Factors 4 and 6 were lower still at .45 and .43, respectively.

Table 4.17

Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis for the MP Scale (Seven-Factor)

Q#	MP Item Description	Rotated Factor Loadings						
		F 1	F 2	F 3	F 4	F 5	F 6	F 7
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	.76						
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	.74						
2	Can identify favorite parts or structural features of favorite tunes		.76					
4	Like favorite tunes mainly due to their musical structure		.76					
14	Enjoy playing w/ strangers (if music is good)	-.45	.54				.40	
6	Each old-time tune has a distinct emotional character			.79				
3	Like favorite tunes mainly due to extra-musical factors			.63				.43
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power			.56				
19	Rather play for others than for myself. Enjoy having audience				.80			
18	Majority of skill and repertoire from lessons and/or videos				.76			
15	Value human interaction more than high-quality musicianship					.78		
1	Play in jam sessions for the music rather than the company					-.76		
8	Ideal jam is small, with talented musicians taking the music seriously					-.69		
22	Enjoy unexpected chords that still "work" for the tune					.78		
12	Prefer to play tunes I already know	.45				-.68		
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn							.78
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	.46						.67
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord		.41	.51				-.53
Eigenvalues		2.08	1.89	1.75	1.50	1.95	1.50	1.82
α		.64	.52	.52	.45	.63	.43	.56

Note: Factor loadings under .40 are suppressed.

One way to understand this variance is that alpha scores tend to decrease as the number of items decrease (e.g., Factor 1 had 5 items; Factor 4 had only 2), but this is not a hard and fast rule. Another issue affecting reliability is the corrected item-total correlations, which is the correlation between each item and the total score for that factor. Items with correlations smaller than .3 are often dropped, since it would indicate that the variance in the item is not very much related to the variance in the factor score. Following this recommendation, Q21 would be removed from all three factors it loaded on to, Q22 would be stricken, as would Q3. Q14's item-total correlation was less than .3 on Factor 6 but was greater than .3 on factors 1 and 2.

Because the items in different factors seemed to be theoretically related to one another and also had (albeit weak) inter-factor correlations in the directions that I would have hypothesized, and because of the seven items with item-total correlations less than .3, I ran the analysis again and forced SPSS to use only five factors, which is the other possible number of factors suggested by the scree plot. In this case, factors which seems to be incongruous in the previous seven-factor analysis now loaded onto factors in a way that suggested a clearer theoretical basis. In this five-factor model, factor 1 (Q16, Q5, Q12, Q13, Q17, Q14) represents musical and social conservatism (i.e., preference for the familiar) and a low level of formal musical training. Factor 2 (Q1, Q15, Q8, Q2, Q4) represents a preference for jam situations which privilege musical competence over socializing and both an ability to identify structural features of tunes and a tendency to experience affect due to those structures. Factor 3 (Q6, Q10, Q21, Q3) represents being affected by musical structure, including chord changes, and identifying a high degree of variance in the emotional character of tunes. Factor 4 (Q17, Q18, Q19, Q3) represents a

preference for playing for others, liking tunes primarily for their extra-musical associations, having learned via more formal methods, and musical conservatism. Factor 5 (Q17, Q2, Q21, Q4, Q22, Q14) overlaps with other factors but generally reflects affect due to musical structure, and a liberal attitude toward music-making. Table 4.18 displays the loadings for this five-factor version.

Factor 1 had (almost) acceptable reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = .68$; Factor 2 was slightly lower, Cronbach's $\alpha = .63$; Factor 3 lower still, Cronbach's $\alpha = .52$; Factor 4 had low reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = .45$; and Factor 5 was slightly higher, Cronbach's $\alpha = .49$. However, the item-total correlations lower than .3 among these factors would mean dropping all four items on Factor 4, two items on Factor 3, four items on Factor 5, and one item on Factor 2.

Because the reliability scores are so low for most of the factors, even in the five-factor model, and because the item-total correlations suggest item removals that would essentially reduce the five factors to two, only the first two factors' scores were retained for use in other statistical analyses. Factor 1 from the five-factor model contained questions 16, 5, 12, 13, 17, and 14; Factor 1 from the seven-factor model contained questions 16, 5, 12, 13, and 14 – a significant overlap. Likewise, the three items from factor 5 of the 7-factor model, which had the second highest eigenvalue and reliability score, loaded onto Factor 2 of the five-factor model (with the addition of two additional items). This represents a good compromise for choosing which factors might prove useful in comparing various sub-populations via *t*-tests and for use in correlations.

Table 4.18

Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis for the Musical Primacy Questionnaire (Five-Factor)

Q#	MP Item Description	Rotated Factor Loadings				
		F 1	F 2	F 3	F 4	F 5
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	.73				
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	.66				
12	Prefer to play tunes I already know	.63				
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	.61				
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	.50			.45	-.43
1	Play in jam sessions for the music rather than the company		.78			
15	Value human interaction more than high-quality musicianship		-.65			
8	Ideal jam is small, with talented musicians taking the music seriously		.62			
2	Can identify favorite parts or structural features of favorite tunes		.58			.41
6	Each old-time tune has a distinct emotional character			.77		
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power			.65		
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord			.59		.45
18	Majority of skill and repertoire from lessons and/or videos				.68	
19	Rather play for others than for myself. Enjoy having audience				.62	
3	Like favorite tunes mainly due to extra-musical factors			.49	.51	
4	Like favorite tunes mainly due to their musical structure		.43			.59
22	Enjoy unexpected chords that still "work" for the tune					.57
14	Enjoy playing with strangers (if the music is good)	-.43				.45
Eigenvalues		2.45	2.18	1.80	1.70	1.70
α		0.68	0.63	0.52	0.45	0.49

Note: Factor loadings under .40 are suppressed.

MP Item Correlations

The three tables below display the 45 statistically significant correlations ($r \geq .30$) that resulted between MP items and personality items, including Big Five domains, facets, and other scales. Table 4.19 is sorted by correlation strength, Table 4.20 is sorted alphabetically by Music Primacy [MP] item, and Table 4.21 is sorted by alphabetically by personality item. When interpreting this data, remember that some items (e.g., Liberalism) are facets, or one component, of a larger domain. It is not surprising that in most cases, when an MP item is strongly correlated with a Big Five facet, it will also be correlated with the domain that contains that facet.

Table 4.19

Correlations Between MP Scale Items and Personality Items by Strength

Q #	MP Item Description	Personality Item	<i>r</i>
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Absorption	.49
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Openness to Exp.	-.48
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Absorption	-.47
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Openness to Exp.	-.47
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Openness to Exp.	.45
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Adventurousness	-.45
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Adventurousness	-.44
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Openness to Exp.	-.43
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power	Emotionality	.41
3	Like favorite tunes mainly due to extra-musical factors	Emotionality	.41
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Adventurousness	.39
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Imagination	.38
9	There are "good" and "bad" tunes, from a musical standpoint	Self-Efficacy	.38
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced	Achievement-Striving	.37
6	Each old-time tune has a distinct emotional character	Achievement-Striving	.36
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Liberalism	-.36
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Liberalism	-.36
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	Adventurousness	-.36
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Achievement-Striving	.36
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Absorption	.35

Q #	MP Item Description	Personality Item	r
12	Prefer to play tunes I already know	Absorption	-.35
2	Can identify favorite parts or structural features of favorite tunes	Achievement-Striving	.34
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Physical Reactions	-.34
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Emotionality	.34
14	Enjoy playing w/ strangers (if music is good)	Imagination	.34
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power	RDEES	.34
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	Openness to Exp.	-.33
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Liberalism	-.33
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Imagination	.32
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Adventurousness	-.32
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced	RDEES	.32
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Emotionality	.32
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Imagination	.31
14	Enjoy playing w/ strangers (if music is good)	Absorption	.31
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns	Adventurousness	.31
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Intellect	-.31
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	Liberalism	-.30
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Imagination	.30
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power	Self-Discipline	.30
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns	Absorption	.30
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Artistic Interests	.30
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced	Extraversion	.30
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns	Openness to Exp.	.30
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	RDEES	.30
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Cautiousness	-.30

Note. Correlations greater than $\pm .30$ are significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed), and correlations $\pm .40$ are significant at $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Table 4.20

Correlations Between MP Scale Items and Personality Items by MP Item

Q #	MP Item Description	Personality Item	r
2	Can identify favorite parts or structural features of favorite tunes	Achievement-Striving	.34
3	Like favorite tunes mainly due to extra-musical factors	Emotionality	.41
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	Adventurousness	-.36
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	Liberalism	-.30
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	Openness to Exp.	-.33
6	Each old-time tune has a distinct emotional character	Achievement-Striving	.36
9	There are "good" and "bad" tunes, from a musical standpoint	Self-Efficacy	.38

Q #	MP Item Description	Personality Item	r
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power	Emotionality	.41
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power	RDEES	.34
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power	Self-Discipline	.30
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced	Achievement-Striving	.37
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced	Extraversion	.30
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced	RDEES	.32
12	Prefer to play tunes I already know	Absorption	-.35
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Adventurousness	-.32
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Intellect	-.31
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Liberalism	-.36
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Openness to Exp.	-.43
14	Enjoy playing w/ strangers (if music is good)	Absorption	.31
14	Enjoy playing w/ strangers (if music is good)	Imagination	.34
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Adventurousness	-.45
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Imagination	.32
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Liberalism	-.36
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Openness to Exp.	-.47
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Absorption	-.47
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Adventurousness	-.44
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Artistic Interests	.30
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Imagination	.30
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Liberalism	-.33
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Openness to Exp.	-.48
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Physical Reactions	-.34
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	RDEES	.30
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns	Absorption	.30
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns	Adventurousness	.31
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns	Openness to Exp.	.30
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Absorption	.49
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Achievement-Striving	.36
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Emotionality	.34
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Imagination	.31
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Absorption	.35
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Adventurousness	.39
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Cautiousness	-.30
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Emotionality	.32
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Imagination	.38
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Openness to Exp.	.45

Note. Correlations greater than $\pm .30$ are significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed), and correlations $\pm .40$ are significant at $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Table 4.21

Correlations Between MP Scale Items and Personality Items by Personality Item

Q #	MP Item Description	Personality Item	r
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Absorption	.49
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Absorption	-.47
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Absorption	.35
12	Prefer to play tunes I already know	Absorption	-.35
14	Enjoy playing w/ strangers (if music is good)	Absorption	.31
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns	Absorption	.30
2	Can identify favorite parts or structural features of favorite tunes	Achievement-Striving	.34
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced	Achievement-Striving	.37
6	Each old-time tune has a distinct emotional character	Achievement-Striving	.36
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Achievement-Striving	.36
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Adventurousness	-.45
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Adventurousness	-.44
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Adventurousness	.39
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	Adventurousness	-.36
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Adventurousness	-.32
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns	Adventurousness	.31
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Artistic Interests	.30
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Cautiousness	-.30
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power	Emotionality	.41
3	Like favorite tunes mainly due to extra-musical factors	Emotionality	.41
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Emotionality	.34
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Emotionality	.32
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced	Extraversion	.30
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Imagination	.38
14	Enjoy playing w/ strangers (if music is good)	Imagination	.34
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Imagination	.32
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord	Imagination	.31
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Imagination	.30
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Intellect	-.31
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Liberalism	-.36
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Liberalism	-.36
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Liberalism	-.33
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	Liberalism	-.30
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Openness to Exp.	-.48
16	Prefer to play w/ familiar people who are from where I'm from	Openness to Exp.	-.47

Q #	MP Item Description	Personality Item	<i>r</i>
23	Like "crooked" or rare tunes more than standard/popular tunes	Openness to Exp.	.45
13	Refer to chords by name instead of by number	Openness to Exp.	-.43
5	Do not have strong grasp of music theory	Openness to Exp.	-.33
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns	Openness to Exp.	.30
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	Physical Reactions	-.34
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power	RDEES	.34
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced	RDEES	.32
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn	RDEES	.30
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power	Self-Discipline	.30
9	There are "good" and "bad" tunes, from a musical standpoint	Self-Efficacy	.38

Note. Correlations greater than $\pm .30$ are significant at $p < .01$ (2-tailed), and correlations $\pm .40$ are significant at $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Generally, these relationships make theoretical sense, with the musical items aligning directly with the constructs of the personality items. For example, the more often people reported liking a tune because of the emotional response it provoked, the higher on Emotionality they were, $r(73) = .414, p < .001$, and the higher a score they had on the Range and Differentiation of Emotional Experience Scale, $r(74) = .343, p = .002$. One straightforward way to interpret this relationship is that those individuals who like tunes because of how tunes make them feel emotionally are, not surprisingly, also more sensitive to emotional experience (or at least claim to be). Similarly, musicians who agreed that old-time tunes could be described in more nuanced emotional terms than simply happy or sad also scored higher on the RDEES, $r(74) = .316, p = .005$.

But in some cases, the relationship is better explained by some identifiable third variable (i.e., a "confound"). For example, being open to experience and referring to chords by number instead of by name (Q13) are related (the 8th strongest correlation out of 45) probably because first, the outsiders who become interested in something like Appalachian old-time music, or any non-mainstream music, are likely high in Openness.

Interest in old-time music and other exotic musics (from the perspective of someone *not* raised with the music) requires intellectual curiosity, non-conformity, and a preference of novelty over familiarity – all characteristics of open people. Second, these outsiders also tend to have the sort of formal music training or informal musical experience from playing many other forms of music that would require them to be proficient in many more keys than are typically used in old-time music and to be able to talk about commonalities across tunes (e.g., “Is this just one and four in the chorus?”) In this sense, referring to chords by number is simply a more efficient way of communicating, but it is not directly related to the construct of Openness to Experience.

Absorption and Openness to Experience were the two personality items with the highest number (six each) of correlations stronger than .30 with the MP items, and this is indicative of the general trend of this data set: these two items are likely to be good predictors of what one’s musical approach and response will be. The overlap in their correlations with MP items can be partially explained by the strong correlation of Absorption with Openness to Experience, $r(73) = .68, p < .001$. Although Openness and its facets represented 23 (50%) of the 46 correlations in the tables below, and facets of Conscientiousness represented 11 of the correlations, other Big Five domains also showed relationships with the MP items, although not as strongly. There were weak but statistically significant associations between Extraversion and Q11, $r(73) = .30, p < .01$; Q21, $r(73) = .27, p < .05$; and Q7, $r(73) = -.27, p < .05$; between Agreeableness and Q21, $r(73) = .29, p = .01$; Q1, $r(73) = -.25, p < .05$; and Q11, $r(73) = .24, p < .05$; and between Neuroticism and Q5, $r(73) = .26, p < .05$. Conscientiousness also showed weak but

statistically significant associations with Q6, $r(73) = .24, p < .05$; Q11, $r(73) = .24, p < .05$; and Q2, $r(73) = .23, p < .05$.

Other interesting associations between particular MP items and personality items illustrate particularly polarizing issues among my participants. For example, Q17 (not liking “weird” tunes) was negatively and statistically significantly correlated with all six facets of Openness. While “weird” is a semantic distinction and could be related to musical structure (e.g., irregular meter), I would hypothesize that it has more to do with unfamiliarity for my sample population. Several traditional tunes associated with the Round Peak area in Surry County, North Carolina are irregular (e.g., “Joke on the Puppy”) or have a melodic structure that can be confusing (e.g., “Backstep Cindy”), but because they were in the repertoire of local traditional musicians and have been heard by contemporary insider musicians, they are probably “familiar” rather than “weird.” It is also probable that having the *attitude* that any old-time tune could be “weird” in a negative sense (i.e., being “weird” meant they were *not* interested in learning it), is what is so strongly associated with Openness and its facets.

The relationships that seem to make the least theoretical sense are those between various facets of Conscientiousness (e.g., Self-Efficacy, Achievement-Striving, Self-Discipline) and MP items related to a strong emotional response to old-time music. In these cases, these relationships might be better explained by the similarity in distributions between these items rather than any relationship between the constructs the items represent. Adventurousness is an example of a personality item for which some of its relationships with musical factors make theoretical sense (e.g., a positive correlation with enjoying the challenge of learning new tunes in jams) and some of its relationships are

obviously due to confounds (e.g., a positive correlation with having a strong grasp of music theory).

Other interesting relationships emerged when examining the link between physical responses to old-time music and scores on the MP scale. Table 4.22 displays the statistically significant correlations between those items. Only 10 of these correlations were stronger than .30, but because this is an exploratory analysis, all significant correlations (regardless of strength) were included in the table. Goosebumps and Lump in Throat or Stomach tied for the most correlations with six each, though only two of these overlapped. The strongest correlation, Goosebumps and Q22 (enjoy unexpected chords that still “work” for the tune) aligns with previous studies (e.g., Sloboda 1991) linking violation of musical expectation to a sort of “frisson” response. The only significant negative correlations were with Q17 (“weird” tunes). All four of this MP item’s correlations with physical responses were negative. The MP item with the highest number of correlations (five) was Q21 (tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord).

This table seems to indicate that separate physical responses occur due to different affective qualities of the music. For example, the relationships between Q3 (liking tunes mainly for extra-musical factors) and Tears, Crying and Lump in Throat or Stomach, in contrast to those responses (Shiver, Chills and Goosebumps) correlated with Q4 (liking tunes mainly for musical factors, could possibly be an indicator that *what* in or about the music is causing those responses is processed differently in the brain. Perhaps, in the case of my sample population, tears and a lump in the throat or stomach are responses more associated with memories, people, or things the music makes a musician think about

(e.g., a deceased relative who used to play that tune), and shivers and goosebumps are instead the organism's response to violation of musical expectation and other things to do with what is taking place musically in the tune.

Other Correlations

Frequency of physical responses to old-time music was also significantly correlated with other scale items. Table 4.23 illustrates these relationships. Tears, Crying did not result in any significant correlations with other items, but Lump in Throat or Stomach resulted in seven significant correlations (all positive except for the correlation with Self-Rated Type), and Absorption was positively correlated with six physical responses. The strongest correlation in this set was between Music-Empathizing and Goosebumps ($r = .48, p < .001$). In contrast to other research, although there was a significant positive correlation between Shivers, Chills and Goosebumps (as they are often thought of as the same type of response) ($r = .57, p < .001$) there were no significant correlations between Openness to Experience or any of its facets and Shivers, Chills or Goosebumps in my sample. Interestingly, Shivers, Chills and Goosebumps were both positively correlated with Music-Empathizing, which is not what we might expect given that those two responses seem to be linked to particular musical devices, while Music-Empathizing concerns more extra-musical factors.

Table 4.24 illustrates significant correlations between Self-Rated Musician Type and other items. Aligning with my general hypothesis, the closer to the insider prototype a musician rated him- or herself, the more likely he or she was to prefer playing with familiar people, to call certain tunes "weird" in a negative sense, to refer to chords by letter rather than by Roman numeral, and to like their favorite tunes mainly due to extra-

musical factors. Similarly, the closer to the outsider prototype a musician rated him-or herself, the more likely he or she was to be higher in Liberalism, to enjoy the challenge of learning new tunes, to like “crooked” or rare tunes more than standards, to be higher in Adventurousness, and to be higher in Openness to Experience. Table 4.25 illustrates significant correlations between MP Factor 1 (Musical and Social Conservatism) and other items. The more musically and socially conservative a musician was, the more likely he or she was to score low on Openness to Experience, Adventure-Seeking, Liberalism, Imagination, Absorption, Intellect, Education Level, Artistic Interests, and to have rated themselves as closer to the insider Self-Rated Musician Type. All of these correlations were also in line with my hypotheses, although it is curious why the *RDEES* scores did not correlate significantly with MP Factor 1. Finally, Table 4.26 illustrates correlations between MP Scale items and education level. As the musician’s education levels rose they were more likely to refer to chords by Roman numeral, to disagree that there are “good” and “bad” old-time tunes, to have learned primarily via lessons or videos, and to agree that the emotional character of old-time tunes is more nuanced than “happy,” “sad,” and “spooky.”

Table 4.22
Statistically Significant Correlations Between MP Scale Items and Physical Responses

Q#	MP Item Desc.	Tears, Crying	Shivers, Chills	Goose- bumps	Ting- ling	Sens. of Warmth	Change in Breathing Rate	Lump In Throat or Stomach ness
3	Like favorite tunes mainly due to extra-musical factors	.26*						.37***
4	Like favorite tunes mainly due to extra-musical factors			.24*	.27*			
6	Each old-time tune has a distinct emotional character	.25*	.23*	.30**				.30**
9	There are "good" and "bad" tunes, from a musical standpoint							.32***
10	Favorite tunes have musical structure that has emotional power		.24*					.29**
11	Emotional character of tunes is complex and nuanced							.28*
17	Sometimes hear "weird" tunes that I don't like or want to learn		-.23*	-.24*		-.30**	-.34**	.27*
20	Enjoy challenge of learning new melodies or chord patterns					.23*		
21	Tend to feel emotions strongly when tunes go to a certain chord		.25*	.30**	.28*	.31**		.24*
22	Enjoy unexpected chords that still "work" for the tune		.28*	.45***				
23	Tend to like "crooked" / rare tunes more than standards			.32**	.23*		.25*	.27*

Note. *, $p \leq .05$; **, $p \leq .01$; ***, $p \leq .001$

Table 4.23
Correlations Between Physical Responses and Other Items

Item	Shivers, Chills	Goose- bumps	Tingling	Sens. of Warmth	Change in Breathing Rate	Change in Chest Pressure	Lump In Throat or Stomach	Dizziness
Imagination								.30
Emotionality							.31	
Absorption	.30		.37	.38	.43	.34	.33	
RDEES					.44	.38	.35	.34
Self-Rated Type							-.31	
# of Other Genres					.41			
Music- Empathizing	.41	.48	.37				.39	
Music- Systematizing		.36				.36		
Achievement- Striving							.32	
Agreeableness							.31	

Note. Correlations with $r < .30$ are suppressed. Correlations greater than .30 are significant at the .01 level. Correlations greater than .37 are significant at the .001 level.

Table 4.24

Correlations Between Self-Rated Type and Other Items

Other Item	<i>r</i>
Q16 (Prefer to Play w/ Familiar People)	-.43***
Q17 (Sometimes Hear "Weird" Tunes I Don't Like)	-.42***
Liberalism	.41***
Q13 (Refer to Chords by Name)	-.39***
Q20 (Enjoy Challenge of Learning New Tunes)	.36***
Q23 (Like "Crooked" or Rare Tunes More Than Standards)	.35**
Q3 (Like Favorite Tunes Mainly due to Extra-Musical Factors)	-.33**
Adventurousness	.29*
Openness to Experience	.29*

*Note.**, $p \leq .05$; **, $p \leq .01$; ***, $p \leq .001$

Table 4.25

Correlations Between MP Factor 1 (Musical & Social Conservatism) and Other Items

Other Item	<i>r</i>
Openness to Experience	-.56***
Adventure-Seeking	-.49***
Type	-.43***
Liberalism	-.42***
Imagination	-.38**
Absorption	-.36**
Intellect	-.32**
Education Level	-.26*
Artistic Interests	-.26*

*Note.**, $p \leq .05$; **, $p \leq .01$; ***, $p \leq .001$

Table 4.26
Correlations between MP Scale Items and Education Level

MP Item	<i>r</i>
Q13 (Refer to Chords by Name)	-.41***
Q9 (There are "Good" and "Bad" Old-Time Tunes)	-.26*
Q18 (Most Skill and Repertoire from Lessons, Videos)	-.25*
Q11 (Emotional Character of Old-Time Tunes is Nuanced)	.23*

*Note:**, $p \leq .05$; **, $p \leq .01$; ***, $p \leq .001$

t-Tests

In order to determine which items differentiate my population, a series of independent samples *t*-tests were conducted using multiple grouping variables, including gender, a history of old-time music in the family, whether or not a musician grew up in Appalachia, self-rated musician type, and type of favorite tunes.⁷⁴

The grouping variable which revealed the largest number of statistically-significant differences in my sample population was whether or not the musician had family elders who also played old-time music. Table 4.27 displays the results of this test. This resulted in differences across 19 items, 4 of which had large (i.e., $> .5$) effect sizes, 10 of which had medium (i.e., $> .3$) effect sizes, and 5 of which had small (i.e., $> .1$) effect sizes. Seven MP Scale items were included, as well as two Big Five domains, three Big Five facets, one MP Factor, one physical response, absorption, age, age when they began playing old-time, self-rated type, and the % of musical factors in the favorite tune

⁷⁴ As the number of *t*-tests using the same sample data increases, so does the chance of making a Type 1 (false positive) error (i.e., finding a significant result by chance). While there are methods to compensate for this statistically, because this is exploratory research I have still included results which may or may not be deemed statistically significant given the large number of tests.

description. This *t*-test suggests that those musicians in my sample who had older family members who played this music were, on average, 1) less liberal, 2) began playing old-time at a younger age, 3) rated themselves as closer to Musician Type 1, 4) are less likely to like crooked or rare tunes, 5) are younger, 6) are less open to experience, 7) are more likely to prefer playing with familiar people, 8) are more musically and socially conservative, 9) are more likely to refer to chords by letter, 10) are less adventure-seeking, 11) are more likely to dislike “weird” tunes, 12) are less likely to feel emotions due to chord changes in tunes, 13) are lower in Absorption, 14) are more likely to prefer an audience while playing, 15) are less likely to experience a sensation of warmth as a result of old-time music, 16) are more likely to like their tunes more for extra-musical factors, 17) used less musical factors in their favorite tune descriptions, 18) were lower in artistic interests, 19) and were more neurotic than were the musicians in my sample who did not have a history of old-time music in their family.

All 17 musicians with elders who played OTM grew up in Appalachia, but there were another 9 musicians who grew up in Appalachia but who did not have a family history of OTM. Adding these 9 musicians to the previous 17 resulted in 26 musicians who grew up in Appalachia. Running the same tests with these 26 musicians resulted in 15 statistically-significant *t*-tests, 14 of which were also present when using whether elders played as a grouping variable. Table 4.28 displays the results of this test. Q20 (enjoy learning new tunes in jams) was now included, but absorption, Q19, Experience Sensation of Warmth, % of musical factors in favorite tune description, and Artistic Interests no longer resulted in significant tests. Only one of these tests (Self-Rated Musician Type) had a large effect size, nine had medium effect sizes, and five had small

effect sizes. On average, musicians who grew up in Appalachia 1) rated themselves as closer to the prototypical insider musician type, 2) were less liberal, 3) were younger, 4) were more likely to refer to chords by letter, 5) started playing OTM at a younger age, 6) were more likely to not like “weird” tunes, 7) were less likely to feel emotions due to harmonic changes, 8) were more likely to prefer playing with familiar people, 9) were more likely to be affected by their favorite tunes for extra-musical reasons, 10) were less open to experience, 11) were more musically and socially conservative, 12) were less likely to enjoy learning new tunes, 13) were more neurotic, 14) were less likely to enjoy crooked and/or rare tunes, and 15) were less adventure-seeking than musicians who did not grow up in Appalachia.

Next, musicians were grouped depending on whether or not at least 8 of the 10 tunes they listed as favorites are typically found in the traditional repertoire of Galax / Mt. Airy area musicians. This resulted in 14 statistically-significant tests, 11 of which overlap with the tests using Elders Played as a grouping variable and 10 of which overlap with the tests using Grew Up in Appalachia as a grouping variable. Table 4.29 displays the results of this test. The difference in mean scores on Q17 (don’t like “weird” tunes) resulted in the largest effect size of any *t*-test ($r = .75$), followed by Self-Rated Musician Type, MP Factor 1, and Liberalism – all with large effect sizes. Responses on Q12 (prefer to play familiar tunes), which was not included in the first two tests, were significantly higher for the >80% musicians, resulting in a medium-large effect size.

Other items which appeared on this test but were not present on the other two tests were Q9 (there are “good” and “bad” old-time tunes) and Q5 (do not have a strong grasp of music theory), which had small effect sizes. The >80% musicians agreed more

with these items than did the <80% musicians. Of the 15 musicians who listed at least 8 favorites typically found in the traditional repertoire of Galax / Mt. Airy area musicians 10 had elders who played OTM, and 12 grew up in Appalachia. On average, musicians who listed at least eight tunes commonly found in the traditional repertoire of Mt. Airy / Galax area musicians were 1) more likely to dislike “weird tunes”, 2) rated themselves as closer to the prototypical insider musician type, 3) were more musically and socially conservative, 4) were less liberal, 5) were more likely to refer to chords by letter, 6) were more likely to prefer playing familiar tunes, 7) were more likely to prefer playing with familiar people, 8) were less likely to like crooked and/or rare tunes, 9) were less open to experience, 10) scored lower on absorption, 11) were less likely to feel emotions due to harmonic changes, 12) were more likely to agree that there are “good” and “bad” old-time tunes, 13) had a weaker grasp of music theory, and 14) were lower on Adventure-seeking than musicians who listed fewer than eight Mt. Airy / Galax area tunes.

Finally, musicians with Self-Rated Musician Type scores of 1 or 2 (close to prototypical insider) were grouped together, as were musicians with Type scores of 6 or 7 (close to prototypical outsider). *t*-tests comparing the means of these groups resulted in 13 statistically-significant results, 10 of which overlapped with Elders Played, 10 of which overlapped with Grew up in Appalachia, and 8 of which overlapped with the Favorite Tunes test. Table 4.30 displays the results of this test. The strongest differences were on Q13 (refer to chords by letter), with a large effect size ($r = .65$), followed by MP Factor 1 (musical and social conservatism) and two MP items included in that factor (Q16 & Q17) – all with large effect sizes. The other nine items all had medium effect sizes. Two items from this test were not on any of the three aforementioned tests: Lump

in Throat or Stomach (Types 1 and 2 scored higher) and Tears, Crying (Types 1 and 2 scored higher). On average, musicians who rated themselves as Types 1 or 2 were 1) more likely to refer to chords by letter, 2) more musically and socially conservative, 3) more likely to prefer playing with familiar people, 4) more likely to dislike “weird” tunes, 5) less liberal, 6) started playing OTM at a younger age, 7) experience lump in the throat or stomach as a result of OTM more frequently, 8) were less likely to like crooked and/or rare tunes, 9) were less open to experience, 10) were more likely to derive affect from their favorite tunes due to extra-musical factors, 11) were less adventure-seeking, 12) experienced tears / crying more frequently, and 13) were less likely to enjoy learning new tunes than were musicians with Type scores 6 or 7.

Seven items appeared in all four tests: Liberalism, Openness to Experience, MP Factor 1, and MP items 13, 16, 17, and 23. Considering that Liberalism is a facet of Openness and that Q13, Q16, and Q17 load onto MP Factor 1, this can be distilled down to a smaller set of constructs (e.g., Openness to Experience, MP Factor 1, and Q23 (Like Crooked and/or Rare Tunes)). Q23 was removed from the principal component analysis due to a barely- too-low KMO value, but the construct it was intended to measure means it would fit theoretically with the other factors included in MP Factor 1. Thought of this way, the main differentiating construct in my sample population was various manifestations of Openness to Experience. Nine musicians⁷⁵ were included in all four groups (i.e., they had elders who played OTM, they were Appalachian, they listed at least 80% Mt. Airy / Galax tunes, and they rated themselves either a Type 1 or 2), though this did not necessarily mean that their responses were in line with the average response from

⁷⁵ Two of these musicians ended up being randomly selected for an interview.

those various group members across different items. However, because these grouping variables illustrated such salient and consistent differences in my sample population, and since these 9 musicians were in all four groups, we could make the case that these 9 musicians represent a sort of statistically-determined subgroup within my population (which we could call “insiders” or perhaps just “the minority group”).

The tests comparing the difference in means between men and women in my sample revealed that women’s mean score was statistically-significantly higher than men’s on eight items. Table 4.31 displays the results of this test. The strongest six of these were Big Five factors and facets: 1) Emotionality, 2) Artistic Interests, 3) Self-Discipline, 4) Absorption, 5) Openness to Experience, and 6) Agreeableness. These were all small to medium in size, with the largest effect size being from Emotionality. The weakest two significant differences were in the frequency of two physical responses to old-time music: 1) change in breathing rate and 2) shivers, chills. The *t*-test on tears, crying (women’s mean score was higher than men’s) just failed to reach significance.

While the results from the correlations support the idea of salient, widespread links between various personality and music-psychological factors for old-time musicians, the results of these *t*-tests are the most compelling evidence for such differences. Because these differences were statistically significant across 19 items, 14 of which resulted in at least medium effect sizes, the division between those musicians with old-time playing family elders and those without those elders seems to be pervasive and substantial. To what degree having a music-playing relative might be a *cause* of these differences, we cannot say without a different statistical procedure and research design. It seems likely that there are other factors (i.e., Openness to Experience and particular

musical attitudes and preferences) confounded with having old-time playing ancestors (which highlighted more of the differences than any other grouping factor), and many of these factors also seem to be confounded with being from Appalachia, rating oneself as closer to an insider musician type, and having a high percentage of favorite tunes being Galax / Mt. Airy standards. Determining which, if any, of these factors are causal mechanisms would be an enormously important research project.

Table 4.27
Summary of Significant t-Tests with Have Family Elders Who Played Old-Time as Grouping Variable

Item	Elders Played Old-Time Music						df	r
	Y		N					
	(n=17)		(n=59)					
	M	SE		M	SE	t		
Liberalism‡	2.70	.32		4.16	.10	4.34***	19.03	.70
Age When Began Playing Old-Time Music	14.71	1.27		25.64	1.43	5.72***	57.31	.60
Self-Rated Musician Type	2.29	.39		4.83	.21	5.72***	74	.55
Q23 (Like Crooked and/or Rare Tunes)	2.60	.17		3.47	.14	3.94***	40.47	.53
Age	35.94	3.46		47.88	2.10	2.95**	28.92	.48
Openness to Experience	3.45	.11		4.00	.06	4.63***	73	.48
Q16 (Prefer Playing w/ Familiar People)†	3.53	.24		2.19	.14	-4.60***	74	.47
MP Factor 1 (Musical & Social Conservatism)	.85	.26		-.25	.11	-4.48***	74	.46
Q13 (Call Chords by Name)†	4.47	.24		3.03	.17	-4.20***	74	.44
Adventure-Seeking‡	3.01	.15		3.79	.09	4.24***	73	.44
Q17 (Don't Like "Weird Tunes")†	3.71	.32		2.24	.18	-3.93***	74	.42
Q21 (Feel Emotions due to Chord Changes)	3.06	.28		3.86	.12	2.93***	74	.32
Absorption	39.77	2.70		46.74	1.12	2.76**	73	.31
Q19 (Prefer an Audience when Playing)	3.47	.27		2.47	.18	-2.72**	74	.30
Experience Sensation of Warmth	2.29	.28		3.16	.16	2.55*	73	.29
Q3 (Affect Mainly from EMF)	3.94	.28		3.25	.14	-2.34*	74	.26
% of Musical Factors in Favorite Tune Desc.	.67	.08		.84	.04	2.09*	70	.24
Artistic Interests‡	4.27	.12		4.52	.06	2.02*	73	.23
Neuroticism	2.85	.17		2.43	.10	-1.97*	73	.22

Note: M = Mean, SE = Std. Error Mean. * = $p \leq .05$, ** = $p \leq .01$, *** = $p \leq .001$. [†] = Loaded onto MP Factor 1. [‡] = Facet of Openness to Experience.

Table 4.28

Summary of Significant t-Tests with Grew Up in Appalachia as Grouping Variable

Item	Grew Up in Appalachia							
	Y			N				
	(n=26)			(n=50)				
	M	SE		M	SE	t	df	r
Self-Rated Musician Type	2.88	.33		4.98	.23	5.25***	74	.52
Liberalism‡	3.23	.24		4.15	.12	3.41**	38.41	.48
Age	35.92	2.75		50.04	2.22	3.87***	74	.41
Q13 (Call Chords by Name)†	4.12	.25		2.96	.18	-3.78***	74	.40
Age When Began Playing Old-Time Music	17.46	1.52		26.18	1.60	3.53***	74	.38
Q17 (Don't Like "Weird Tunes")†	3.35	.27		2.16	1.38	-3.56***	74	.38
Q21 (Feel Emotions due to Harmonic Changes)	3.15	.21		3.96	.13	3.40***	74	.37
Q16 (Prefer Playing w/ Familiar Peop)†	3.04	.24		2.20	.15	-3.06**	74	.34
Q3 (Affect Mainly From Extra-Musical Factors)	3.88	.24		3.16	.14	-2.86**	74	.32
Openness to Experience	3.68	.09		3.98	.07	2.66**	73	.30
MP Factor 1 (Musical & Social Conservatism)	.40	.22		-.21	.12	-2.58*	74	.29
Q20 (Enjoy Learning New Tunes)	3.92	.23		4.48	.11	2.51*	74	.28
Neuroticism	2.82	.13		2.37	.11	-2.46*	73	.27
Q23 (Like Crooked and/or Rare Tunes)	2.88	.18		3.48	.16	2.32*	74	.26
Adventure-Seeking‡	3.36	.13		3.75	.11	2.22*	73	.25

Note: M = Mean, SE = Std. Error Mean. * = $p \leq .05$, ** = $p \leq .01$, *** = $p \leq .001$. † = Loaded onto MP Factor 1. ‡ = Component of Openness to Experience

Table 4.29

Summary of Significant t-Tests with Percent of Favorite Tunes in Common Traditional Repertoire from the Mt. Airy / Galax Region as Grouping Variable

Item	$\geq 80\%$ ($n = 15$)		$< 80\%$ ($n = 61$)		t	df	r
	M	SE	M	SE			
Q17 (Don't Like "Weird" Tunes) [†]	4.07	.25	2.20	.17	6.18***	29.31	.75
Self-Rated Musician Type	2.07	.30	4.80	.21	-5.98***	74	.57
MP Factor 1 (Mus. & Soc. Conservatism)	1.08	.26	-.27	.10	5.52***	74	.54
Liberalism [‡]	2.73	.30	4.11	.11	-5.10***	73	.51
Q13 (Call Chords by Name) [†]	4.67	.23	3.03	.16	4.67***	74	.48
Q12 (Prefer to Play Familiar Tunes) [†]	2.93	.38	2.00	.14	2.28*	18.03	.47
Q16 (Prefer Playing w/ Familiar People) [†]	3.53	.31	2.23	.14	4.18***	74	.44
Q23 (Like Crooked and/or Rare Tunes)	2.47	.26	3.48	.13	-3.43***	74	.37
Openness to Experience	3.53	.14	3.97	.06	-3.33***	73	.36
Absorption	39.87	3.10	46.49	1.10	-2.48*	73	.28
Q21 (Feel Emotions due to Harmonic Changes)	3.13	.32	3.82	.12	-2.34*	74	.26
Q9 (There Are "Good" and "Bad" Old-Time Tunes)	3.20	.34	2.43	.15	2.19*	74	.25
Q5 (Do Not Have Strong Grasp of Music Theory) [†]	3.53	.40	2.59	.19	2.17*	74	.24
Adventure-Seeking [‡]	3.27	.19	3.70	.09	-2.08*	73	.24

Note: M = Mean, SE = Std. Error Mean. * = $p \leq .05$, ** = $p \leq .01$, *** = $p \leq .001$. [†] = Loaded onto MP Factor 1. [‡] = Facet of Openness to Experience.

Table 4.30

Summary of Significant t-Tests with Self-Rated Type as Grouping Variable

Item	Self-Rated Type						df	t	r
	1&2 (n = 16)			6&7 (n = 22)					
	M	SE	M	SE	M	SE			
Q13 (Call Chords by Name)†	4.65	.17	2.91	.26			37	5.20***	.65
MP Factor 1 (Musical & Social Conservatism)	1.00	.27	-.29	.16			37	4.29***	.58
Q16 (Prefer Playing w/ Familiar People)†	2.05	.21	3.53	.29			37	4.25***	.57
Q17 (Don't Like "Weird" Tunes)†	2.00	.30	3.76	.34			37	3.89***	.54
Liberalism‡	2.89	.36	4.09	.22			36	-3.01**	.45
Starting Age	17.18	1.70	27.34	2.82			37	-2.87**	.43
Lump in Throat or Stomach	2.53	.23	1.67	.20			36	2.85**	.43
Q23 (Like "Crooked" and/or Rare Tunes)	2.65	.24	3.64	.24			37	-2.84**	.42
Openness to Experience	3.50	.14	3.92	.10			36	-2.55*	.39
Q3 (Affect Mainly from Extra-Musical Factors)	3.76	.27	2.86	.23			37	2.57*	.39
Adventure-Seeking‡	3.15	.18	3.77	.18			36	-2.38*	.37
Tears, Crying	2.18	.18	1.62	.16			36	2.33*	.36
Q20 (Enjoy Learning New Tunes)	3.71	.34	4.55	.14			35.37	-2.27*	.36

Note: M = Mean, SE = Std. Error Mean. * = $p \leq .05$, ** = $p \leq .01$, *** = $p \leq .001$. † = Loaded onto MP Factor 1. ‡ = Facet of Openness to Experience.

Table 4.31
Summary of Significant *t*-Tests with Gender as Grouping Variable

Item	Men (<i>n</i> =50)		Women (<i>n</i> =26)		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>r</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>			
Emotionality‡	3.61	.09	4.11	.12	3.43***	73	.37
Artistic Interests‡	4.35	.07	4.67	.07	3.05***	73	.34
Self-Discipline	3.30	.12	3.81	.17	2.51*	73	.28
Absorption	43.38	1.39	48.72	1.62	2.35*	73	.27
Openness to Experience	3.79	.07	4.04	.08	2.20*	73	.25
Agreeableness	3.95	.08	4.24	.10	2.13*	73	.24
Experience Change in Breathing Rate	2.52	.15	3.08	.25	2.03*	73	.23
Experience Chills	2.24	.14	2.72	.19	2.00*	73	.23

Note: *M* = Mean, *SE* = Std. Error Mean. * = $p \leq .05$, ** = $p \leq .01$, *** = $p \leq .001$. ‡ = Facet of Openness to Experience. The test on Tears, Crying just failed to reach significance ($p = .07$).

Interviews

Interview Sample

The 11 musicians randomly selected to be interviewed represented a diversity of musician types, cognitive approaches, musical aesthetics, and susceptibility to affect due to the music. One interviewee lives just outside the Appalachian section of North Carolina, 6 currently live in Appalachian North Carolina, 2 live in Appalachian Virginia, and 2 live in Appalachian Alabama. Five of the interviewees grew up in an Appalachian county in Virginia or North Carolina, while the other 6 interviewees grew up in the Midwest, the deep South, New England, and non-Appalachian places in Virginia. One interviewee had a doctoral degree, 4 had a master's, 3 had a bachelor's, 2 had taken some college classes, and 1 had a high school diploma. Two interviewees were university professors, 2 worked in healthcare, 3 worked in a library/research field, 2 worked in the food/beverage field, and 2 worked in technical fields. Ten were multi-instrumentalists within old-time music, with 5 listing the fiddle as his or her main instrument, 3 listing the banjo, 1 listing bass, 1 listing guitar, and 1 listing both fiddle and banjo. Eight of the interviewees had some degree of formal musical training outside of old-time music when they were younger, and 4 interviewees had older family members who played old-time music. Other styles of music frequently listened to was consistent with the larger sample: bluegrass, early country, Cajun, swing, or other folk / world music were mentioned by all interviewees, with a sprinkling of classic and modern rock, and contemporary pop music was mentioned by 1 interviewee.

Independent samples *t*-tests were used to determine whether or not this interviewee group differed significantly on any survey items from the rest of the sample

population. Because so many *t*-tests were done, as with the earlier *t*-tests, the likelihood of a Type 1 error (false positive) increases as more tests are done using the same data set. With this in mind, statistically-significant differences were found on four items: on average the interview group scored higher on Neuroticism, lower on MP Factor 2, lower on Q1 (play in jam sessions for the music rather than for the company), and higher on Q7 (not very particular about “right or “wrong” chord progressions). *p* was less than .01 only for Q1. As Q1 is a component of MP Factor 2 (a preference for jam situations which privilege musical competence over socializing), these results suggest that it is this construct that best differentiates my interviewees from the rest of my sample.

Caveats of Interview Format

Interpreting the answers that the interviewees gave carries the same risks as any self-report methodology related to lived experience. As Gabrielsson noted, “one may also ask oneself how reliable language is to describe strong music experiences. People differ greatly as regards vocabulary, the meaning they assign to different words and concepts, and in their ability and willingness to describe experiences in words” (2011, 456). It is almost certainly true that few musicians have consciously analyzed what musical features their favorite tunes have in common – the answer to that question would be better generated by a formal musicological analysis of their favorite tunes – yet their on-the-fly verbal responses certainly have some significance. One must use caution in assuming qualities about the musicians from information *omitted* from their answers, especially in an interview that was this long and which gave the interviewees such leeway in their responses. Some interviewees contacted me after the interview (sometimes the same day, sometimes days later) to augment or modify their earlier responses. Some

forgot to mention favorite musicians, for example. This is not to say that no conclusions should be drawn from the interview responses, but rather that answers to particular questions should be interpreted with caution.

Memory of First Strong Experience with Old-Time Music

Question 1 asked about the circumstances surrounding and the felt experience of participants' first strong experience with old-time music. One musician of the 11 didn't remember a specific first strong experience, possibly due to the ubiquity of old-time music around the house since birth. Six musicians had particular memories from a time around early adolescence that were particularly affecting, some from recordings and some via live events. Two musicians (then ages 13 and 14, respectively) remember being impressed with the energy of live old-time music and dancing, as was another musician who, then a college student, went to a square dance with live music as "was just eaten up with it." Another musician recalled a series of formative live events: a Jean Ritchie and New Lost City Ramblers concert when a young child, a contradance as a teenager, the Highwoods String Band while a college student, and his first Galax Fiddler's Convention, which was "an amazing experience." Galax was also mentioned by another musician, then 8 years old, who felt moved by the sound of the fiddle there enough to demand lessons from her parents. This musician remembers feeling "chills and goosebumps" upon hearing Ralph Stanley and Benton Flippen for the first time and told me that the fiddle "spoke" to her in some way. Two other musicians were first strongly moved as children by cassette tape recordings of Grandpa Jones and a Civil War music collection for one and a tape of Bill Monroe for the other.

A sense of place was an important component of this first experience for 4 musicians. Growing up in an area that was home to several Civil War battles, the musician moved by the Civil War music tape used to use it as a sort of soundtrack to his adventures exploring the hills around his family farm. The musician hearing the Bill Monroe tape was missing his rural upbringing after having to relocate to the D.C. suburbs, and the music conjured ideas of the way of life he'd had to leave behind. Another musician from western North Carolina found that old-time music and dance was a means to finding a mountain identity during his teen years, while another western North Carolina musician linked the first local jam she attended to special feelings of community, home, and warmth. This same sense of something special or magical happening during a first jam experience was shared by 2 other musicians, a married couple, who both had a special weekend of music and "hanging out" with another couple they had recently met and with whom they had a lot in common. One member of the couple remembers hearing a recording there of Tommy Jarrell and Fred Cockerham that "blew [his] mind," and the other member remembers that she felt "almost high" from the experience of playing music with their new friends for the first time.

Two of the previously mentioned musicians had detailed memories of the emotional character and affective qualities of the music heard during these first strong experiences. One remembered at age 13 hearing a particularly affective waltz ("Rock All Our Babies to Sleep") played live at a party and hearing the Roan Mountain Hilltoppers' version of "Sally Ann," which had a turnaround that was "the most lifting thing [he'd] heard." The other musician remembered that the Bill Monroe tape was "kinda ghostly and sad but bittersweet, like sad and happy at the same time. Whatever that emotion is I

really like. It would be sad and happy and really driving and strong, but also sad and happy at the same time.” This bittersweet quality was mentioned several times throughout this musician’s interview. It’s possible that the attraction to this sort of sound was already established before he heard Bill Monroe at age 9, or equally possible that this first experience helped shape his continuing attraction to that particular character in old-time music.

Old-Time Music as Especially Affective Compared to Other Music

Question 6 asked musicians if they thought themselves to be easily affected by music generally. In some interviews, if the interviewee seemed to be confused about the question, I changed this to ask if they thought old-time music was more or less affective for them than the other types of music they liked. One idea that seems to make sense is that outsider musicians might be deep listeners generally and through various circumstances end up discovering old-time music and finding others to play it with. The live group music-making aspect, coupled with the community bonds that most form, might make old-time music more affective for deep listeners than other forms of music that are reserved for private listening-only engagement. In fact, some musicians indicated that they don’t particularly care to listen to old-time music; they are involved for the live experience: “The benefit I get out of old-time music is out of playing it rather than hearing it. When I get real excited or emotional about old-time music, it’s about playing that tune. If I’m just listening, the enjoyment I’m getting out of it is imagined playing.”

Six musicians indicated that old-time music was special for them in some way compared to other types of music that they also enjoyed. Some reasons for this included: old-time was the only music they actually played (the others were just listened to), and

therefore it was the only one that had a strong social component; old-time music conjures thoughts of history and deceased family members; and that old-time music connected a musician to her home: “I feel like my emotions can be heavily influenced by music but that with old-time I feel a different feeling. I feel a feeling of warmth and a feeling of home, like I’ve come home or that I’m right where I need to be, that I don’t feel with any other type of music.” One musician, an outsider, told me “old-time music is my music.... I can’t even tell you the last non-old-time... Yeah, I don’t even buy anything that’s not old-time or Cajun/zydeco.”

Two musicians indicated that other musics could be equally as affective as old-time, especially if they were good for dancing or if the other music was “raw and earthy” like old-time. Another musician indicated that other musics could move her, even music in a foreign language, as long as they communicate emotion effectively. However, she was most frequently moved by old-time music and felt she had a deeper relationship with it. Similarly, another musician noted that while gospel and other musics had a strong spiritual component for him and they could “really... get my heart racing or give me goosebumps or have my hair stand up on my arm,” old-time fiddle music “gives you just a really good feeling... just a real transformative feeling in some way or another that you just feel – chills might be appropriate.” And one insider musician’s answer, although she seems to be focusing on songs rather than tunes, illustrates the special perspective that insiders can have in terms of this music’s affective power – a perspective that is uncommon among outsiders:

Old-time music has a more intense effect on me in that I don’t generally cry over other songs or other genres but old-time music I tend to. I don’t know, certain songs just make me tear up because I get to thinkin’ about the culture, the history, the whole history that comes along with the music. I wonder if past family

members of mine played. I wonder what life was like for them and I'm just curious.... That's why I was so drawn to Ralph Stanley. I would listen to his songs – I mean any of his songs really, but his voice just moved me because it made me think of a time, another time and place that's not so different from my place but [the] time would be different.

Trance Experiences

Question 3 asked about “trance” and other altered states of consciousness as a result of playing old-time music and was stated in a broad way so as to solicit a wide range of possible responses. Nine of the 11 musicians claimed to have experienced this in some sense.⁷⁶ One musician who claimed to have never experienced this was relatively new to playing old-time music and was still “hyperaware of [her] playing.” In line with the theory of flow, this musician’s skills had not yet developed to a level that allowed her to meet the constant challenges of live music-making with others. A different musician first said that any sort of altered state didn’t apply to him; however, he did offer that drinking alcohol can seem to make things more intense and would make him want to play tunes faster and longer than normal.⁷⁷ Dissatisfied with this answer, since I knew that old-time music is a major part of this musician’s life, I asked him what might be going through his head during his favorite jam scenario (Galax fiddler’s convention). He replied:

I don’t know that I would actively be thinking about anything, but I would probably after it was over maybe think that this is – that’s the reason why I play music, and it’s the environment in which it’s meant to be played. It’s like the reason you play is to be around like-minded people on ground that has been the site of your ancestors and people you admire doing the exact same thing for 70 or 80 years. It’s kinda like, “Oh, this is where it’s meant to be, and this is just what’s supposed to happen here.” And it happens in a higher level there just because everybody’s thinkin’ that.

⁷⁶ This high frequency of trancing aligns with what I found with the Brown string band participants

⁷⁷ Another musician, much older and with decades of experience, also claimed to not really have this type of experience but then said that sometimes “you close your eyes and lose yourself for a little bit.”

Note that his explanation for the *purpose* of playing old-time music is entirely based on a continuation of a tradition that his family and other local musicians have now entrusted to him and to his fellow insiders who attend Galax. This seems to be an example of one of Woolf's types of altered states, which he called "Prolonged State of Imaginative Excitement" and which was characterized by a musician's "awareness of his part and history in playing old-time music," though in the case above, it would be much harder for an outsider to have the same sense of investment in the music tradition as somebody whose dead ancestors also played that same music at that exact same place (possibly on the same instrument, since fiddles tend to be kept in the family).

Seven musicians noted that it was important to have a strong level of synchrony (again, in line with the idea of flow) with the other musicians in the jam in order for any sort of trance feeling to occur. This was variously described as "everybody is together," "find[ing] a pocket,"⁷⁸ "a tune everybody knows well," "everybody needs to be on the same groove," "once a bunch of people get in rhythm together powerful things happen," and "having a conversation musically." The actual language describing the experience included: going into "autopilot," "starts to feel like an alternate universe," "takes you somewhere else," "lost [himself]," "you hit it and it just takes you away," gets "lost in the music," an "out-of-body experience," "chill bumps," "group meditation," and [the music] "takes me to an altered state or high." These statements echo those from Woolf, Wooley, Titon, my previous research, the statements from the musicians in the *Why Old Time?* film, and align neatly with reported experience of flow states. In line with what Woolf

⁷⁸ An expression common to jazz musicians, as are expressions like "in the groove," "having a musical conversation," etc.

observed on old-time musicians being reluctant to verbalize and share their personal experiences of the music with others, 2 musicians, in separate parts of their interviews, brought up the awkwardness of what usually happens at the end of tunes:

You know the hilarious thing is to me as someone who came to it late in life is – it’s affected me so much, and I go to these festivals and these kick ass jams, and it finishes and everyone just kind of looks at their shoes and takes a drink. Nobody comments on anything, and that just kills me. I just want to jump up and go “God DAMN!!”

And, from another musician:

A lot of us musicians are not exactly the best about interacting with people or each other a lot of times. If you ever watch a jam of old-time musicians they’ll play a tune that’s really great, but then it’ll be the most awkward thing after that because they’ll all just be like, “Well, that was good.” And they’ll just kinda sit there and be like this intense awkwardness until the next thing. A lot of these parties are like that. It’s like it’s for anti-social people, you know? Isn’t it the truth?

Part of this question also asked about whether they were aware of any particular musical triggers for these experiences, and 4 musicians answered “yes” using various examples: “certain tunes or parts of tunes,” “certain songs do that more than others,” “that has happened plenty of times and generally ... not in the rags,” “If I’m in a certain song where I’m anticipating a chord change that I really like it would bring me to this climax or something like that,” and that dynamics and “rising and falling” in the music “is a powerful thing.” One musician, in a response to a different question, described a strong experience that he had while listening to old-time music in his car during a nighttime drive. Multiple factors seem to be in play in this description, though it does not involve playing live music with others:

I remember having a tape of Dock Boggs in my car in high school and so driving into school listening to this tape [a friend] had gave me of Dock Boggs coming back late night from somewhere. I remember driving and having that tape on, taking the back roads home. Just driving out in the country in the middle of

nowhere. You listen to his music – it just starts to feel like an alternate universe. It's just you alone with this scratchy recording on a tape. Maybe it's the fact that I knew that car might not get me there [i.e., to his destination] either.

While listening to (but not necessarily playing along with) recordings of old-time music has been mentioned by many musicians as a catalyst for a strong experience with old-time, this above quotation is potentially an example of the affective power of a different form of old-time music – solo banjo songs – that many old-time jamming musicians also enjoy listening to and perhaps playing at conventions and jam sessions but usually not in a string band setting. One of my old-time music friends, who had moved to a different part of the country before the start of this project, is an example of a banjo-playing songster in this sense. His repertoire and playing style work much better solo than they do with accompaniment, particularly due to the metrical irregularity of his playing and singing. It is difficult, but not impossible, to follow his timing, and he is not much interested in filling the banjo role in standard string band jams. When we have played music together, usually with me playing fiddle while he plays banjo and sings, I have often had strong experiences. I find this particular musician's music to be compelling on its own, but in consideration of the criteria for flow states, I'm sure part of what led to my strong experiences while playing with him was the semi-conscious awareness that I was able to synchronize (for the most part) with a musician who others find impossible to accompany. For this musician and for the minority of others who primarily or exclusively play old-time music solo or with only modest accompaniment, we would need to look not so much at the social aspect of the jam or at combined flow but at other sources that create affective responses.

Ideal Jam Scenario

Question 2 asked musicians to describe their ideal jam scenario. Some responses were very specific. For example, one musician said it would involve being outside in nice weather, playing with friends or like-minded musicians, there might be alcohol or pot present, there would be a mix of socializing and tunes (not “crazy” ones), there wouldn’t be too many people (esp. on any one instrument), and there would be an aggressive approach to the music. Another musician gave a detailed account of the instrumental lineup and what each instrument would be doing (e.g., one guitar “just playing runs”) and even what body style of guitar (dreadnaught), while another musician only got as specific as saying there would need to be “strong fiddlers” involved. Four musicians mentioned that tight group synchrony and responsiveness would be a component of their ideal jam (as they did with the trance experience), and 3 musicians indicated that their ideal jam would take place at a festival (with 2 mentioning Galax, specifically). Three musicians indicated that there would be an audience or dancers present for their ideal jam. A different musician, relatively new to old-time, valued welcoming and encouraging people and told me that “it’s more about the community and playing together rather than getting everything right.”

Use of Psychoactive Substances

Question 4 dealt with the use of psychoactive substances while playing old-time music, and it was a sensitive question that people were reluctant to answer in spite of the promise of anonymity and secure keeping of the interviews. Two musicians offered that they have used both alcohol and marijuana during old-time music jams, and both noted that marijuana had a different effect from alcohol in that while alcohol provided social

lubricant and relaxation, marijuana makes one musician feel more connected with the music, and it seems to help the other musician play tunes in certain tunings on the banjo. One musician made a similar comment about the transformative power of alcohol, though in a way consistent with the effects of that substance: “It changes everything for me, you know? I’m relaxed about playing the music, and it just adds to the pleasure of it. Kind of revs you up and – for me it does. And it allows me to be less inhibited. Yeah, I like a liquor drink, for sure. And I like the way it affects other people in the jam.” Other musicians who were interviewed that I have witnessed smoke marijuana before and during jams did not mention this during the interview, and I didn’t press them on it or ask specifically about it. Two of 11 is almost certainly a misrepresentation of the amount of old-time musicians who use marijuana to alter their jam experience, and this remains an aspect of the musical behavior in need of further study.

One musician said that *music* should already be the altered state of mind and that “if you’re really concentrating on [the music] you shouldn’t need anything like that.” He also noted that alcohol changes his voice in a bad way. Another musician abstained totally from all substances due to a medical condition, but had witnessed a lot of substance use by other musicians, especially alcohol and marijuana, but also some cocaine. Among those who did often drink while playing old-time, however, most of them made a distinction between playing music alone, which they would do sober, and playing music in social settings, where alcohol would often be used. It also often came up that drinking to excess (in that it would impair music-making) was a downer. One musician told me a story about an excellent musician at Galax one year who had had too much to drink and could no longer jam with the other musicians and how let down

everybody was by this. For the musicians whom I interviewed the music takes precedence over the party (or, at least, that's what they told me).

Chord Identification / Preferences / Affect

Question 7 asked several questions about chords in old-time music: whether or not they could easily identify which chord was supposed to go where in a tune, whether or not they can identify the position of chords by hearing a progression, and to what extent they are affected by chord movement and choice. One outsider musician enjoyed “fighting chords” that “create tension and then resolve it.” Another outsider said “it’s like a tension builder / tension reliever almost. I don’t know if I can verbalize it,” and she was adamant that everybody in a jam be on the same page as far as chords: “I’ve been in that situation before when the guitar player is not playing it the right way [and she thought] God damnit, you know – play it the way I want to hear it.” Another musician said, “Compared to the average person, yeah, chords really kind of speak to me” and explained the affective potential of different chords using an example from the tune “North Carolina Breakdown,” which has several possible choices in the B part of the tune:

On the B part I’m gonna hang on an E note on the fiddle. I’ll be like, ‘You can play a C chord or an E minor or an E major because all of them have an E note in them, and they’re all gonna work. If you play a C chord it’s gonna have a major sound and sound kinda happy. If you play an E minor it’s gonna be kinda minor – sort of sad. If you play E major it’s gonna be kind of funky.

This musician and several others remarked that they would be hesitant to stop and correct rhythm players in a jam if they were playing unorthodox chords, but that their preference would be if rhythm musicians changed chords the same way they themselves would. Another musician was especially moved by chords, and linked them to physiological responses, telling me:

I think back to the chillbumps situation – when something’s being played and everybody hits that chord – that’s kinda what makes the song. If it had that change in it – sometimes it can be overwhelming. You can just feel it.... That’s probably what appealed me to that song to start with.... Yeah, I’m greatly affected by chord changes.

Although they came in responses to other questions, two other musicians also identified particular chord motion as being particularly affective: one noted that when a particular tune moves to the IV chord “every time it comes around it just feels really good,” and another musician, an insider bassist, using the same verbiage as the musician above (“makes the song”) told me:

When it goes to a B chord in “Sugar Hill” or in “Lost Indian,” whether you play it in D or A – cause then it goes to that F chord, and that’s just super-cool, you know? Yeah I think it’s an F chord.⁷⁹ I guess the trend I’m seeing with myself is when it goes to unexpected chords, and I think that little twist really makes a song.

A few musicians responded that chords were not particularly affective for them, but then made comments which call that appraisal into question. One insider musician told me: “I know some people like if you’re playing a D tune and you go up to C and suddenly it’s like magic.... I think I’ve kind of moved beyond that as far as that really affecting me.” But he then said, “But I gotta admit – [a tune with that progression] came on TV the other night, and just between that and the narration and that rising moment where it had that clinging note, it’s like, ‘Oh man, that does have some gravity to it’.” Another insider immediately responded: “No, I would say not” when asked if he was strongly affected by chords but then went into a lengthy explanation of why certain guitar chords might clash with his fiddle playing at times. For this musician, chords seemed to serve a functional, rather than a hedonistic, purpose. An outsider musician told me: “I

⁷⁹ It’s an F# minor chord.

find chord progressions can be a distraction and make a tune seem gimmicky or trite... and some of the best tunes are just the two-chord tunes or one-chord tunes,” although he noted that when he plays guitar, “it’s more fun if there’s chords.” This same musician also said that he prefers chords which are “sort of more archaic or raw sounding” and that he thinks of chord choices as a choice between pretty and gritty: “and I definitely prefer the gritty.”

A number of my interviewees were not very confident in their ability to explain verbally why certain chords go in certain places. Some examples include: “I learned to play with my ear so I don’t really know chords. If someone said it’s a C chord right there that is meaningless to me almost”; “Usually, if I don’t know the chord changes I just try to do bass runs that sound like I do.... I may kinda know what the chord is, but I’m not thinking like that so I’m just running up to whatever note I can on the bass and then trickling my way back down as fast as I can into the next chord I know is there”; “Even if I don’t know what the chord is I know that something’s changed. I mean there are those chords that just go together well.... [explaining this is] a little difficult for me”; “I have no formal training. I know I could try [to explain why chords go where] – but like ‘Sally Ann,’ for instance – could I explain that chord change? Probably. But is it going to be perfect? No. It would probably be me looking at them and going ‘NOW’.” Although some of the musicians in my sample may not be able to verbalize *what* is happening with chord movement in certain tunes or why those chords are so affective, this does not seem to inhibit their potential to be strongly affected by those chords.

Commonalities of Favorite Tunes

Question 5 asked about whether the musicians had noticed any commonalities among their favorite old-time tunes (e.g., musical structure, associated with a certain region, learned from a certain person, etc.). Only 2 musicians did not mention a particular region; the other 9 all had some sort of regional grouping to their tunes, some with a narrower scope (e.g., Western North Carolina) than others (e.g., southwest Virginia, northwest North Carolina, and northeast Tennessee). In most cases this region was the childhood home to the musician, with the exception of 2 musicians who preferred the music of their current home (though they grew up elsewhere). Harmonic components were mentioned by 4 musicians: 1 was currently into tunes with VI chords instead of vi chords because they have a “cool, dirty feel to them and in an unexpected way.... Dirty, almost. Slimy. It’s creating a certain kind of tension”;⁸⁰ another prefers tunes with “strong IV chords and minors” and energetic tunes with a bittersweetness to them (which he thought might have something to do with “IV chords in weird places”)⁸¹; another (previously discussed) likes tunes that have a I – bVII motion or that spend time on a G chord; and another likes her tunes to be in a variety of keys rather than just A and D. Six musicians mentioned rhythmic / tempo components shared by their favorite tunes: “I prefer hard-driving. I like tunes you can dance to.... I don’t like crookedy”; “90% of the tunes that I like the best are fast dance tunes, and they’re not crooked”; “I just remember [his favorites] as being good dance tune or tunes that we really liked to dance to on the

⁸⁰ A different musician said that using VI instead of vi created a “funky” feel.

⁸¹ In ongoing discussions with this musician about examples of this phenomenon, I noticed that the IV chords going in “weird places” tend to be when a IV chord is used instead of a I chord to support a melodic passage that involves the 3rd scale degree (either in passing or as the central note of the melody at the time of the change to the IV). This creates, although temporarily, a maj7 harmony – often reported to have a wistful, bittersweet emotional character.

clogging team”; “I like the wide-open just – not real crazy crooked tunes – just kinda the standard tunes played in a wide-open fashion”; “I like the really fast fiddle tunes that have the verses in between”; “It’s always the dance tunes that draw me the most and... I find the ones that are most danceable are the ones that are the most rhythmic and driving – fairly fast.” I would be almost certain to get a different response on this question had my sample come mainly from Clifftop attendees or from some place without such a strong stylistic history as the NC/VA area where my participants were mostly from.

Extra-musical factors such as links to people, places, or historical events were mentioned by 4 musicians. For example, “When I hear a tune I don’t hear played often like ‘Spotted Pony’ or something then I often remember where I learned it or who taught it to me, and those are the ones that hold... more memories for me”; “If I know a tune is from Western North Carolina, where I’m from, I tend to like that as a favorite tune. And sometimes the sound of those are really – I connect with them. And I think, ‘If I didn’t know this tune was from Western North Carolina, would I like it as much?’” One insider musician, who seems to enjoy the best of both worlds by virtue of having a healthy fascination with Appalachian history and culture *and* being well-known throughout the old-time community as something of a virtuoso singer and instrumentalist, invoked both the music itself and all of its other powerful associations in his answer to one question:

When I got into old-time music it was like all these hometown heroes that I had that were just – all the places that I knew I could point to. Some places I live right down the road. Like, I grew up next to the Lee Highway, and when I heard “Lee Highway,” I was like “That’s awesome. That’s right down the road.” Or Cripple Creek is only two hills over. I could go to Cripple Creek.⁸² I had friends in high school from Cripple Creek. And to think that those are the places that inspired those names just blew my mind... So on top of the tunes was having those place and people connections, and I’m just fortunate that I grew up in an area where it

⁸² “Cripple Creek” is a popular old-time tune/song, and some musicians are especially fond of the line: “Girls on the Cripple Creek, half-past grown / Jump on a man like a dog on a bone.”

was that potent. And I think that's really what drew me in at the end of the day.... I think if you have the right combination of imagery – either through lyrics or through the association with place along with good music, along with a powerful fiddle tune – the combination of that rhythm and the association with place and historical stuff really is what I get into this stuff for.

This is another example of the type of recurring comments from insiders linking the music to extra-musical factors with a great deal of meaning for those musicians. Not having grown up in the area would not necessarily prevent an outsider from having equally-significant extra-musical associations, but many insiders would make the claim that there is something special about a connection like growing up right off of the road memorialized in a fiddle tune.

Favorite Musicians

Question 11 asked for the participants' favorite old-time musicians and what about those musicians, in particular, they liked. Four participants in particular stressed that they valued their favorite old-time musicians for reasons outside of just their musicianship. For one insider musician, the superb musicianship of old, dead musicians whom he didn't know was not as significant as his interactions with living musicians:

I could list tons of old guys on records. But the ones that really mean a lot are people, and even dancers, like Robert Dotson⁸³ always sees me and always treats me like a million bucks. And he's always kinda like, "This boy's from Virginia. He can play dance music." And that feels like getting an award every damn time. It's not so much the music but the encouragement that you get. And I think that's a big part of the tradition.

Although some outsider musicians, especially those who have lived in the mountain South for some time and who have actively sought out older insider musicians, would have had the time to build these sort of relationships with insider musicians whom they considered mentors, my experience has been that outsiders like their favorite musicians

⁸³ A nonagenarian dancer who lived in Watauga County, North Carolina

primarily for their music.⁸⁴ One of my interviewees, however, fits the description of the outsider just mentioned, and his response was that:

It goes beyond the music to the person, and if [Tommy Jarrell] had been a crabby person playing that music I wouldn't have the same opinion. But he was a wonderful, generous guy who was into sharing the music – had a great attitude about it. Also, I played for over 20 years with [another insider musician], and he had the same kind of generous, sharing attitude. So to me it's not just about the notes that are played; it's about the communication of spirit from one person to another.

The importance of human interaction and a generous personality was also echoed by another insider musician, who told me: “I just feel like there's a lot of people, just really good people I've met playing music.... Most of my favorite people, musicians who are alive, are ones who have taken the time to really build friendships with me and be mentors, people that I can look up to in that way,” and an outsider musician told me that her favorite musicians were “not demonstrative personality-wise. [One of her favorite fiddlers] is quiet and soft-spoken. And polite. They're all polite. But then they pull out their instrument, and it's like, you know, they just blast the ceiling off the room.” This social aspect of old-time music, recall, was also highly important even to the string band members at Brown. It was, in fact, rated the most important factor to enjoying their jam experience.

Other interviewees, however, had much to say about the music made by their favorite musicians, many of which they liked for different, particular reasons. One outsider musician, for example, appreciated the “sheer energy” of one band and enjoyed the weirdness of Hoyt Ming:

⁸⁴ Of course, it is easy to find other things to like about those musicians, whether or not the outsider actually knows him or her (if they are still living at all – many of the popular favorites died before any of the revival generation got to meet them).

I really really like Hoyt Ming. There's only 12 or so recordings, there are very few. He's playing the weirdest old-time music. He hangs on a beat way too long, and it's just all somehow collapses back into being together. And there's almost that feel of just like coming back into the whole band. Not that the band ever gets off of him. There's a weird tension, but in a way it feels like that tension resolves. Almost just feels like they're falling into it rather than just all coming back together. They're just kind of hanging out and just fall off into being back into those tunes. I'm really into that. Just cause it's so weird.

This weirdness was also important to a different outsider musician, who, speaking about Narmour and Smith, said "I like them as a duo and what they create 'cause it's just weird – it's just so basic.... It's like I cannot achieve that sound." This musician also was enamored with John Morgan Salyer's fiddle playing and said there is "something about that I like but I can't put into words." Another insider musician appreciated his favorite musician, also his neighbor and mentor, because "he doesn't draw boxes on things and he's willing to try and experiment and do new tunes," and he has encouraged this insider musician to "listen to other instruments. Listen to a piano and try to replicate that on a fiddle.... Listen to jazz.... And it's thinking outside the box because that's what the old guys did. That's what they were listening to." A different insider musician, when describing his favorite musicians, used the phrases "really great tone," "good selection of tunes," "good technique," "I like his drive," "I like his intensity," "he had more drive than any fiddle player that I've heard," and "they were entertainers as well as good musicians."

Another outsider musician had a wider range of things he liked in his favorite old-time musicians. His response included "rowdy, rockin' music," "rough, rowdy, passionate, and a wide range of emotion," "his music is more ethereal and kind of introverted in some way, and I really love that," "a lot of that dark music," "I like a lot of people that sing," and "I like driving – just hard, fast music." One insider musician's

favorite musicians were all living musicians whom she normally plays with. Among the phrases of praise she gave to these musicians were: “he doesn’t hit all these notes that other people hit, but I don’t care ‘cause it works”; “[she] is amazing on the banjo and just has a good lick to it, and she’s got a good sound. I can’t get technical ‘cause I don’t know the technical terms”; “There’s something about his fiddling that’s really smooth”; “He’s a freakin machine on the rhythm guitar”; and “She’s just amazing to me as well on different instruments and very talented.”

Another musician, with no hesitation, told me:

Camp Creek Boys – right out the gate. They embodied to me a – for a band without a bass they – those dudes – I mean, that is the most driving old-time music. They were tight. Extremely together. Fred’s fiddling it’s like almost bluegrass – a little slicker. But then you got Tommy Jarrell. Love him. And that’s all because of the bowing. You hear four notes to another person’s one. He’s rockin’ that bow back and forth, and you hear it. Stripling Bros. – I like Charlie’s fiddling. It’s real clean and pristine but still has this – there’s a rawness about it. There’s this bluesy – blue notes. It’s raucous in its own way. Earl Johnson – he fiddled. It was just constant wild fiddling. Go back and listen to him and there’s no human that can do that still. But Stripling, I guess it’s because they were from my area that I’ve looked more into him. Narmour and Smith, the fact that the guitar player, Shel Smith was so – I don’t know if he wasn’t good or what but he kept – all the guitar was downstroke, and he rarely changed chords when everybody on Earth would say there’s a chord change there. He just kinda powered through. And then you go back and you put the right chord change it loses that entire feeling of that song. I think he knew what he was doing. Or he didn’t have exposure to complex chord changes. And part of what appealed to me about it was the constant droning. They’re trance music to me. All downstroke just like a heartbeat.

This musician knew in great detail particular musical nuances that had affective power for him but that represented multiple musical mechanisms: “driving” and synchronized rhythms, particular bowing technique on the fiddle, a mix of clean with raw in terms of tone and technique, “blue” notes, “wild,” inimitable fiddling, a local connection, an

appreciation of simple guitar technique and a reluctance to obey conventions of old-time harmony, and a droning sound that this musician likened to “trance music.”

Favorite Sounds

Question 8 asked musicians about their favorite sounds in old-time music. I intended this question to be more about timbre/tone, but some interviewees interpreted it to mean broader structural elements. Some of those responses include: “stuff where there’s a discord between lead and rhythm,” “certain bowing patterns... that always seem to grab me a little bit. Sometimes strange placement of chord changes,” “I like a good driving guitar that plays the runs... and I like a driving banjo, too,” and “I find myself listening a lot to guitar players doing runs. That really draws me into a recording or jam. And I generally like fast, intense fiddling. Almost like harsh.” Another musician, also a dancer and dance-caller, said, “I guess my favorite sound is... the instruments providing a rhythmic base for the fiddle and having the fiddle floating around on top but the others are all locked in together in a sort of rhythm machine chugging along that supports the melody. And it all goes back to dance.”

But for those who stuck to timbral elements, responses varied from those who appreciated mellowness: “singers... where it’s almost like a lullaby.... I really like that old kind of mellow sound”; “[his] banjo playing – it’s not aggressive at all but it’s assertive without being aggressive”; “it was this kind of calming and mellow sound” to those who appreciated aggression and intensity: “I love the sound of a fiddle. I love the sound of a clawhammer banjo. I love the sound of the bass. And I like loud basses, obviously. I don’t like it when people barely play the bass. That’s not what it’s for, in my opinion”; “something that sounds real nasty” and banjo playing that sounded “like he’s

gonna rip it in half”; and “I really like the sound of when you got a good dance going on a good floor and people are just kinda freestyle clogging and tapping with the music... and there’s just kind of a bounce to the room.”

Other responses named particular sounds but did not explain why those sounds were particularly liked: “I really like the sound of people singing harmony,” “I really like the sound of a banjo tuned town low,” “Edden Hammons has a tone that is just – you can’t. I’ve never heard anybody come close to sounding anything like it, and I don’t know what he’s doing, but it’s just the kind of tone he gets,” “I enjoy the sound of listening to old-time music on my record player. I just like the old sound of it. The kinda crackly sound that a record player brings anyways,” and “a lot of times when I listen to music and I hear that constant drone of the fifth [banjo] string I love it.”

Favorite Parts of Tunes

Question 9 asked musicians about whether or not they had favorite parts of tunes and, if so, if they could explain what they liked about those parts. One musician, a bassist, said “No. But, of course some fingering is fun. And when you can throw in a nice run on the bass. I’d generally say no.” This was echoed by another musician who said, “Yeah, I usually like the tune as a whole. I don’t know if I can pick out certain things,” but who then mentioned several parts of various tunes, for example a yodel part on the fiddle, a passage where you pluck the fiddle strings, and a particular part in a song that seems to generate crowd interaction. Another musician, a dancer and dance-caller, liked a part of a tune where the beat stops for a particular section because it enabled dancers to show off and allowed the musicians to “get a little bit of a spotlight in a real non-threatening way.”

This musician also liked “anytime there’s a song that sort of sits on a funny chord for a long time... it kind of totally puts a different mood between the two parts.” Another musician told me that “there’s something about you’re down there in the low part of [some tunes], and it’s good – you’re just kinda pluggin’ along, and you come to the high part, and it’s just... Yeah, there’s like a release when you start playin’ up real high.” This same sense of expectation and then release due to the form of the tunes was echoed by a third musician, who told me: “Sometimes it’s just the B part, like the A part’s kinda like filler situation, and then you hit this massive B, and the B part comes, and it’s like what you’ve been waiting on. It kind of shapes the tune.... And when I play I’m trying to hold it together to get to that part. That’s what I’m looking forward to.”

Emotional Categories of the Tunes

Question 10 asked the musicians to attempt to describe how they would categorize old-time tunes. I did not specify that I was interested in emotional/affective categories unless I was trying to prompt an interviewee who had not mentioned anything related to that and seemed to have finished his or her response. Some examples of responses that did not directly address emotion include: “I guess you’d say fiddle tunes, ballads, dance tunes, crooked tunes, and then you’d describe them regionally,” and “If you’re going by time signature there’s breakdowns, like banjo breakdowns. What I would consider dance tunes – that’s like any of the “Sally Ann”s are dance tunes.” This idea of dance music was used to differentiate the type of old-time one musician played from another “academic” type: “There’s dance music, and there’s listening music. Listening music would fall into like the academic sort of, like, ‘This is a crooked tune I learned from somebody in Kentucky.’ It really serves no purpose for dancing. For connoisseurs

of fiddle music it might have some appeal. And then there's just straight up 'This is dance music'." Another musician had a wider scope of classification, but dance was still an important tune type:

I might break it down by their function or break it down by their history or where they came from. There are tunes that are meant to be for dancing, and there are tunes that are meant to tell a story, and there are songs that are meant to tell a story, and there are slow dance tunes, and there are fast dance tunes. Or there are tunes that come from Scots-Irish tradition or African American tradition.

A dancer and dance-caller musician, not surprisingly, replied:

Square dance tunes and flatfooting tunes, and then you'd also have waltzes. Those would be the two main categories of dance tunes. And then there's other tunes that are more maybe not up to dance speed but are just pretty. I'm not sure what kind of word to put to those, but just slower beautiful melodies that are nice. And then there are other tunes that I guess in an earlier time I guess would refer to as an aire. Sort of slow, melancholy type things.

When asked what the predominant emotion or mood was of the dance tunes he liked, he told me: "Uplifting? Foot-tapping. Ones that make you want to move, basically."

One interviewee's response was particularly interesting. She began by listing several different criteria and categories for classifying tune types, which reference dancing twice:

I guess there'd be the dancing songs. Those fiddle tunes like "Fly Around," or any of the ones you hear at dances often. Or the ones that are story songs that have a background. The train songs, and there's some murder ballads. I guess that's one way you can describe it. And the ones that are all about keeping rhythm. They go to the rhythm of a dance, often. I guess the other ones are a kind of oral history – a way of passing down a story.

But she also identified a particular type of tune that has much less affective power for her than (we assume) the types mentioned above:

There's those older sounding ones that sound like Civil War era ones that have a specific sound to them compared to some of the ones that some people call newer, I don't even know if they're newer, but [a friend] calls them "hippie tunes." The kind of newer, faster – they start to blur in my head, and I have a hard time

remembering them. Like I know them if I hear them, but I just don't – I'm not as interested. And it seems like some of those are more about showing off technical skills whereas the other ones are like, there's more of a simplicity to them.

In the first passage above, there is either something to *do* using the tune (e.g., dance), or there are extra-musical associations with the tunes/songs which imbue them with meaning. The “hippie tunes” in the second passage (instrumentals, often with complicated melodies and irregular rhythms and harmonies, with no extra-musical associations) don't seem to work for this musician in terms of producing pleasurable affect. They fail to such a degree that she even has difficulty telling them apart.

One musician at first answered “I don't know if I could do easily do that” when asked to explain the different sorts of emotions/moods the tunes can express but then told me “I would say dance music generally sounds happier, whereas if you got something like ‘Elk River Blues’ – that is an instrumental fiddle tune that is trying to convey some sort of sadness. Some of those crooked tunes probably convey people by themselves working on music.” Here, this musician has delineated three basic categories of tunes (happy, sad, spooky/scary/something unpleasant), which were the same categories that I listed on the survey as suggestions and which are used generally by music psychologists in studies regarding music and basic emotions.⁸⁵

Another musician also divided the emotional character of old-time tunes into “happy-go-lucky sounding tunes,” “mournful songs,” “and spooky songs,” and two musicians specifically mentioned West Virginia as being the source of spooky music:

⁸⁵ These categories were also suggested by me in the text of my survey packet, and it's worthwhile to consider that these interviews were conducted after taking my survey (which for some musicians meant thinking about these questions for the first time). Completing the survey and talking about it with other musicians certainly influenced (probably unconsciously) the sort of responses I received on the interviews to some degree.

“You can have minory spooky scary stuff. A lot of the West Virginia stuff sounds to me like that,” and “I think some of that West Virginia stuff qualifies as spooky.”⁸⁶ A different musician told me that although he hadn’t thought of describing tunes as happy, sad, or spooky as a classification before taking the survey, after he thought about it, he decided that “there are tunes that sort of just make you want to tap your foot, and there are tunes that kind of pull on your heart, and there are ones that sound like they’re kind of ancient or coming from some other place.” Yet another musician noted these three basic categories, but added some others: “I would say major tunes, there are minor tunes, modal tunes, rags, blues, novelty tunes, and you could be in more than one category,” and another noted that *how* someone plays a tune is also important as to how he would classify its expressed emotion.

The terms “happy” and “sad” were insufficient for one musician, who told me:

One category might be melancholy? Like a waltz that might be kind of a slower song that might be sort of – have some minor-type sound to them, something like that. I don’t wanna say sad. That sounds generic. Like when I’m playin just a rockin’ tune and I’m rippin’ it I don’t know that I really would call that “happy.” [D: What would you call it?] I might call it – I don’t know, like “rockin.” Maybe “groovy” would be one. And I don’t mean like a hippie, but just like laid-back. Kinda like a groovy tune.

As this musician seemed to be struggling with the question, I read off her top 10 tunes from her survey as a prompt. Her response then focused heavily on the intense, vivid visual imagery that she experiences as a result of particular types of tunes:

Yeah, “New Carrol County Blues” is groovy to me. “Lost Girl” is just like ... I’m at a loss. I kind of see visual things with music more than.... Maybe I associate

⁸⁶ Part of the reason for this association might be that the “modal” (i.e., mixolydian, dorian, minor pentatonic, etc.) tunes in the Round Peak and SW Virginia traditional repertoire tend to be played at fast tempos and loud volumes with full-band instrumentation, in contrast to the slower, quieter, modal tunes played by West Virginia musicians often solo or with a minimum of accompaniment. The way modal tunes are set in the NC/VA region might transform their “spookiness” into more of a “driving” character. Of course, there are many other factors possibly involved here, including the structure of the tunes, the timbre of the instruments, the tune titles and associations with the supernatural, etc.

kinda like colors and a certain scene or something. Which – maybe that would go along with happy or sad. Like a sepia tone or a bright and sunny tone, or I might see or envision like what I would even think the artist would look like, or a setting of people playing, or maybe a color or something that would go along with it. And I have kinda like a calendar in my brain for some reason. Like the year I would imagine it.... I just see more visual things than I can put it into words.

This inadequacy of three basic categories was also demonstrated by another musician who said he was fond of the term “rockin’ tune,” where “everybody is just pounding on their instrument,” which he contrasts with “sweet. Kind of pretty. [Tunes that] have pretty parts, and a little finesse is used on ‘em.” A different musician began with these three basic categories, linking musical features to emotions, but struggled with rags:

Major tunes, as a rule, aren’t as sad. They’re more happy or joyful. Minor tunes can be but they don’t have to be. Modal tunes have kind of a hardness to them. Sometimes there’s a dark or spooky quality to some modal tunes, but not all of them. But there’s a hardness to them that I like. And rags – there is an emotion to a rag, but it’s really difficult to describe. But there’s totally an emotion to a rag, but I don’t know how to describe it. Yeah. Man, what IS that?

Finally, another musician attributed different emotional characteristics to different keys, noting that “A tunes are happy-belligerent. C tunes are circus-belligerent. G tunes are a little bit deeper in some ways.... Midwestern G tunes are all over the fuckin’ place.” And when asked to expand on this analysis, he told me:

I feel like A-cross tunes just have that, even the prettier ones, still have a little bit of that – they’re all leaning forward a little bit. I think part of that is the inherent drive of having the drone string, but I think that’s influenced how those tunes are constructed. I think D tunes can be, not necessarily prettier in an overly pretty sort of sense but they’re....they just have a little bit of a different mood. A tunes are very masculine, and D tunes can be a little more feminine as far as, I don’t know. That’s very, very, very broad and bold statement to make, I guess.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ I, too, have noticed that certain D tunes have, for me, what I can only describe as a feminine energy. I mentioned something to this effect lightheartedly in the Brown string band class one evening after playing one of those tunes and recall being met with raised eyebrows and looks of bewilderment. Like the musician above, I have musicological and music-psychological theories for why I and others might interpret those

Dislikes

This was an especially provocative question (#12), with a remarkable degree of overlap in the responses. Ten of the 11 musicians mentioned something to do with a lack of power and/or grit as something undesirable in this music. Words and phrases such as “pretty,” “tinkly,” “notey,” “academic,” “new-agey,” “popcorn-style,” “groove,” “Northern sound,” “self-conscious chord changes,” “hippie tunes,” “feels lame,” “not danceable,” “no passion behind it,” “slick,” “contrived,” “unnecessary chord changes,” “stiff,” “weak,” and “pussyfoot” were used by my interviewees to describe these negative qualities. One musician, speaking about a well-known and award-winning fiddler said, “Great fiddler. Great energy. But, you know, play a fuckin’ dirty note from time to time.” Another musician could not stand it when people would “pussyfoot around [on] notoriously driving, killer tunes [and it] ends up like some Civil War reenactment kind of crap. It’s stiff.” He concluded his response by saying: “And if that’s their style then I probably don’t have any interest in playing with them because all we’re gonna do is go through a bunch of tunes that are gonna be played in a lackluster fashion. I really just hate pussy old-time fiddle tunes.”

Another musician listed several specific factors that he didn’t care for and that, like with the musician above, would prevent him from playing with certain old-time musicians, though to a more literal degree:

I don’t care for I guess what you would call “popcorn-style” banjo. I don’t know what the appropriate term for that is but.... If I hear that sound on the banjo I generally am like “I don’t want to be involved in this jam.” Because I feel like the banjo is a crucial part of an old-time band, and that style of banjo lends it to a different kind of rhythm to the music where it’s more of a groove than a drive. So,

particular tunes that way, and these theories could be investigated using a mixture of scientific and humanistic methods.

if I was to describe the difference between good old-time and bad I would say good old-time has “drive,” bad old-time has “groove.” And it’s set by the banjo, primarily. The banjo either propels or gives it that sort of New York-style sort of groove. I can’t remember the New York-style band but you might be able to name them for me.... [D: The Horseflies?] Yeah. That’s the band I’m thinking of. There’s a picture-perfect example of that sort of sound that I don’t – I couldn’t sit down and play with them with the way I play.

It is important to point out with this particular example that this musician is saying that he literally would be unable to make his style of old-time music work with certain other old-time musicians – the clash in rhythmic feel would be too glaring. While the musician in the preceding paragraph said that he wouldn’t *enjoy* playing with certain musicians, not being *able* to play with others is a different issue. And the musician making this claim has been playing this music since he was a young boy, has recorded several albums, and has won dozens of band and individual contests at fiddler’s conventions. It is a common trope among old-time musicians, especially when talking to non-players about the music, that one amazing thing about the music is that people who have never met each other can sit down and play tunes together (even if only the fiddler knows the tune at first) for hours. This is true for most outsiders with certain basic competencies on their instruments, but at least 2 insider musicians (recall the musician in the introduction who left a jam outside of his home region in frustration) who took part in this project have recognized that their musical style is simply incompatible with certain outsider approaches to old-time.⁸⁸

This question of dislikes brought one musician back to the issue of chordal accompaniment, and he told me:

I know a lot of people really fall over themselves for that big minor chord when it comes in or the four chord, but whatever.... They can be good, but I’m feeling

⁸⁸ Although, in all likelihood, the groove-centered outsiders, if they were to play with him, would probably enjoy the experience and may not even realize that this musician would be struggling to keep it together

overridden by that stuff being around the Asheville crowd. A lot of people are into new tunes and people who are really.... There's a certain sort of – I heard somebody call those tunes “precious” or something like that where they're just a little too pretty. Not that I'm not into a pretty tune. Bruce Molsky's done a lot to this music for drawing people in, but quit the pretty shit. There's a lot of people who play that same stuff. There's some real offenders, not around here necessarily, but they've gotten to be pretty prominent lately in the festival scene as far as the hot jams.

This same musician then used a term, “Cliffpop,” to describe the

hot tunes currently that are played. Like really overly-cleaned-up and watered down a little bit. Just lacking some of the grit and energy. Maybe not even lacking the energy but lacking the grit and realness of old-time music.... It's not dance music. They can play a square dance, but it's not the same.

This musician attributed this different aesthetic (“everything being as clean and crisp and warm as possible”) to “a lot of people who have some classical training. I think you're getting a lot of people who are listening to a while lot of other kinds of music.... I think modern production qualities are leeching into live old-time music in a certain sort of way.” After some issues with the security and management apparently harassing some attendees at a recent Clifftop, several musicians aired their frustrations on Facebook. But one commenter was also frustrated about something else she experienced at Clifftop which echoes the criticism of the above musician:

We were incredibly frustrated that everywhere we turned there was nothing but pretty, perfect fiddling and accompaniment. Whatever happened to gritty old-time music!? Everything sounded the same everywhere we went with the exception of a few select spots. The music was waaaaay too pretty this year. Joe Birchfield and Tommy Jarrell must be rolling over in their graves. They wouldn't have even placed in the fiddle contest... Sorry to be a hater, but I can't contain myself about this anymore. Did everyone under 25 decide to go to Berklee [college of music] to study old-time fiddling???

These comments are similar to comments by several of my other interviewees when they invoked the term “hippie” in describing a particular style of old-time. One insider musician's conception of “hippie” old-time involved rhythmic patterns not

conducive to dancing, too many notes, too many chords, and being associated with a Northern sound:

One thing that drives me up the wall is when there's a mandolin player playing note for note with the fiddle player. To me, it's just – that's just not old-time music. I mean it is, but it doesn't make me want to tap my toe. It sort of loses all of its rhythm when you're like "de-de-de-de-de," and it's just notey. To me that just feels like that's coming from a different source. Without being too regionalist about it it's like that's a Northern sound. That's hippie music. That's not real old-time music. Like just putting in a lot of fancy chords or using a [ii chord] or – there's just some chords that are just a little too fancy. People who are playing the music but are not of the music.

We might interpret this idea of "playing the music" but not being "of the music" to mean that this musician feels that those who grew up with the music or who are from the southern mountains wouldn't want to make these sort of changes to the music, especially if they conceived of the music as primarily dance music that requires a straight-ahead "drive" in order to work well for dances. Another like-minded musician told me that in determining that he doesn't like a certain kind of approach to old-time

a lot of it has to do with rhythm. There's certain kinds of rhythms that I don't really like. I'll give you an example of a tune that I don't like and the rhythm. I've never liked "Kitchen Gal," and, again, I think it's one of those ones that has one of those self-conscious chord changes and they'll play it like "DUM. DUM. DUM." Like when you stop the rhythm and it jerks – that annoys me.

The jerks that this musician refers to would be inappropriate as dance tunes, and it's possible that that is part of the reason for his dislike of them. And this same musician went on to say the following, which is noteworthy in that he labels himself as "still kind of [a hippie]" but is still highly critical of "hippie" old-time, for multiple reasons:

And, I mean I hate to use the term, but like "hippie" old-time music. Different times in my life I have totally been a hippie and still kind of am, but I don't like what people consider "hippie" old-time music very much. [D: What do you mean by "hippie" old-time?] I don't know how to describe that. If you're playing dance tunes and you can't dance to them – if you play everything at the same speed. Some of it's about the tone of the fiddle.... There's just a grit to it. There's a little bit of hardness to it, even if it's a sad or pretty song. It's gotta have this grit or this

grain or this edge to it, and I don't know how to describe it. If you hear it you know. There's just an edge, and it's pushing something, and if it's a dance tune you should be able to dance to it.... Banjo's another way to think about it. I don't necessarily like that more hippie stuff that will just be like "dicka-dicka-dicka"⁸⁹ – they go high up the neck, and you lose the rhythm of the banjo.

Notice that this focus on the banjo as crucial to determining the overall rhythmic feel was also mentioned by the first musician's response in this section. But the issue of chord choice came up again in the following musician's explanation of "hippie" music:

A hippie tune to me would be maybe just a newer generation tune that I might not even – that might have come from a newer old-time musician. I might not even know the source of it to be honest. I don't know: Bruce Molsky, Rayna Gellert, maybe they wrote it.... Or they take these songs and they put these chords in 'em that I don't think belong, these minor chords, and they make it all – they put these chords in there that make it less traditional sounding and more modern and new-age or something.... Or they'll hold certain parts out or drag certain parts out to add suspense.

I then asked this musician if she could think of any particular examples of this happening:

I can maybe think of some traditional tunes that have been hippie-fied. Or where I don't like that they put that chord in it. Maybe that "Going to Hamburg" where it hits that, I guess it goes to that C. They just drag that part out for – God, I don't know how long, and they hold it for-freakin'-ever. While I'm playing I get so ticked off 'cause I'm like "ARRRRGGGH. Why are they putting that chord there?" It just makes it so much, just – prettier. Just hold the G!

This is the same musician who experienced the intense visual imagery from tunes and who finds herself going into "trance" sometimes during jams. That she would be upset about musical modifications to further intensify those strong/trance experiences is puzzling. Obviously, there is no hard and fast rule that approaching the music generally as a means to achieve a strong or transcendental experience also requires changing the music's regional-stylistic conventions. The changes many other trance-seeking musicians make to the music seem to backfire for this particular musician, even though she seems to

⁸⁹ In my master's thesis research an insider musician told me that "hippie banjo" playing sounded like "bucka-bucka-bucka."

reach the same sort of pleasurable affective state via the music as those other trance-seeking musicians.

While no musicians mentioned that they disliked particular instruments (e.g., the hammered dulcimer, which will make many a jam musician's eyes widen in terror), many of the responses here seem to be related to music that fails to function as they want their music to function – as a sensory stimulus that can help induce special altered states of consciousness. For musicians who respond favorably to more high-arousal musical stimuli, “weak” or “hippie” old-time music, then, is just not pushing enough reward buttons in these musicians' brains to begin the cascade of processes that can lead to pleasurable altered states.⁹⁰ Woolf observed this psychoacoustic deficit as also being linked to certain thin-sounding instruments: “From the point of view of the old-time enthusiast, we might say that the thin tones of the Appalachian dulcimer or the solo guitar, accompanying a folksong, seem pallid beside the fullness, power, and high energy of the large jam” (1990, 206).

Expertise

Question 13 asked musicians about their level of expertise – a question that I had considered adding to the survey. One musician rated herself a 2, 2 musicians rated themselves a 3, 1 rated herself a 3.5, 2 rated themselves a 4, 1 rated himself between 4 and 5, and 1 rated himself a 5. Other musicians could not pick one number and instead had to qualify their response or break it down by different instrument. For example, one musician was a 5 on banjo and guitar but a 4 on fiddle. Another was a 3 to 4 on guitar,

⁹⁰ It's possible that this could be either because of the psychoacoustic response to the music (e.g., its tempo, loudness, aggressiveness of tone and attack), because of that sort of music's associations with other “hippie” music and its associated ideology, or some combination of the two.

but thought his fiddle playing ranged from 3 to 5 depending on what he was playing. One musician refused to choose a number for himself and thought there was no good way of comparing his skills to anyone else's in an objective way. One of the musicians who chose 4 did so because he thought he would never reach a 5 since there would always be people better than him. Overall these interviewees represented a wide range of expertise, though I was surprised at how humble some of these responses were, considering the tremendous skill and long experience of some of these musicians.

Self-Rated Type Rationale

The last interview question asked participants to explain how they came to choose the number that they did for themselves for the Self-Rated Musician Type section of the survey. Most of these responses focused more on justifying a more traditional Type rating than might be expected given the background of the musicians. Typically, this involved first conceding a fact that would move them closer to the less-traditional type and then countering that fact with a statement that would not only compensate for the first fact but would move them closer to the traditional type. For example, one musician didn't grow up in Appalachia but had family from the region. Another didn't grow up in the region but had spent most of his adult life around it learning from locals. Three musicians mentioned that they might not have had parents who played old-time music, but they grew up in a music-rich place, were "raised around it," learned from people who "lived pretty close," had a history of it farther back in the family, etc. This attitude is possibly due to the pejorative connotation that "revivalist" has had and continues to have in certain social and institutional circles (see Allen, 2010) or just from the general idea that "real" or "authentic" things are better than fakes.

Because these are idiomatic to each individual, all 11 musician's responses to this question are listed below, as well which number each musician chose for their place on the spectrum (scale ranged from 1 to 7) and a list of the main justifications given for their choice. The lower the musician's type number, the closer they felt they were to the prototypical traditional musician in the survey packet. These are not the full, verbatim responses, as many were exceedingly long and tangential, but I have attempted to preserve as much of the main ideas in each musician's statement as I could. While there are some overlapping themes, as mentioned above, each musician has a unique and nuanced position in regard to where they feel they lie on this scale:

Type 1: I do have some family who plays, but not a lot, and we don't live together. And that's why I picked that. It's not like my next door neighbors, but I just drove down to Fries and played with [friends], or I'd drive to Galax and play with [a friend], so I kind of took the neighbor out of context. Not next-door neighbor, but people who live pretty close.

Main justifications: 1) Family and community connections, 2) Grew up in the area

Type 2: In this day and age anybody, even if they grew up in [Type 1] circumstances – everybody's a lot more self-aware of the revival and old-time music. And the people that play it now – it's a little different thing. I don't know that purity ever completely existed, but I would say now everybody is a lot more self-aware as far as what the circumstances of what they're trying to do is, versus at one time it was just – that's what you did.

Main justifications: 1) Probably no such thing as a true Type 1 anymore

Type 3: When I first glanced at it quickly I was gonna say I'm not from the tradition, but then when I thought about it, I really identify with the region and the people. And although I grew up in northern Virginia... my mother's from the mountains of western North Carolina, and my father's from south central Virginia, and that's where all my people are. I just, like, identify. It's not just the music. It's the community, and I feel like I learned music not from.... I certainly didn't learn it from sheet music. I learned it in the traditional way of listening to it live and learning from other players.

Main justifications: 1) Identification with the region and its people, 2) Older family from region, 3) Learned live from other musicians

Type 3: Most people would probably say I was a 2 because I was kind of torn between.... I feel like I come from a place where the music is really important, but my parents didn't play old-time music. My grandfather played guitar, but I don't remember him doing that when I was growing up. My uncle has taught himself bluegrass banjo, but I don't remember him doing that when I was growing up. When I started taking an interest in it they started playing again, and that's become part of our family get-togethers. But none of them went to fiddler's conventions regularly or anything like that. And so I can't – while in one sense they're my inspiration, in a lot of ways they're not really my source or my teachers in terms of the way I play or the tunes. But it's more just like something kind of inside of me from generations further back.... I think why I kept going toward the Type 4 was because I play tunes from all over... and I think there's a group of younger people now who, with our access to the internet, it's like we come from a particular area, and we try to learn and honor the tunes from our area, but with the recordings that we have available to us we can learn tunes from all over just like our younger counterparts who aren't from the mountains – who are from Boston, Baltimore, Nebraska, wherever.... I like the tunes where I'm from – they're some of my favorite tunes, but I really wanna learn Kentucky tunes. I just wanna learn tunes that sound good to me and are fun to play and help me connect with other people that I like to hang out with. If they're playing Isham Monday tunes then I'm a-learn some Isham Monday tunes.... So it's hard to want to preserve the identity of where you're from but also embrace that everything's changing all the time.

Main justifications: 1) Older family played, but parents did not, 2) Plays music with those older family members, 3) Plays tunes from both home area and elsewhere

Type 3: I felt a connection to a sense of place or rural place that I didn't have at that time. Or a sense of community, or a sense of certain time. Like when people think it sounds primitive or old or something like that. I think that's a huge part of it for a lot of people. And it is for me, too. There's something about a tradition, especially for people that don't fit in, I think for Type 1 people, too. There's something countercultural about you in some way, and you find something that's old and continuous and connected to this one place, but it's also got darkness and songs about murder and songs about getting drunk and being rowdy or weird or that kinda thing. And there's something about that that I think draws a lot of people to the music. And it's a sonic thing, too. It's not just the words – what something's about. When somebody hears Roscoe Holcomb or Dock Boggs or something, and it doesn't fit in an un-nuanced idea of what rural – traditional values. It's very traditional, but it's not at the same time in the way that people think about tradition. And I think that's a huge part of it. And people hear that in the sound of the music, I think. But it's also connected to things that are outside, that extend outside of the music. And I think that's really important. It's

definitely important for me, and I think it's really important for other people too. The lifestyle these people had, and the folks that I knew and still know, that connection to that kind of lifestyle and that kind of place is still there. And other things – agriculture, I'm interested in local food production and different things like that that I do in other parts of my life. All that stuff is all connected somehow to me.

Main justifications: 1) Identification with the region and its people, 2) Alignment with countercultural movement

Type 4: My dad played the guitar and the banjo and he would – he wasn't very good, but he's how I learned. Then the musicians that I try to emulate or learn from now are also Alabama and Mississippi, whether it's through recordings or local fiddlers that are still alive or that learned from the old-timers from the area that I'm in.... I didn't have a great-granddaddy that played the fiddle, but I've tried to create as many lines back to someone that I can say "I learned it from him, and he learned it from sittin' on this guy's porch" in Alabama or – and a lot of those tunes aren't played as much, and people just don't know about them, and I want to try to be a link to someone else if they ever wanted to learn that tune.... Learning from my dad and learning Southern folk music from him, regardless of if it was old-time music, I did have that influence of hearing him play guitar, and it made an impression on me.

Main justifications: 1) Learned from direct family, 2) Desire to be a bearer of traditions associated with where he grew up

Type 4: If I had somebody else judge me they'd probably put me over on the traditional side because of the way I play and the way I present my music, but I think somewhere in between is where I am. My dad dabbled around with old-time fiddle and mandolin, so it was around the house in a certain way.... And I did grow up in the rural South or in a rural area period. An ultra-rural environment. I would consider it that because my family in every level was just about invested in rural stuff: farming.... [But most of] my exposure to this was through recordings. And most of the bands that I saw live – I mean I saw a couple old-time bands – but in my formative bands it was bluegrass. So I consider myself kinda down the middle 'cause a lot of my references were bluegrass, country, rock 'n' roll and oldies growing up.... I mean I could go back to eons and eons and talk about all the people that my grandparents said played like me, fiddle music, when they were children. But at the same time, I never knew those people.... I could probably list 36 musicians. But what do you consider a musician? It was like TV back then for those people. I don't look at it as as rare as some people do, at least in a historical context, to be related to people who played music.

Main justifications: 1) Learned from direct family, 2) Grew up in area with strong musical history, 3) Also exposed to other styles of music, 4) Older musicians in family not relevant

Type 4: I felt like I was in the middle of those because I was raised here, my parents don't play, but I have a lot of history that is tied to it that has been a part of my history. My family from West Virginia – it was something I was raised around. My parents – neither of them are musical at all. And my grandparents aren't necessarily. I guess my parents spent a lot of time around musicians, but I came to it in a later age. I grew up listening to Doc Watson, but I came to really appreciate the music as I got a little older. But I learned from my neighbors and the people around here and in the community, and I am mostly influenced by local artists as far as the music goes.... Because my parents don't play – because that wasn't necessarily when I was a young child – I wasn't raised in a family who played old-time. I felt kinda like I was right in the middle of the two.

Main justifications: 1) Grew up in area with strong musical history, 2) No musicians in family, 3) Exposed to old-time at young age, 4) Learned directly from local musicians

Type 5: I may have been a generation or two removed from this music, so I didn't directly see people playing it, but... my great uncle and great grandfather and great-great uncle, they liked the fiddle and banjo and went to fiddle conventions. And my great-grandmother was known as a really good dancer and went to square dances, and I've always heard about this. I guess I felt like I was carrying on a family tradition that I was a little bit removed from.

Main justifications: 1) Older family played, but parents did not, 2) Carrying on family tradition

Type 6: Well, I didn't grow up here in North Carolina, and I didn't have family members who played; however, I've been around it a good part of my life, and I have had lots and lots of experience. I've lived in North Carolina for 34 years, so that whole amount of time I've been around – I've been learning from people. I feel I have a lot of first hand connection with the tradition. And not just the music but the culture – living here and being part of the community in Western North Carolina. So I feel it's different than somebody from New York City who's just learned off of records and maybe has been to Mt. Airy but doesn't really have personal connections with the culture and the music here.

Main justifications: 1) Not from the region, 2) No musicians in family, 3) Lived in the region for decades, 4) Learned directly from local musicians, 5) Identification with region and its people

Summary

In light of the general pattern of responses across these questions, it seems that these musicians make different arousal demands depending on the type of altered state they prefer/are able to have. Some musicians require high levels of arousal and therefore want the music loud, fast, gritty, and to have insistent and punctuated “driving” rhythms. Other musicians, talked about but not well-represented by my interviewees, require lower levels of arousal and therefore want the music to be quieter, slower, and to have less of a sense of rhythmic urgency (“groove”) in order to highlight melodic, harmonic, formal and timbral nuances that might be harder to execute and process in a high-arousal style. To use a visual analogy, these high-arousal musicians want their music to take them on a roller-coaster ride; the low-arousal musicians want their music to take them on a meandering stroll through an enchanted forest. This is not to say that the intensity or the enjoyment of the experience is lower for those requiring lower-arousal stimuli. Anecdotal evidence from these interview respondents also supported links between personality factors and musical preferences, though in a way that still would require further empirical support.

Attempting to infer too much about a musician based on particular things mentioned in these interviews is a reminder of the benefit of having multiple lines of evidence and of the danger of researcher bias. For example, one interviewee, when answering the question about favorite parts of tunes, mentioned the tune “Tennessee Mountain Fox Chase” (listed by 4 survey respondents as a top-10 favorite and probably one of the most popular C tunes among outsiders today). As a result of my bias, I immediately thought he was going to point out the third part of the tune where the chord

progression goes: IV – I – IV – I – IV – I – V – I, a delicious progression for fans of the IV chord, but instead he cited the extra beat in the first part of the tune as the part he thought was “fun.” Had his response stopped there, I might have assumed that this musician was indeed in general more moved by an unconventional meter than by a repeating harmonic movement, and I might then have tried to offer some support for this based on his survey responses (e.g., this musician had the lowest possible score on the physiological responses scale (1.0 out of 5), was at about the 30th percentile in the Emotionality facet of the Openness domain, and was at about the 8th percentile on the Tellegen Absorption Scale).

Several times throughout the interview this musician remarked on his strong feelings about old-time music being primarily for dancing and how this influenced his taste in tune types and playing aesthetics, which might help explain his response of “strongly disagree” to the MP item (Q23) about preferring crooked and rare tunes (not great for calling dance figures to), which places him in the bottom 2% of that item’s distribution and would suggest that his fondness for “Tennessee Mountain Fox Chase” – a crooked tune – was an exception. Yet, he strongly agreed to the question (#21) about feeling emotions strongly due to certain chords in old-time music and, in fact, the next thing he said after mentioning the extra beat was “I know the D version of ‘Indian Ate a Woodchuck,’ that I just love it when – I think it goes to a four chord – that every time it comes around it just feels really good,” which aligned with his survey question response but which made him an exception to the links that I found between having strong experiences due to harmonic motion and the personality measures (Absorption, Emotionality, Imagination) that correlated with those experiences.

Perhaps the most interesting and puzzling finding from the interviews was that a paradox emerged of musicians who would speak of their dislike of “hippie tunes” or playing that was characterized by excessive changes to the music for the sake of intensifying affect (e.g., inserting substitution chords, modifying tune structure, using excessive dynamic changes, or playing tunes that structurally are outside the norm of old-time music) and then in almost the next sentence would tell me about how they have strong experiences with music and pronounced physiological responses (e.g., goosebumps) and give me examples of particular structural features that can create that affect. I have often understood that implicated in the derision expressed toward “hippie” approaches to old-time music was a general aversion to being overly affected by old-time music – regardless of the source of that affect. These interviews suggest that it is both cultural (i.e., a negative association with all things “hippie”) and musical factors that turn certain musicians off from the “hippie” tunes, but that this disparaging of “hippie” old-time music does not necessarily mean that the musicians doing the disparaging are uncomfortable with the idea of having strong experiences with the music (they just prefer those strong experiences to come from different sources than do “hippies”).

One such interviewee also demonstrated an interesting paradox in that she simultaneously had the second highest score on the absorption and physiological response scales but almost the lowest score on the Liberalism facet of the Openness personality domain. This interviewee identified a particular harmonic structure, movement from the I chord to the bVII chord (a common practice in mixolydian, dorian, and minor pentatonic tunes) that she was especially fond of. Interestingly, she referred to this as “going to the G chord” in a bluegrass song she was fond of that used the I to bVII

movement, but which was actually in C (so, C to Bb). Despite having no formal musical training, this musician (incidentally, a self-reported Type 1 born and raised and still living in Appalachia) identified a particular harmonic progression across multiple keys and styles of music that was particularly affective for her. I at first thought that she might have been using “G chord” as a term to mean *any* bVII chord, since many of the tunes in this player’s repertoire are in various modes with A as the root, but after giving me other examples I realized that she was *also* referring literally to playing the open G string on the bass (which could happen in a number of keys, for example a D tune, “Going Down the Lee Highway,” which hangs on the G (IV) chord for a while) because this gave her a special sensory feedback experience due to the resonance of her instrument when playing that pitch. This information, while not necessarily generalizable to my research sample, is an example of the benefit of an interview format: I would have been very unlikely to have gotten such a response via a paper survey.

Overall, these interviews show a wide range of variance among the interviewees in matters of musical taste, musical sources of pleasurable affect, and in the physiological responses and felt musical experience caused by those affective stimuli. However, there was also significant overlap in the fact that musicians were particular about what would lead to maximal enjoyment of the music and the musical experience. The shared disdain for “hippie” old-time and the shared love of “drive” and danceability in old-time music among so many of these musicians likely reflects particular conventions common to the old-time culture in northwestern North Carolina and southwestern Virginia. Had more of my interviewees come from more outsider-dominated areas within this general geographic area (e.g., Asheville, NC; Floyd, VA; Blacksburg, VA), it’s likely that the

musical aesthetics that were privileged would be less centered on drive and function as dance music and perhaps more focused on other, more low-arousal features of the music. Old-time music was powerful and a significant force in all these musicians' lives, though that power came via different mechanisms, and because of the large number of musicians in my interview sample who either grew up with the music or had invested themselves in the culture of Appalachian North Carolina and Virginia, this was also probably skewed to reflect more of a focus on extra-musical factors involved in affect than we might find in other old-time areas.⁹¹

⁹¹ Not to say that musicians in other areas don't have strong associations with or investment in their local music. The presence of regional fiddler's conventions, regional music recording collections, and scholarship on particular regions of old-time music other than those in NC and VA suggests that this sort of dynamic could be true elsewhere. What might make my population different is the large number of musicians in my study area claiming native status, which I would guess is a higher number than in other regions where old-time is played by mostly revivalists but with a smattering of locals with a family link to the music.

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION

The survey data, interview responses, and prior research in the field seem to support the idea that if there are not two general types of old-time musicians (i.e., those who are primarily affected by musical factors and seem to experience trance states, and those who are primarily affected by extra-musical factors and who do not experience trance states), there is at least a wide spectrum of musician types across these affective dimensions. Depending on how much weight one gives the myriad of variables identified in this study, various statistically-supported divisions of this population could be made, yet the sheer number of different constructs and measures involved would make any basic binary division which failed to take these all into account unsatisfactory. In the end, this study does not make the use of labels for multiple old-time musicians – each with unique perspectives on, preferences for, behaviors relating to, and experiences resulting from playing old-time music – any less loathsome. Comparisons of sub-group statistics – even those that seem to strongly support certain hypotheses or folk theories about the relationship between musical behavior/experience and location, biological heritage in the music, personality factors, and musical aesthetics – rely on averages to make those comparisons, and these results have demonstrated variability on measures not just between but within these subgroups. While we are still restricted to using terms like “most,” “many,” or “some,” when comparing types of musicians, the data collected here might help add some precision to those terms.

Although the conclusions from this study still posit the existence of a continuum of musician types (as did Rogers Thomas), this new data provides the first statistical support for the correlations between the above factors and also takes into consideration for the first time how the sources of affect and the felt experience of the music differ among different musicians. In the case of the musicians on the extreme opposite ends of these affective dimensions, this research suggests that the enormous cultural gulf between them does not magically close when the picking starts – it continues throughout the entire musical experience, coloring *why* they play the music, *what* in the music is emotionally affective, and *how they experience* that affect. While it is tempting to conclude that there has to be something conceptually uniting about two musicians who play not only the same type of music but who play tunes together in the same jam or in the same band, the reality is that the layperson perception of one united old-time community is, in many respects, an illusion. Though we still need much more empirical research, we could make the case that those musicians whose responses place them at opposite poles of this spectrum, when compared to one another, can be thought of as playing (and experiencing) different musics.

One important question, in light of these research findings, is where, conceptually, we ought to place the experiences of old-time musicians in terms of the various types of altered states of consciousness that have been described in the literature. Certainly, what most describe, no matter how varied or what the source, would fit under the general umbrella of altered states, and many of these musicians, even the insiders whose affect seems to come primarily from extra-musical factors, would fit Becker's category of "deep listeners." It is also obvious that these musicians, by and large, are

experiencing affect via multiple mechanisms, are having strong experiences (a la Gabrielsson) with this music and, though the source and nature of those experiences is highly variable, there is a remarkable degree of similarity in how the felt experience is described. Furthermore, the overwhelming degree of frequency with which my participants report experiencing physiological responses to old-time music dwarfs the numbers reported by Gabrielsson's participants.

But what these musicians experience doesn't seem to fit with spirit/possession trancing, including the religious ecstasies that Becker studied. It also doesn't seem to be the case that saying that most of these musicians (at least those whom I interviewed) play "festival" old-time style would be accurate. Too many specific musical features which contradict the sonic blending effect characteristic of "festival" style are mentioned in the interview responses. Is what these musicians experience best conceived of as something like the secular, solitary low-arousal trance contexts that Ruth Herbert describes, just in a group setting?⁹² This also seems unlikely. There is too much emphasis placed on the role that other musicians play in facilitating these experiences, by both trance-seekers and those who imbue tunes with meaning via their connection to particular people, to equate this to any sort of solitary experience. The research into combined flow states seems especially attractive in this regard, though studies involving combined flow in music jams are still uncommon.

Although he did not live long enough to see his research more fully developed, I find that the most satisfying way of understanding what certain old-time musicians

⁹² After all, some old-time musicians report having strong/trance experiences playing alone or even listening to recordings of old-time music by themselves. For example, one of my participants reported being brought to tears listening to one of his favorite old-time recordings.

experience is via Andrew Woolf's notion of "musician's trance," which invokes multiple affective mechanisms, both musical and extra-musical, that are unique to the experience of simultaneously *listening* (with all the affective potential that activity affords), and *creating*, with the help of other like-minded musicians, the music being listened to (with all the affective potential *that* affords)). The combination of the affective potential from both of these contexts, with all the musical and extra-musical factors at work, is powerful even for the most trance-averse musicians and facilitates, for musicians with particular neurological predispositions, the same sort of religio-mystic experiences that occur for some users of psychedelics such as MDMA and psilocybin. And because even the musicians in Gabrielsson's research, writing about strong experiences while they played music, did not report having the range, intensity, or frequency of these experiences at anything close to the levels reported by the musicians in my sample. There seems to be something about old-time music, musicians, the musical context, and perhaps the historical situation that differentiates them from musicians in general. Therefore, we might instead characterize what they experience not as "musician's" trance but as "old-time musician's" trance.

Participant Observation / Fieldwork / Confirmation Bias

Although fieldwork provided the basis for the majority of this research, it was not the central research activity. I did, of course, conduct significant fieldwork and participant-observation during the research period for this study, and while the observations that I made seemed to further substantiate the differences illustrated by the surveys and interviews, these are very difficult to interpret as not being the result of my

confirmation bias. During the transitional period when I began gravitating towards more quantitative methods, I slowly became aware of the bias that I brought to every one of my “field” excursions. My pattern detecting circuits were on high-alert, and while I remained interested in any new evidence that might call into question my pre-conceived notions of what was going on, I was especially happy when my field observations seemed to align with the music psychology literature and my own theories (such is the dangerous nature of bias). Many of the observations I made during fieldwork could, in theory, be scientifically measured, though it would take an army of research assistants to record the data. For instance, there are certain outsider musicians whose approach to old-time music is not necessarily incompatible with insiders’, but for whom playing in a jam with certain insider musicians would be unfulfilling in a number of ways. Whom somebody ends up playing music with is important, as it reveals much about their approach and response to this music, but it is too easy and tempting to make erroneous inferences based on observation alone. People sometimes find themselves in jam situations that they don’t want to be in and then have trouble finding a socially acceptable way to leave the jam. Other musicians are less picky about who they jam with so long as the music keeps going and there’s not too much talking. Some outsider musicians might make it a point to play with insiders while at Galax, Mt. Airy, or some other festival with a number of insider musicians present, but this is a special case, and usually the outsider musician jams with other outsider musicians.

There are practical reasons for this sort of self-segregation among insiders and outsiders, with the most obvious reason being shared repertoire and playing style. I personally know some excellent insider musicians, well-respected within old-time music,

who I'm sure would struggle to figure out chord progressions to unfamiliar tunes (especially crooked and obscure ones popular with outsiders) on the fly. I have witnessed this happen dozens of times. Other musicians, usually outsiders, thrive on the challenge of harmonizing novel melodies because they have the ability, probably drawn from prior musical training, to do so. Repertoire lists, which is something that I intend to collect and analyze in future research, will likely reveal that there are structural commonalities among the tunes that one plays, though linking this to individual personality is also tricky. For example, heavily syncopated tunes might appeal to a fiddler, but if the majority of those tunes happen to come from Mississippi bands who recorded in the late 1920s, we would need to parse this out to determine to what extent the musician likes the tunes because they are syncopated, to what extent the musician likes the tunes because they are from a particular place, and what other factors might be at work (e.g., the mere exposure effect).

Monster Jams and Talking Jams

How well musicians tolerate jams that either 1) have a large number of musicians or 2) spend considerable time talking rather than playing tunes seems to be related to the particular affective demands that musicians have for achieving the goal of their jam experience. This seems to vary with insider/outsider status and with expertise on one's instrument and with old-time music generally. A typical Thursday night jam at the Jones House in Boone, North Carolina in the summer might go like this to a newcomer observer: Musicians start to arrive at around 7:30 and socialize in the kitchen room until at least one fiddler arrives and sits down to play. This can happen almost immediately, but there have been some nights when musicians stand around talking, instrument cases

closed, for hours. Sometimes there is talk about which room to play in, and usually the conversation will be centered on acoustic and jam size considerations. The kitchen, with its wood floor, low ceiling, small floor space, and wooden cabinetry, tends to be a favorite for jams both because the sound tends to be more resonant than in other rooms and because, due to the space, only seven or so musicians can comfortably fit.⁹³ The middle room, which is an art gallery by day, is much larger and has carpeted walls and bright lights. Therefore, the front room, which is not as acoustically pleasing as the kitchen, is usually where a second jam will materialize if enough musicians are present. In nice weather the first musicians there might start a jam on the front porch. Once musicians have taken their spots in the jam circle there will be some discussion of what key to play in, followed by tuning and much socializing. Some time might pass before the musicians decide on the first tune to play, but once the music starts, there will be a combination of tunes and breaks for talking and rearranging of musicians until around 10:30, when the jam starts to wind down, chairs are put away, and people say their goodbyes.

But behind the scenes at these jams is a complex social drama, being played out in the subtle language and behavior of the musicians present. The behavior of the musicians can be seen as evidence of different individual affective requirements for enjoyable jams. For example, one unfortunate consequence of the egalitarian ethos of public jams is that due to a lack of official regulations, musicians have to work out for themselves how to structure the jam sessions. Jam size can become an awkward, glaring elephant in the

⁹³ Though recently I came downstairs from teaching and counted 11 musicians tightly packed into this kitchen room. They asked me if I wanted to join, despite there being literally nowhere else to put a musician except in the center of the circle.

room. The first jam might be just two or three people, but on busy summer nights, there can be 10 or more musicians jockeying for position in the initial jam circle. As a guitarist, you might be upset that there are four other guitarists present – the group certainly won't hear your individual contribution, and that much sound might make it hard to hear the melody line and the interplay of the other instruments. As a fiddler, having several other fiddlers in the jam with you is going to limit your choices for tunes (only the most insensitive fiddler would continually lead obscure tunes unfamiliar to the other fiddlers) and will limit how effectively your individual variations on the melody are communicated to the other musicians. The classic string band setup on most of the oldest recordings was one fiddle, one guitar, and one banjo. Each musician had a specific role and could be heard clearly in the context of the group sound. After the Highwoods String Band, the Fuzzy Mountain String Band, and other larger groups grew in popularity in the late 1960s, it became more common to see jams with multiple fiddles, guitars, a bass, and maybe another instrument like a mandolin. Still, there are preferences shared by most musicians (e.g., guitar and fiddle can be safely doubled; bass and banjo should not), which reflect psychoacoustic considerations about how we are able to process simultaneous sound streams.

In essence, large jams (more than seven musicians) are bound to violate both the unofficial rules of number of people on each instrument and on having so many musicians that the overall sound becomes washed out and orchestral. None of my interviewees, for example, claimed that large jams were their ideal jam experience.⁹⁴ On the contrary, most of them and most other advanced musicians whom I know have

⁹⁴ And, in fact, it was this survey item that differentiated them from the rest of my sample population

specific numbers of musicians on each instrument (usually one) that would lead to their ideal jam situation. But because musicians at the Jones House often arrive at different times, it is easier for newly arriving musicians to join the jam that's already going rather than try to start a new one in a different room. If there is only one fiddler present, the choice of newly arriving musicians is to either join the jam (although it is probably already at critical mass) or to sit and listen until a space frees up. Even when there is more than one fiddler present, by the time a jam has grown too large, it becomes too awkward for most musicians to say that they are not enjoying the current setup, that they are going to go to another room to start a new jam, and that they'd like some of the other musicians to also leave the big jam and play with them in the new jam. In fact, I've never seen this happen. There have been summer jams out on the porch that grew to fifteen or more musicians, assembled in a race track shape due to the shape of the porch, because it became more awkward and less convenient to split mid-session as time went on. What some musicians, (including me, I'll admit), will do instead is to slyly sneak away from a jam in progress during a break in between tunes and investigate what's happening in other rooms.

During one such jam last summer, I was one of two fiddlers out on the porch. I was familiar with the other fiddler's style (nuanced, complex, understated) and repertoire (some North Carolina standards but many obscure tunes from Kentucky), and found it surprising that he would find a large jam with mostly moderately-skilled musicians enjoyable. As more and more musicians filed out the front door with chairs and wedged themselves into the action, I saw a deer-in-the-headlights look come across his face. At that moment, I realized that he was plotting his escape, meaning that I would then be

stuck as the sole fiddler in a jam with 10 other musicians. After a tune finished, he vanished inside, yet all the other musicians remained comfortably parked outside with me. Some time later, when I decided I'd had enough and was going to head home, I walked upstairs to see if anybody else was around. In one of the small rooms with the door closed there was the escaped fiddler playing with two other talented and well-seasoned musicians (one of whom could claim "insider" status by blood kinship to a well-known traditional musician). We agreed that I had "taken one for the team" that night (although I did have some fun out on the porch).

For most outsider musicians the most obvious indicator of whether or not someone will tolerate a monster (large-sized) jam seems to be degree of expertise: highly-skilled and experienced players will quickly tire of large jams and will seek to escape, while beginner musicians seem content to stay despite the growing number of musicians. Yet I have observed that even highly-skilled and experienced insider musicians tend to be less concerned about jam size (or at least less-likely to take action to correct the situation). One wonders about the reasons for this behavior and how different affective typologies might be partially responsible. One obvious possibility is that for some musicians the social aspect of the musical event takes primacy over the actual music. And, of course, it's possible that certain cultural behaviors (e.g., leaving a jam to start another one with better musicians) would be considered rude in some circles. Another possibility is that beginner outsider musicians actually prefer playing in large jams for the sonic anonymity they provide, not because they find the sound more rewarding than a smaller jam. It is also unlikely that a beginner musician would find him-

or herself the sole player of their instrument in a jam where all the other musicians are highly experienced.

Experienced outsider players know that usually their most rewarding jam experiences will happen with similarly skilled musicians who also play compatible repertoire and styles, and they will plan carefully and negotiate complex social arrangements to ensure that these jams happen. For some musicians this invitation-only jams at people's homes or, during festival season, making "jam dates" with their preferred playing partners early at a festival, sometimes even in advance of arriving at the festival, rejecting other jam offers, and setting up these private/public jams so as to physically discourage others from joining. This can range from playing in an enclosed space like a tent or EZ-Up with side panels to disappearing deep into the woods to ensure privacy. Spontaneously organized jams can be stalled while looking for a proper musician to fill a missing instrumental role. If a first choice isn't available, sometimes one of the jam organizers will have to ask a musician to join without having full confidence in his or her abilities. As usually happens with exclusive clubs, if the newcomer turns out to be a disappointment, this will reflect poorly on the member who vouched for him or her. Care must be taken also to not assemble in a jam formation in public view before all the instrumental roles have been filled, since this runs the risk of a beginner musician or even an experienced musician who is a poor player walking up to the jam and asking the jam organizers, "You guys need a guitar?" or worse, presumptuously sitting down with instrument in hand.

Rogers Thomas found that these behaviors characterized the different sub-groups of old-time musicians in and around Asheville, with the insider musicians outside the city

limits being much more tolerant of lack of musical expertise than were the outsider transplants who hosted the jams in the city. Musicians observed and interviewed in my previous research and also in this study support that idea that this difference in jam behavior between insiders and outsiders is generally perceived to be true by old-time musicians. But the three most-likely causal mechanisms at work in determining attitude toward jam behavior – 1) affective requirements for a pleasurable musical experience, 2) musical expertise, and 3) cultural attitudes about proper social behavior – would need to be separated out in a future study to determine which tends to be more influential for any given musician, how those might change in importance in different contexts, and whether the data supports generalizing about insider and outsider (defined culturally, not musically) musicians' behavior in this way.

Trance Jams and Dance Jams

I have observed that certain old-time musicians often modify the historical conventions of old-time music in order to increase the pleasurable affect of the musical experience. While many of these conventions have been discussed by my interviewees in the context of making the music sound more “hippie” (e.g., by choosing certain accompanying chords), two aspects of musical change that even one naïve to old-time music could observe between certain jams (usually characterized by insider or outsider status) are the arrangement of the instrumental roles and the duration of the tunes. One example of an unorthodox approach to these musical aspects is from a rendition of the tune “Needlecase” that I observed at the 2014 Mt. Airy Fiddler’s Convention. The jam was taking place after dark under a permanent picnic shelter. There were eight musicians present, including three fiddlers, and at least as many bystanders. I was acquainted with a

few of these musicians already enough to know that they would in no way fit the “insider” criteria, but I was unsure about the status of some of the others (though if forced to guess I would have chosen “outsider” for all of them based on their choice of clothing, choice of tunes, manner in which they were playing the music and moving to it, and the lack of Southern or mountain accents in their speech, among other indicators).

When I first walked up to this jam they were playing “Deergoat,” a groovy, loud, crooked, newly-composed tune in pentatonic minor, and I could tell by the bassist’s playing that he was a skilled musician for whom old-time was probably one of many types of music that he played. “Needlecase,” their next tune, is a common, D major, regular meter tune which is harmonized with the standard I, IV, and V chords. One fiddler began playing the melody of the tune, and the other instruments slowly joined in, with the exception of the bass. Even if the bassist had not heard the tune before, it couldn’t have possibly taken him 2 minutes to figure out how his part went – some jam versions of tunes don’t even *last* for 2 minutes. Yet he waited for exactly 2 minutes after the start of the tune to enter, and when he did, it was with an extended descending lead-in to the tonic note on the first beat of the first part of the tune – tastefully constructed and perfectly executed and the sort of thing one would normally hear in a performance, rather than a jam context. This drew loud whoops from the other musicians and from the audience, and I felt a little tingle when the deep, punchy tone of the bass filled out the sound of the jam. The musicians played the tune for almost 10 minutes total – an abnormally long duration for a jam without a dance audience, confirming the bassist’s tacit assumption that the tune would be played for long enough that even with a 2-minute delay, there would be more of the tune played with his bass accompaniment than without

it. After the tune ended, the musicians discussed how enjoyable it was, praised the bass player for his entrance, and talked about how good the tune “Needlecase” is structurally.

I have rarely, if ever, observed these sorts of behaviors in a jam when it’s led by insider musicians. There are obvious reasons why this might be true. For example, for insider musicians used to playing music for dancers, concerts, competitions, radio shows, and recordings, doing what is essentially an extended re-mix of a tune does not fit those any of those contexts very well. For the insider musicians whom I know in North Carolina and Virginia, if the bass player didn’t start playing right away on a tune, this would be cause for concern. Instead of the delayed bass entrance giving them a pleasurable psychological reward, they would probably find it inappropriate, and, in reality, would have likely stopped the tune well before the 2 minute mark to see what was wrong with the bass player. For insider musicians who pride themselves on playing the music “straight-ahead” or “traditional,” this sort of unorthodox arrangement would conflict with their musical values. Outsider musicians who play the music this way in jams are taking inspiration from genres outside of old-time such as progressive rock, jam-bands, jazz, pop, classical, and others. But in addition to the delayed bass, the 10 minute length without a dance context suggests that the musicians were enjoying their own music in the same way that one might chew gourmet food slowly – they wanted to prolong the intensely pleasurable experience as long as possible until it had run its course (ceased to maintain the same level of pleasure). In jams it sometimes takes several iterations of the tune before everybody is confidently playing their part, and it is only when that solid accompaniment base is established (i.e., when all have achieved a state of flow) that fiddlers will attempt the more daring melodic and rhythmic variations and

other instruments will start to “dig in” and groove off of one another (i.e., Juslin & Västfjäll’s emotional contagion occurs more easily when musicians appreciate what one another is playing during the tune).

Insider musicians seem less apt to approach the music in this way and are less likely to play it (and possibly to hear it) in a manner that would allow them to not lose interest after three or four minutes unless, of course, there are dancers present. To what degree this is related to the skill/challenge aspect of the flow experience is not yet known. But the presence of dancers can change the entire focus of the music and often results in more energetic playing and more time being spent playing this tune (especially if the dancers are having fun). This is not to say that dancing doesn’t occur with outsider musicians as well – it often does, though it is usually with the outsider musicians whose aesthetic approach is more in line with the “driving” old-time so well-liked by my interviewees. Also, while it seems to be true that insider jams generally involve spending less time on each tune than outsider jams, these shorter insider tunes are often played with exceptional musical skill and energy and have tremendous affective power for listeners and participants (if one is lucky enough to find him or herself involved one of these jams). Some younger, highly-skilled insider musicians whom I’ve been fortunate enough to jam with over the last year or so have played tunes so well, especially on fiddle, that at the end I had to stop myself from exclaiming “Jesus Christ!”, “Holy Shit!”, or some other deity-related ejaculation so as to not risk offending them (using Christian words as interjections is frowned upon by some insider musicians). As much as I was enjoying playing guitar to this outstanding fiddling, the tunes only lasted for about 2 minutes each. It seemed as if I was getting much more out of the experience of hearing

these tunes than were the other musicians playing them with me, but it's important to note that inasmuch as they might have been careful about sharing their emotions related to the music, I was doing the same by consciously refraining from commenting. Because nobody else was making any comments in that regard or otherwise displaying intense enjoyment of the music, it seemed inappropriate for me to do so. It is not hard to imagine, then, how this learned emotional self-regulation might play out on a larger scale within the insider culture.

Parallels with Sacred Harp Singing

The Sacred Harp, or “shape-note,” singing community, which is also undergoing a revival by those who come to the music as outsiders, is a potential analog to the old-time music community, and mixed-methods research could help us answer the questions of in what ways and to what degree the musical experience is different for different types of singers and how these differences help us better understand the insider/outsider dynamics of the community. My first exposure to Sacred Harp singing happened while in residence at Brown, and I was immediately struck by the affective power of the music. Hearing and feeling the live sound, coupled with certain lyrics and the experience of singing this music with others, produced physical responses (chills, tears, feeling of warmth) that are characteristic of strong experiences with music and which were perhaps even more powerful for me than those I've experienced with old-time music. I was also immediately struck by the glaring incongruity between the personality and background of the singers present (mostly Brown students, some of whom were GLBT, who were seemingly very liberal, open, empathetic, and intellectually curious, and many of whom

were ethnically Jewish but agnostic or atheist in practice) and the lyrical content of the songs (Christian) and the Southern culture which currently nurtures the music (especially a state like Alabama, which, historically, has not been fond of *any* of the characteristics of the aforementioned Brown singers). But the fact that outsiders are drawn to Sacred Harp is even more bizarre than in old-time music. As Kiri Miller, a Sacred Harp singer and ethnomusicologist phrases it, “what are a Southern conservative Christian and a liberal queer agnostic intellectual doing singing hymns together” (2008, 38)? Miller’s ethnographic study of this musical community reveals striking parallels between these two musical communities, and the pages that follow will draw heavily on her research.

The Sacred Harp community is characterized by the same bizarre paradox as the old-time community: obvious and persistent differences between different sub-groups of musicians despite constant musical collaboration and interaction. These differences extend into many different areas, and singers are constantly reminded of them when interacting with one another. In addition to the obvious difference of religious belief, Miller found that

many other important sites of difference exist in this community – class, political ideology, rural versus urban background, musical experience, formal education.... Sacred Harp singers constantly posit difference – between traditional and new singers, Southern and Yankee, Christian and non-Christian, family and visitors, locals and strangers.... (Ibid., 199)

Yet Miller claims that these differences can easily be “rhetorically erased” due to the “racial nondiversity” of Sacred Harp singers and because “socioeconomic divisions are largely occluded” (Ibid.). The “overwhelming whiteness” of the singing population is also true of the contemporary old-time musicians, and it is easy to see how this and the fact that ostentatious displays of wealth are extraordinarily uncommon at old-time music

events combine to make it easy for insider/outsider distinctions to become blurred even to old-time musicians themselves. But traditional Southern singers can come under fire from their own for seemingly betraying their cause. As has happened in the old-time community over the issue of insiders' marijuana use, Miller found that "some lifelong singers have been criticized by family or fellow singers and rejected by church brethren for singing with the known liberals, gays, and unbelievers who revere them as tradition-bearers" (Ibid., 170). Given the political climate in the U.S. in recent years and the substantial ideological chasm that exists between singers from rural Alabama and from western Massachusetts, not to mention the travel time between those places, the fact that these disparate groups sometimes attend the same singings is evidence for the Sacred Harp's importance in their lives.

Miller writes that "generational, religious, political, and geographical differences would ordinarily prevent these people from crossing paths at all," yet singers experience so much pleasure from singing that they are willing to go to great lengths to ensure that they experience it fully. Conventions for Sacred Harp singers, where these disparate groups of people unite, are analogous to fiddler's conventions for old-time musicians, though crucially different in several ways (e.g., there is usually one hollow square at the convention, which all singers participate in simultaneously, vs. the hundreds of concurrent jam sessions that take place at fiddlers conventions). Nevertheless, the types of people who attend Sacred Harp conventions overlaps considerably with those attending fiddler's conventions. Miller observes that the attendees at Sacred Harp conventions include

young children born into rural Southern "singing families"; Southern urbanites in search of regional cultural heritage; American folk music fans from college-age to

graying; Christian and Jewish singers who have grown dissatisfied with their institutional religious experience; early-music lovers who think the open harmonies and straight-tone singing have a medieval sound; and young punk musicians who appreciate the volume, “rawness,” and do-it-yourself anticommercial ethos of Sacred Harp.

Rather than making a culturally-determined dichotomy between insider and outsider singers, Miller finds that the concept of an “imagined diaspora provides a membership category that transcends the binary distinctions of South versus North, insider versus outsider, traditional versus newcomer, rural versus urban, and Christian versus folk enthusiast without eliminating the very real importance of the divisions in individual conceptions of the national community” (Ibid., 33). Miller argues that in contrast to the common stereotypes applied to the North versus South binary, “many Northern singers have evangelical Christian convictions and are neither liberal nor ‘postmodernist’,” and that “Southern singers are not exclusively Christian or politically conservative” (Ibid., 34). But, as is the inevitable outcome when there is no survey data to reference, the crucial distinction here comes down to what we (both scholars and practitioners of a music) understand “many” to mean in a statistical context. Certainly, the knowledge that “many” meant 40% of the Northern singers above would change our entire understanding of the Sacred Harp revival. But discovering that “many” meant only 2% of all Northern singers probably would not change the utility of using the North/South binary to contrast the various religious beliefs of Sacred Harp singers.

Due to a lack of objective survey data, and because that data (if it were to be gathered via a stratified, random sample – and good luck with that!) could be interpreted in any number of ways, for Miller what matters is that these divisions are real in the minds of singers. Her application of the diaspora concept to Sacred Harp singers seeks to

“acknowledge the differences singers use to place themselves in the national community” while avoiding the reinforcement of “stereotypical dichotomies” (Ibid.). As old-time musicians acknowledge difference (often using the terms “revivalist” or “traditional” to refer to the great binary), so do Sacred Harp singers understand there to be certain factors related to birthright, regional culture, religion, and age at which he or she began singing that would make someone a “traditional” singer and someone else not a traditional singer. As such, Milled found it rhetorically useful to contrast “lifelong” singers (those born into these Southern “singing families”) with “diaspora” singers (singers not born into the tradition but whom aspire towards some sort of insider status). While the concepts of “lifelong” and “diaspora” singers do not exactly map onto the distinctions that bifurcate old-time musicians, and not all non-lifelong singers are “diaspora” singers, in the paragraphs that follow, I will use “insider” and “outsider,” respectively, to refer to these two basic types of singers for sake of comparison with old-time musicians.

There are enough similarities between Sacred Harp music and old-time music to suggest that similar structural features might be responsible for the hypnotic / trance-like effects of the music. As with old-time music, Sacred Harp demands a steady, punctuated pulse which commands the focus of everybody involved. There is also repetition built into the Sacred Harp songs— via “‘singing the notes’,” multiple verses, and repeated choruses” (Ibid., 57) – similar to the structure of fiddle tunes, and which certainly is a large contributor to affect. Miller observes that “ordinary experience of time is displaced by these indefinite circular repeats.... Singers characterize these moments as some of the most affecting of the singing day” (Ibid.). The repetitions that characterize old-time jam tunes can be overwhelming for certain musicians. It is never right at the beginning of the

tune that people report the highest degree of enjoyment, but later, when the tune has had enough time to take hold, when the musicians have synchronized with one another, and when people really start to “dig in.”

But this is for instrumental fiddle tunes, usually with no programmatic meaning save for what we can glean from the tune title.⁹⁶ In the case of Sacred Harp, pairing highly affective, repetitive music with lyrics (imbued with religious or non-religious personal associations) can have interesting consequences. Miller found that “even for singers who would not usually express belief in an afterlife, the compelling repetitions that characterize the hollow square can engender such belief ... if only for a few moments” (Ibid., 47) and that

some singers describe having a kind of conversion experience at the center of the square, wherein they suddenly identify with the expressed ideals of the Sacred Harp community; others recount similar experiences but eschew the language of Christian conversion, instead describing an active choice to “surrender” or “be swept away” in collective sound and feeling. (Ibid., 73)

Miller’s research makes it clear that Sacred Harp singing is often a peak/strong experience music for singers: “When the [group’s] energy is high, a look around the room shows some singers making expansive gestures, others clenching fists, many with eyes and books closed and both hands in the air” (Ibid., 56), and we learn of Miller herself at her second-ever convention being brought to tears during the singing of songs in honor of recently deceased singers (Ibid., 24) and acknowledging that the singing “profoundly moved” her, despite not being Christian herself. Leading a song, which engages multiple mechanisms of emotion, “can overwhelm the senses.... Both new and

⁹⁶ Though, of course, these tunes can have powerful extra-musical associations (i.e., being associated with particular people, places, and events). It is unknown to what degree multiple repetitions of tunes modulate the intensity of those associations.

lifelong singers are often breathless and shaky when they return to their seats” (Ibid., 47). Obviously, the acoustics of being located in the center of what could be hundreds of people all facing you would be ideal for hearing all vocal parts at near-even intensity levels. For this reason, and also because leaders can pivot 360 degrees and see faces and bodies reacting to a musical selection that that leader is in charge of (at least for a moment), the hollow square is a “portable focal point of emotional intensity” (Ibid., 75).

Looking at music as a sonic version of a pleasurable psychoactive drug, the center of the square is the site where many new singers experience their first real “high”:

“Experienced singers persuade family or strangers to come stand in the center while they lead, because ‘Once it gets ahold of you, it won’t let go.’ People use the language of addiction or conversion in describing their experience in the square: ‘I was hooked.’ ‘I have to get my fix.’ ‘I was transformed.’ ‘It was my Sacred Harp baptism.’” (Ibid.).

Leading a tune in the center of the square also puts leaders in charge of gauging the level of affect the singers are experiencing and adjusting the length of the song accordingly –

“During these repeats many leaders walk or pivot around in a circle in the center of the square, making eye contact with members of each section as they cue successive entrances in fuguing tunes. If the class is deeply engaged the leader might cue a third or fourth repeat” (Ibid., 57) – which is also what fiddlers do during old-time music jams.

Affective Display

How Sacred Harp singers outwardly display their emotional engagement with the music also is similar to the situation in old-time music: different sub-groups of singers tend to abide by different cultural conventions of emotional display. In Miller’s study we

learn of outsider singers in western Massachusetts who exhibit a highly-demonstrative performance style, which Miller likens to the symptoms of trance states:

The singers in [Western MA] manifest visible signs of the intense physical effects that virtually all long-term Sacred Harp singers describe, among them the trance processes catalogued by Judith Becker: “emotional arousal, loss of sense of self, cessation of inner language, and an extraordinary ability to withstand fatigue” (2004:29). As a group, Western Massachusetts singers are exceptional in their outward display of these effects; they rock back and forth in their seats, look skyward or shake their heads while leading, and stamp their feet. (Ibid., 121)

In old-time music, the equivalent to Western Massachusetts singers might be certain younger outsider musicians, perhaps the ones seated so closely together that their legs intertwine, shoeless, eyes closed, heads and bodies swaying synchronously with the pulse of the tune. But recall that insider old-time musicians and dancers/spectators are sometimes more demonstrative (measured in loudness with a dB meter) than are outsiders. Especially when there is alcohol around, insiders are liable to whoop, holler, shout encouragement at one another, and spontaneously dance along to the music. These are, in certain contexts like Saturday night at a fiddler’s convention, culturally-acceptable ways of displaying one’s enjoyment of the music. Crucially, insider old-time musicians and fans tend to respond this way only when the music has the amount of “drive” required for good dance music. The outsider players I’m describing above would probably be acting the way they were because the music had the “groove” required for the musicians to have strong or trance experiences and would not be dependent on the presence of dancers or any sort of audience.

This links back to the inward vs. outward direction of the music that tends to be different between insiders and outsiders. As Miller observes with Sacred Harp singers:

A much-remarked attribute of many Western Massachusetts singers and leaders: their participation is so emotional and physical that it can seem closer to the

trance traditions of charismatic churches than the tightly controlled, masterful leading style of Southern lifelong singers who grew up in the singing-school tradition. Some visiting singers are taken aback by this local style – “shaking” and “speaking in tongues” *suggest an inward-directed transcendent experience rather than an outward-directed concern with the group experience of the whole hollow square* [my emphasis]. (Ibid., 120)

An insider old-time musician whom I’ve interviewed multiple times and who has been a long-time source of an insider perspective into the old-time world once told me that playing old-time music should be about how a musician can use his or her skills to show off a tune, rather than using a tune to show off a musician’s skills. I’ve often thought about how this perspective can be applied generally to the insider approach to emotion and meaning in old-time music. Using one’s skills to show off a tune is evidence of humility, sure, but it is also evidence of a respect for the older source musicians and the communities of people who nurtured old-time music and dance for so long that we don’t know who composed the majority of this music. The attitude this musician describes proclaims that they are merely temporary stewards of something of great cultural significance – something that is more to them than a mere musical composition. Therefore the focus should be on the tune but also on the whole tradition, and not on the individual musician playing the music.

Same Music, Different Meanings

As in old-time music, musicians whose strong experiences don’t seem to involve certain extra-musical factors (e.g., worship) important to some insiders are often thought of as missing out by those insiders: As Miller puts it:

Singers agree that Sacred Harp can afford relief from grief, anxiety, and feelings of alienation, but their explanations for how and why this effect is accomplished are less consistent. Some suggest that all group singing can be similarly efficacious, referring to the embodied experience of singing open harmonies, feeling the blend or clash of timbres, and moving in rhythm. Words are beside the

point.... But others find this stance incomprehensible....[e.g. a Southern Christian singer who remarked] 'But how much richer and fuller our experience is when we join mind, heart and voice to worship our Creator in music and words!' (Ibid., 126)

An example of a parallel in old-time music are the “workshops” hosted by insider musicians at the Mount Airy fiddler’s convention. At these workshops local insiders tend to tell stories of musical ancestors, recently deceased musicians, and special memories associated with tunes, songs, instruments, etc. They might play through a tune a few times, but very little of the three workshops I’ve attended had anything in the way of actual musical instruction. Yet, all were attended by at least two-dozen outsider musicians, who arrived with their instruments tuned and ready to play and with their digital audio recorders on standby. While I’m sure that some of the outsiders in attendance thoroughly enjoyed these workshops because they are legitimately interested in the cultural context and history of this music, I’m also sure that some left disappointed by the focus on old stories instead of specific instrumental techniques.

A musician whom I interviewed for my master’s thesis, an outsider originally from New England who had moved to North Carolina in the late 1960s to be closer to old-time music, exemplifies this attitude of musical, but not necessarily cultural interest – what Rogers Thomas would call a “transplanted revivalist.” When I asked him about seeking out the locals, since he was involved in the first wave of the old-time revival, he told me: "I haven't a clue who they are. Not disrespecting them – I never really wanted to know who they were." This musician later told me about how despite living for 17 years near a club that features live local bluegrass music, he has never been inside: "That's how little I care about – I don't think it's big-headed, but I'm content with the music I play and who I want to play it with, and I don't even want to go see what's going on down there”

(Wood 2009, 50). My prior research with the string band group at Brown University revealed a similar attitude: they were there overwhelmingly for the music and to jam with others and had only a marginal interest in the historical context of it.

I'm speaking here in generalities. Of course, as with old-time music, factors extrinsic to the music play a role in outsider singers' affective experiences, and factors intrinsic to the music play a role in insider singers' affective experiences. And, as with old-time music, extra-musical meaning related to previous musical memories can be an increasingly important source of affect, even for outsider singers with no investment in Christian doctrine. One can also look at Sacred Harp in terms of what helps shape the affective experience for both types of singers. For example, singing with other people, regardless of the lyrical and musical content, is a special sort of activity which, especially in disconnected modern Western society, is a rare moment of intimate human interaction. Miller argues that group singing "communicates intent in uniquely powerful and multivalent ways: as a shared visceral experience and a form of physical and emotional intimacy, it continually points to the failures of speech (2008, 208)."

Outsider Transformations

The issue of outsiders transforming a tradition via their involvement is true of Sacred Harp as it is with old-time. This includes performance practices such as "vocal timbre, rhythmic style, treatment of repeats and verses, seating arrangement, means of finding a starting pitch, distribution of singers among the parts, and leading method" (Ibid., 51) and, of course, the choice of what songs to lead at singings. Early in my own Sacred Harp experience I realized that I tended to prefer songs that were simpler, major key, and more hymn-like over the complex minor-key songs that were led frequently at

the Brown singings. For the few times that I led songs myself I chose those that had my preferred characteristics, and I began to informally look for patterns in the musical structure of songs that certain people tended to lead. Although I only have my anecdotal observations as evidence, and certainly, as in old-time music, leaders sometimes choose what they think would be appropriate for the group rather than what they would themselves most prefer, I noticed that individual leaders tended to choose songs that exhibited similar structural elements which I took to be personal choices. While I have not attended a singing in the rural South, I would imagine that musical structures shared by the songs frequently chosen by lifelong singers would be different than the structures in songs frequently chosen by diaspora singers. To link this somehow to the differences in musical preferences among old-time musicians would require a change in research methodology.

Miller claims that “the preferences of some leaders can be assessed based on physical appearance and regional accent even if they are not well known to the class,” and she admits that “like many young newcomers from folk-revival back-grounds, I virtually always led minor fusing tunes until people began to tease me about it” (2008, 93), suggesting shared communities of musical taste (or inexperience with reading what sort of song would work best at a given point in a singing). But certainly it is not physical appearance and accent that *cause* the difference in taste; these are proxies for a complex set of psychological differences between different types of singers that would be best examined via controlled experimental methods. Perhaps the “minor fusing tunes” that Miller writes about are the equivalent of “crooked” tunes in old-time music, which tend to be preferred by musicians high in Openness, Absorption, etc. Therefore, a beginning

research question could be whether the same sort of musical devices (e.g. unconventional metric structure or repeating I-IV harmonic motion) are appealing to outsider musicians of a certain psychological makeup regardless of the specific music they prefer. Another way to examine this would be to look for links between a singer's formal musical training (e.g., in Western classical music) and his or her preferences for certain types of Sacred Harp songs.

As with old-time music, the degree to which experimentation and deviation from the established norms of the music is acceptable varies from outsider to outsider, and in the discourse of the community, it is characterized in how "traditional" a singer's approach is to the music. Some outsiders aspire to be "traditional" via their musical behavior (since they cannot change where they were raised or how they came to sing Sacred Harp). Miller gathered survey data that illustrates this point:

Of the 109 singers who responded to my survey questions in 1999, only 16 percent identified themselves as lifelong Sacred Harp singers, but 39 percent responded positively to the question 'Do you consider yourself a traditional singer?' Another 25 percent responded with some variation on "I try to be." 32 percent responded negatively. (Ibid., 53)

This is similar to the self-rated musician type scale I used in my survey, and, like my respondents, Miller's survey respondents understood the term "traditional" to reference both factors outside of their control (e.g., regional origin, family links to the music) and within their control (e.g., time spent attending insider singings). But, looked at another way, a primary characteristic of being a "traditional" Sacred Harp singer or old-time musician could be a lack of conscious focus on musical nuances. In contrast to the classical violinist-turned-fiddler, who must take great care not to slip back into "violin mode" (assuming that the musician can "code switch" with some degree of success),

“traditional” musicians, it is assumed, don’t know any other way of playing or singing other than what they absorbed as children, and therefore perhaps fetishize the musical nuances less than outsiders do. One Southern Christian singer gave Miller an excellent explanation of this sort of attitude, which combines a lack of focus on musical nuance with a strong focus on religious function:

I have no idea what I am doing as a ‘vocal stylist.’ I just sing and don’t think much about what it sounds like, and I don’t think it sounds very good!! But I believe what really counts is NOT what it sounds like. It is to me a form of worship, praise and entreaty to God. I suppose spiritual values make me a “traditional singer.” (Ibid., 54)

But it is important to emphasize that a lack of *conscious* focus on some musical feature in no way indicates that that musical feature is not important to an insider musician. One particular area of contestation in Sacred Harp that deals specifically with the conscious attention to musical nuance is the issue of the raised sixth scale degree, which some outsider singers insist is to be raised in minor songs to match how insider singers sing them (i.e., in the Dorian mode), despite being notated as flatted. Miller details the debate around whether or not this is actually common among insider singers and in what contexts, and in the process of her research on the issue had an outsider singer tell her that “it’s not because traditional singers can’t hear, but because they can hear MORE that they don’t like to discuss the raised sixth. The subtleties involved make it very hard to talk about” (Ibid., 88). This certainly merits empirical investigation, especially in light of the statement from another diaspora singer who was trying to help Miller in her raised sixth research. This singer had “contacted every ‘traditional singer’ [she] could get ahold of... and none of them could tell [her] for sure if they were raising sixths/singing accidentals or not (there is some sort of a moral there.... Most did not seem

to believe this was too important.)” (Ibid., 90). Although a study could be designed to measure when and to what degree traditional singers are raising the sixth scale degree in minor songs, of more importance here is the implication that traditional singers don’t seem to concern themselves with such minutia. Perhaps it is unlikely that whatever momentary dissonance is created from the simultaneous singing of a minor second is going to interfere with the function of the music for insider singers, but it could also be the case that this is just a question of implicit vs. explicit knowledge of music – another rich area of future study in the field of traditional music revivals.

As argued in this section, the parallels between Sacred Harp and old-time music are considerable. As with old-time music, it seems reasonable to expect that a distinguishing feature of the national Sacred Harp community would be Openness to Experience and possibly absorption and other related personality factors. How these and other differences manifest themselves in various types of Sacred Harp singers and in their musical and affective behavior is certainly worthy of future mixed-methods research. For example, if old-time musicians are experiencing an “old-time musician’s” trance, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, one line of research going forward could be exploring how whatever Sacred Harp singers experience might be analogous to or distinct from that trance experience. In general, the empirical reality of these differences in the Sacred Harp community would provide further support that what I and other have found in the old-time music community is an important phenomenon and that it might also be evidence of a more general pattern of behavior that we can expect to find across other musical revival communities.

Methodological Considerations

Sampling

One difficult issue to overcome in this sort of research is the challenge of finding a random, stratified sample of old-time musicians from which we might be able to better generalize to the old-time revival as a whole. Although many musicians have social media accounts, not enough of these are insider musicians, especially older insider musicians, for this to be a comprehensive way of reaching representatives of all the various musician types. Fortunately, the fiddler's conventions that bring these musicians together by the hundreds or even thousands tend to attract insider musicians if they live nearby. Because these are multi-day events, with the right approach, significant travel funds, and perhaps with help, one could deliver thousands of these surveys in a summer. Like Wooley, I would guess that most old-time musicians think of the old-time community as a diaspora more than a confederation of different regional factions, and certainly the event that brings the most musicians from the widest variety of places is Clifftop. However, Clifftop is not attended by many insiders, and some outsiders with particular attitudes about the music have stopped attending or have never been. Clifftop is, to my knowledge, also the most expensive festival to attend, and not many musicians live very close to the campgrounds, again discouraging certain subgroups of musicians from attending. In the case of my research, musicians who either live in North Carolina and Virginia or who enjoy the music from this region enough to attend the Mt. Airy and Elk Creek conventions make up the vast majority of my sample, but to what extent my findings are generalizable outside of my sample, I cannot say.

Musical Primacy Scale

My theoretical question groupings from the Musical Primacy scale turned out, after principal component analysis, to be erroneous, at least inasmuch as my participants would answer similarly across questions in each of my categories. MP Factor 1 (Musical & Social Conservatism), for example, pulled from 3 different categories from my original groupings: 1) formal musical training/musicianship, 2) attitude toward variation / musical approach, and 3) jam attitude. MP Factor 2 pulled from 2 of my categories: 1) affective power of musical structure, and 2) jam attitude. The other 3 factors, while not used in analysis, also drew from multiple categories. However, there was little way I could have accurately predicted which of these items would have intercorrelated, and now we have empirical evidence that certain of these items seem to be more strongly related to one another than others (according to my sample population). MP Factor 1, according to the data analyses, was a useful factor in illustrating differences in my sample population, and with more refinement, this type of scale could be applied to other musical traditions.

Subject Expectancy Bias

It is possible that some of my musicians, especially insider musicians who are passionate about issues of cultural politics when it comes to old-time music, answered this survey and their interview (if they did one) in a way that would overemphasize their traditional approach. In one case, when an insider interviewee told me, “No, I would say not” when asked whether he was strongly affected by chord changes in old-time or other music, or when he told me “That probably wouldn’t apply to me” in response to a question asking whether or not he experienced altered states, trance, or strong experiences, or when he said “Not so much” when asked if he had favorite parts of tunes,

or when he said “I don’t know if I could easily do that” when asked to describe the different emotions/moods that old-time tunes can express, his responses were more of a gut-reaction “don’t answer like a hippie” thing than they were an honest appraisal of his affective tendencies.¹⁰¹ Similarly, men and women might have been influenced by normative gender roles (especially men from conservative, rural areas), and might have under- or over-reported certain responses that would violate those gender norms. Counteracting these biases would involve more careful design methodologies in the future.

Method of Data Collection

Using questionnaires and interviews required my participants to provide retrospective reports of their behaviors and experiences. As we learned from the issues with the RDEES and from debates within personality psychology, actual, moment-to-moment data collection often contradicts a person’s intuitions about how they tend to behave or what they tend to experience. One key way, therefore, in which this line of research could be improved is to use the Experience Sampling Method, which collects data from subjects at random or regular intervals before, during, and after the events that facilitate the particular psychological phenomena that is being studied. In practice, it is hard to imagine how a musician in the middle of a jam session would physically be able to respond to survey questions. While this is probably an impossibility (and would interrupt their experience of the music anyway), survey instruments could be designed to capture musicians’ experiences immediately following the playing of a tune.

¹⁰¹ This was confirmed via a phone call with this musician several weeks after I’d first completed a draft of the dissertation.

Mutability of Affective Factors

Public jams at the Jones House, in downtown Boone, North Carolina, are where I cut my teeth as an old-time musician. I first participated in a Jones House jam in August 2007 when I moved to Boone to begin graduate school and have several fond memories of strong experiences that happened during jams over that first two-year stint. Reflecting back on that early period where I was a guitarist for these jams, I realize that my perspective, and by extension, the perspective of other musicians, has changed over the years as I became more familiar with old-time music, learned more tunes, became more aware of the larger context of my involvement in this music, and eventually found myself with a fiddle in my hands surrounded by musicians who were depending on me to provide the melodies around which they would play their parts. To be frank, I think I was easier to please early on. I was a relative newcomer to this music playing with musicians who were both more experienced and more skilled than I, so almost every jam felt like a privilege. Fiddling was mysterious and seemingly impossible for me, and, not knowing exactly how the fiddle operated, I was more enchanted than I am now with the sounds that people coaxed out of it. I was also hearing for the first time tunes that were old favorites to the other musicians and discovering their beauty, drive, and mystique. Furthermore, I was far less self-conscious about my outsider status since I was surrounded by other outsiders and only gradually began to navigate the politics involved in playing this music in Appalachia as an outsider. Several highly skilled musicians were living in Boone at that time, and even in the larger jams, there were usually enough of them present in any given jam to keep the energy and clarity required for me to have a cognitively and emotionally rewarding jam session.

Things are different for me now. After teaching group music lessons for three hours before the jam sessions start, playing in the jams sometimes feels like a burden, and I often skip the jam and go directly home. I have also noticed that, as with many musicians, my favorite tunes change frequently, and some of my old favorites, which I could once never conceive of as anything other than magical, no longer result in the same pleasurable affect as they once did. There are also situations in which I wish that somebody else could do the fiddling so that I could go back to my role as a guitarist – a role in which I did not have to concentrate so hard on what I was playing and which allowed me to more easily let myself be strongly affected by the musical experience. While I have certainly had strong experiences in old-time music when playing the fiddle, there are far fewer of these than the strong experiences I had as a guitar player in the first few years of playing old-time music regularly with others. I therefore wonder to what degree this is also true for other musicians. Although age was not significantly correlated with any particular responses to music for my sample population, it is likely that the affective mechanisms at work when someone first enters this music are not necessarily all still at work after 30 years of playing it. In light of what we know about the instability of personality factors, the situational approaches to personality theory, and the effect of increased skill on achieving flow states, to name just a few examples of the general instability of all of these constructs, longitudinal research could be used to track how these results change for individual musicians over the lifespan.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

I was about to leave my lesson of Persian music in the spacious old house in south Tehran when my teacher suddenly fixed me with his forefinger: “You will never understand this music. There are things that every Persian on the street understands instinctively which you will never understand, no matter how hard you try.” Startled, but realizing that he meant “understanding” in a particular way, I blurted out, “I don’t really expect to understand it that way, I am just trying to figure out how it is put together.” “Oh, well, that is something you can probably learn, but it’s not really very important.” My teacher was telling me that a member of a society may understand a culture quite differently from even an informed outsider. End of lesson.

(Bruno Nettl, 2005, 149)

This study suggests that an outsider could take a great interest in the older insider musicians (whose lives are often as – if not more – interesting to certain outsiders than the music they play) and in the context surrounding this music (e.g., its deep and mysterious history, its connection to Appalachian lifeways, its role in maintaining a sense of regional and cultural identity) to such a degree that they effectively shed their non-Appalachian upbringing, move to the mountains, and attempt to integrate into the local culture, but yet, will still listen and respond to the music itself as most other outsiders would. For the outsider musicians for whom this is a *music* first and a cultural phenomenon second, it makes sense that they would derive their pleasurable affect from things intrinsic in the music’s sound and structure, with perhaps a bit of vague Appalachanness as a backdrop. But for the outsider musicians for whom the music and the culture surrounding it are inseparable and equally important, this doesn’t seem to change *what* it is that they appreciate about the sound and structure of the music or how they process it cognitively to any significant degree. One wonders whether these

outsiders (whom Rogers Thomas would call “tradition-inspired”) wish that they could learn to process and respond to the music in a way similar to how an insider might.

Obfuscated Difference

It is tempting here to make an analogy with language, for example, the frustration of a non-native speaker who will never shed his or her accent and the stigma and stereotypes associated with it. This speaker might wonder whether or not he or she truly understands the language in a way congruent with native speakers. Yet language, with its referential meaning, is different from something like an instrumental fiddle tune – free for interpretation (among those who can hear a difference between them in the first place).

That is, despite a foreign accent, experienced speakers of a foreign language can convey and understand the meaning of the words in a similar enough way to native speakers that the differences between them and native speakers would be insignificant, if detectable at all. Though this would have to be confirmed by future research, I would hypothesize that the way most outsiders play old-time music sounds like a foreign accent to most insiders. Yet even for those very few outsiders who can achieve the musical analog of losing one’s accent (i.e., validation as sounding “local” from insider musicians), it seems unlikely that they understand the music as an insider would.

Musical mimicry is deceptive this way, where making *sounds* that are similar to the ones insiders make might suggest to a listener that this musician has also learned to *hear* and to *experience* the music as would an “authentic” insider. That something like a repeated move to a IV chord can be implicated in one musician having a transcendental experience and another musician not even noticing that the chords changed seems to

suggest that there is a rich area of research potential for exploring why certain musical features affect old-time musicians so differently. Likewise, the fact that a tune could bring one musician to tears by virtue of its associations with, say, a dead music-playing relative (or due to it conjuring thoughts of what life must have been like for his or her ancient ancestors who helped foster and create that music) but, for a different musician, is just one more new tune they heard in a jam and put into their “Tunes to Learn” list on their iPhone suggests that the potential for musical misunderstandings in old-time music is enormous.

Revival Theory

Musical and affective differences like those I discuss above have not been studied by the majority of scholars who have written about folk music revivals. For example, Tamara Livingston, in an attempt to develop a general theory of music revivals, defines music revivals as “social movements which strive to ‘restore’ a musical system believed to be disappearing... for the benefit of contemporary society” and argues that “the common thread between these [revivals] is the overt cultural and political agenda expressed by the revivalists themselves” (1999, 66). Characterizing music revivals as essentially grassroots resistance movements, Livingston makes no small point of how important resistance to dominant capitalist paradigms and to the cultural mainstream is to making revivals happen at all. Noting that she thinks of revivals in terms of a basic recipe, she lists the following ingredients as essential to any music revival:

- 1) An individual or small group of “core revivalists”
- 2) Revival informants and/or original sources (e.g., historical sound recordings)
- 3) A revivalist ideology and discourse
- 4) A group of followers which form the basis of a revivalist community

- 5) Revivalist activities (organizations, festivals, competitions)
- 6) Non-profit and/or commercial enterprises catering to the revivalist market (Ibid., 69)

But an attraction to the sound, structure, and extra-musical features of the music being revived, a desire to play it and experience it with one another, and possessing the perceptual and cognitive facilities necessary for learning to play the music and for experiencing pleasurable affect from it are also at work in making a music revival possible, and research in this area would likely expand the list of necessary ingredients for a music revival to occur.

Although at one point she writes that other scholars “have noted the importance of revivals in offering a new repertoire of sounds for younger musicians,” Livingston offers other reasons besides mere “sounds” for their involvement in music revivals, including “personal authenticity in historical forms,” “political reasons,” “intellectual curiosity,” and “financial gains to be made from the new revivalist market” (Ibid., 73-74). There is good evidence that these reasons are probably at work in music revivals, but we ought not to assume that music-psychological factors should always be subsumed under these larger sociocultural issues. For example, when an example of a change to the actual sound and structure of one of the revival musics is eventually discussed in the article, it takes the form of musical changes made for the purposes of political activism, identity politics, and resistance to Western hegemony, not because of the affective potential of those musical changes.

Had Livingston’s article not mentioned the old-time revival, we could potentially bracket the old-time revival as different in type from what she is describing, but the old-time revival is mentioned in her essay. Certainly there was (and still is) a strong element

of the capitalist and mainstream resistance involved in the early old-time revival, and it's likely that some who joined were in it more for social and political aspects than they were for hedonistic musical experiences,¹⁰² but there are other outlets for that sort of resistance that don't involve dedicating one's life to learning and performing a musical style that was not part of their own upbringing. So then, as the film asks, why old-time? Wooley's explanation of the difference between "traditional" old-time communities and revival communities directly contradicts Livingston's tacit assertion that the actual music in revivals is secondary to the social, cultural, and political issues at work:

In traditional communities, music functioned as an aspect of the expression of culture. In modern and especially postmodern revival communities, music functions as the core element of the culture, with other elements of culture radiating from the actual music, musical tradition, and act of musical expression itself. Rather than music being simply an expression of the ethos of the community, the central ethos of the community is developed from the music. (2003, 18)

Livingston's characterization of revivals does not seem to apply to the old-time music revival, and it is unlikely that the old-time music revival is alone in this regard.

Even an edited volume specifically about folk music revivals generally overlooks the importance of the affective experience of music making in creating and sustaining these revival movements. In the introduction to *Transforming Tradition*, Rosenberg outlines the types of approaches and topics taken by the essayists as including "broad social and cultural issues," "American and Canadian studies," "political history and theory," "and the "politics of culture" (1993, 1–2). Even when discussing actual changes in the music or aesthetic differences between insiders and outsiders, Rosenberg still

¹⁰² Titon (2012) contrasts Pete Seeger's vision of "progressive, communal politics" with Mike Seeger's apolitical focus on musical achievement, the music's history, and how through those things he and others could find "communal truth" (231).

invokes social issues as what is really at work: “Musical styles of the new aesthetic vary as elements in the synthesis change, but underlying the variation is a consistent rationale for this involvement in musics that are alternatives to popular forms, a rationale that emphasizes the relevant social messages these musics convey” (Ibid., 3). Left unaddressed is *why* these “elements in the synthesis” change in any given revival. Is it due to random chance and circumstance? We have a strong case that in the case of old-time music, musical changes have taken place in order to better suit the affective needs of outsider musicians. Whether due to the implicit learning of musical aesthetics from the rock, pop, classical, or bluegrass music that certain musicians were exposed to before old-time, or whether due to shared perceptual, cognitive, affective, and personality characteristics which manifest in musical behavior and experience, many old-time musicians today require that the original music be modified in order to reach its maximum hedonistic potential. It seems likely that this same sort of musical change to suit the affective demands of outsiders takes place in other music revivals, and this could prove to be an area of research in which ethnomusicologists and music-psychologists could work together.

Similarly, the question of what attracts musicians to a foreign music in the first place is answered in terms that don’t seem to consider how the sonic and structural features of the music might have profound affective power for certain listeners. Wooley’s research revealed that many outsiders were first captivated by the *sound* of old-time music,¹⁰³ and several scholars have recorded the frequency of “conversion experiences” in which outsiders have a strong experience with old-time music which leads to a total

¹⁰³ Though, again, this concept of *sound* is a combination of musical and extra-musical factors

investment in the music, but these sorts of experiences are not addressed in this volume. In his essay, “The Music of American Southern Whites in Japan,” Toru Mitsui poses the question, “What, then, attracted the bluebloods of Japan to the blue-collar music from the American South?” While his answer does reference the “exotic” sound of the music (which could have been true of any foreign music), Mitsui’s theory involves an attraction to purely extra-musical factors such as the music’s association with America and freedom:

It was presumably the very exoticism of the music, the feeling of openness and liberation it yielded along with a touch of rusticity, and the romanticism of the West with its images and ideas of the Wild West, prairies, adventures, and mobility. And the attraction might well have had much to do with the idea of American democracy that was suddenly advocated by the new Japanese authorities. (1993, 278)

This is not to say that these Japanese musicians weren’t experiencing pleasurable affect as a result of these extra-musical factors, but only to say it is premature to imply that extra-musical associations with the idea of America and freedom is the *sole* source of that affect without empirical confirmation.

Perhaps it is unfair to critique essays on this topic written over twenty years ago.

In 2014 Oxford University Press published *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*, a long overdue contribution to the field of music revivals. According to the jacket copy:

The book makes a powerful argument for the untapped potential of revival as a productive analytical tool in contemporary, global contexts. With its detailed treatment of authenticity, recontextualization, transmission, institutionalization, globalization, the significance of history, and other key concerns, the collection engages with critical issues far beyond the field of revival studies and is crucial for understanding contemporary manifestations of folk, traditional, and heritage music in today’s postmodern cosmopolitan societies.

Reviewing the list of categories into which the 30 chapters are grouped confirms that music-psychological considerations are still not present in music revival research.

Instead, the eight categories used to group the chapters reflect the current strong social constructivism / social theory paradigm in ethnomusicology and folklore studies. The categories include:

- Part 1 - "Towards Multiple Theories of Music Revival"
- Part 2 - "Scholars and Collectors as Revival Agents"
- Part 3 - "Intangible Cultural Heritage, Preservation, and Policy"
- Part 4 - "National Renaissance and Postcolonial Futures"
- Part 5 - "Recovery from War, Disaster, and Cultural Devastation"
- Part 6 - "Innovations and Transformations"
- Part 7 - "Festivals, Marketing, and Media"
- Part 8 - "Diaspora and the Global Village"

Of these, it would seem likely that Parts 1 and 6 would be the most promising in terms of addressing what, musically, might attract revivalists to a certain music, what musical changes they might make to the music and why, and how their experience of the music might differ from that of the insider musicians (if insider musicians still exist in that particular revival). Yet a search for discussion of these topics reveals strikingly little in the book's 671 pages. There is one data table offered (the number of hits for internet searches of fiddling terms in an essay about the role of the internet in revivals), and the results of an informal audience survey are discussed in one chapter (Moulin 2014).¹⁰⁴ Save for a handful of paragraphs describing musical sound or a brief mention of how revivalists have changed the music, the goals of these essays are to theorize music revivals using the discourse of social/critical theory. Taken as a current-state-of-the-field publication, this book suggests that humanities scholars studying music revivals either are

¹⁰⁴ Jane Freeman Moulin, an ethnomusicologist, used a simple survey of her own design to help answer a question about audience perception of a musical movie trailer popular in Hawai'i, and the results provided some descriptive data in support of her thesis (though the survey was not empirically validated and the results were not presented in any formal statistical style). Her end notes contain other descriptive data, and she goes into some detail about the sound and structure of the music at the center of her thesis.

not aware of the existence of music-psychological research or are aware but don't find it relevant enough to include in their scholarship. What follows is not an attack of these scholars for not being interdisciplinary enough in their research (the same criticism could be levied against most of academia) but is rather an attempt to highlight areas of potential collaboration between ethnomusicologists and music psychologists.

Carolina Bithell's chapter on the revival of Georgia's polyphonic singing notes that the strangeness of the harmony in this music appeals to the Western ear, but her claim would be made stronger with evidence to support it (2014, 576). Bithell also cites outsider (Western) revivalists who gave conversion narratives indistinguishable from the kind that appear in the scholarship on old-time music and Sacred Harp singing cited in previous chapters in this dissertation and no doubt other not-yet-investigated revivalists in other genres. Such phrases from Bithell's informants include: "It was like reaching into my heart and just grabbing me"; "It was like a key unlocking something in my chest"; and "It was like lightning going down and cutting my body up" (Ibid., 589). These singers are describing emotional and physiological responses as a result of hearing music that have been researched by music psychologists (e.g., Gabriellson, 2011) and by neuroscientists (e.g., Salimpoor et al. 2011). Since the majority of these Western revivalists have "no genetic, territorial, or otherwise logical connection to Georgia" (Ibid., 593), we might wonder *why* they would be so affected by this music and so compelled to learn to sing it themselves. Bithell's analysis begins after these musicians had already grown to like this music, writing that "the singers associated with [Western community and world music] choirs already had a taste for radically different kinds of

music, and they were accustomed to learning by ear and singing in languages that were not their mother tongue” (Ibid., 585).

Bithell’s chapter (and almost all other writing on music revivalists, for that matter) leaves us to wonder *why* these musicians were drawn to exotic musics in the first place – what combination of genetic predisposition and life experiences would have influenced their taste for unusual music? Were we to know, for example, that these singers were especially high in Openness, or in absorption, or that they met Becker’s criteria for “deep listeners,” we could link this with other similar findings in other revival musics in order to begin building a better explanatory theory. What would be even more enlightening would be to discover what about these singers’ personality or individual differences in music perception would make the particularities of Georgian polyphonic singing (esp. its system of harmony) especially affective for these revivalist singers compared to other forms of music.

Bithell’s chapter, in line with current ethnomusicological research, seems to imply that whatever is responsible for their initial interest in the sound of the music is quickly supplanted by the socio-cultural aspects of the singing, as is evidenced by the amount of writing devoted to this (almost the entire chapter) versus her discussion of affect (less than a paragraph). Her essay would have been strengthened by engaging with music-psychological scholarship such as the chapters also published in the Oxford handbook (on music and emotion) regarding experimental aesthetics and liking for music (Hargreaves and North 2010), strong experiences with music (Gabrielsson 2010), or the influence of affect on music choice (Konečni 2010) – all of which are directly relevant to her thesis.

Sean Williams' chapter on Irish music revivals also briefly attempts to link musical sound to affect in his discussion of how the timbre and other "signifiers" of Irish instrumental music can "make the members of the Irish diaspora awash in tears of longing" (2014, 603). Williams makes claims such as: "In a diasporic context, the fiddle does not even need to be producing Irish melodies to alert the listener that he or she is listening to the 'right kind' of timbre that awakens longing; the timbre alone can do the job"; that "the use of Scottish great highland pipes in the diaspora triggers timbral signals in the brain"; and that "melodies – whether sung or performed instrumentally – that step outside the mainstream boundaries of major and minor may pack a larger emotional punch for the diasporic audience" (not because of any particular affinity for those particular sequences of pitches, but because those melodies seem to index a perceived "Irishness") (Ibid., 603-604).

Williams' claims would be greatly strengthened by a combination of specific evidence for his claims and through references to music psychology scholarship on timbre, memory, and affect (e.g., Balkwill and Thompson 2010; Payne 2009; Nusbaum and Silvia 2010). Here, as with the other chapters that mention music specifics and affect, it is claimed not to be the particular sounds themselves but the extra-musical factors that those sounds index for listeners that elicit an affective response. Later in his chapter Williams discusses Japanese "who have chosen to join the Irish diaspora through their enjoyment of Irish music and dance" and who "create community through their shared emotional reactions to Irish music" (Ibid., 614). However, Williams claims the source of these emotional reactions to be a "historical connection between Irish songs and the songs disseminated through the newly emergent post-Meiji national school system in

nineteenth-century Japan,” which he claims leads to “the creation of nostalgia for a homeland that was never theirs” (Ibid.). Again, the sound and structure of the music is treated as irrelevant except for its utility in conjuring certain memories or extra-musical associations (in this case, nostalgia for an imagined homeland).

That being said, this book is about musical revivals, and revivals are social/cultural/political movements that ought to be studied as such. With this in mind, we would not expect a handbook of music revivals to be filled with music-psychology studies, statistical tables, etc. The book is not intended to be about what happens emotionally and physiologically when someone experiences a music that they discovered later in life that was not associated with their own upbringing, or what psychological constraints might influence particular nuances of musical production and reception among revivalists, or how this differs from those in the original music-culture. But it is a shame that these questions have not been integrated by these authors into the larger questions of social significance of the music. Those who would argue that a more rigorous, scientific approach, which drew on findings from music psychology, would have important things to contribute to the scholarship on music revivals might be discouraged (or inspired to take action) by the fact that there are no references to any such scholarship in any of the 30 chapters in the book.

Several of the chapters in *The Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology* (2009), in contrast, cite ethnomusicological research, and the *Handbook of Music and Emotion* (2010) not only cites ethnomusicologists throughout but has a chapter written by an ethnomusicologist (Judith Becker). Although there are certainly good reasons for music psychologists to be in need of ethnomusicological perspectives (especially in the area of

decontextualized laboratory studies), we ought to ask why the scholars in the handbook of music revival are not interested in what music psychology might have to offer to this area of research. An equally pertinent question might be why music psychologists have been so uninterested in studying music revivals. One possible answer to the latter question is that music psychologists *have* been studying cultural differences in music perception, cognition, and affect under the rubric of “cross-cultural music cognition,” leaving the social (i.e., debating over a definition of “revival”) aspects of these phenomena to be examined by scholars in the humanities (i.e., ethnomusicologists) who are interested in such questions or who seemingly have the appropriate epistemological toolkit (i.e., social/critical theory) to answer them.

While music psychology is not well-represented in this handbook, three chapters in particular (Rosenberg’s, Jabbour’s, and Blaustein’s) deal with the American folk music revival, to different degrees, and Alan Jabbour’s is specifically about the old-time music revival. Jabbour, in contrast with almost every other contributor to the volume, invokes musical affect when explaining why he switched gears from being strictly a documentarian to becoming a musician in the style, writing that “the tunes were beautiful to me – both in the abstract, as melodic structures, and in their sensuous surface, namely, the style of their performance,” (Ibid., 120) but this is not compared or contrasted to what any of his insider informants thought about those tunes. In fact, contrast between insiders and outsiders is what Jabbour’s chapter seeks to erase.

In discussing what he feels is a false dichotomy between insider and outsider, Jabbour (himself a cultural outsider who was involved in the 1960s revival in Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina, whose ethnicity is Arab-American, and who is a

trained violinist) invokes the phrase “origin fallacy” as a “cautionary reminder that a person’s ethnicity, religion, place of origin or other group membership is an untrustworthy measure of the authenticity of that person’s artistic expression” (2014, 118). Jabbour also seems to argue that one can work his or her way out of being a revivalist by spending enough time immersed in a region and its local music, stating that the singing style of someone who moved from Chicago to Appalachian Kentucky in 1970 “probably [wouldn’t] sound like [that of] the locals. But what about twenty or thirty years later?” (Ibid.). Jabbour also claims that culture is “dynamic, not fixed” and that cultures are constantly gaining and losing members (not just to birth and death but to the physical movements and choices of individuals) (Ibid., 119).

Running with these ideas, Jabbour explains the circumstances surrounding his learning of fiddle tunes from an elderly insider musician in Virginia (Henry Reed), how they were similar in terms of their respective ages (two generations apart) to Reed and *Reed’s* fiddle mentor (Quince Dillion), and asks, rhetorically, “Was my learning from [Reed] substantively different from his learning from Quince Dillion? Or is Henry Reed’s learning from his neighbor Quince Dillion ‘traditional,’ but my learning from him, having not grown up in his neighborhood, a form of ‘cultural revival’?” (Ibid.). In what seems to be further evidence of his philosophy, Jabbour explains how he sometimes served as a conduit for the tunes passing from insider to insider, such as in the case of a tune that Jabbour learned from Reed and that another insider musician, Taylor Kimble, learned from Jabbour’s playing.

To someone interested in music psychology, these ideas of Jabbour’s raise questions that Jabbour doesn’t discuss, namely which music-psychological attributes

might differentiate an individual from an individual from a different culture; to what degree these attributes are genetic, learned, or a combination of both; to what degree these attributes are mutable; and to what degree these attributes influence the perception, affective response to, and production of a music that was not part of that individual's upbringing. One can read Jabbour's chapter as giving a tacit answer to these questions: music-psychological factors are fully mutable and are not at all constrained by genetic factors (i.e., are entirely the result of learning). While the behavioral genetics related to musical ability are in their infancy, there is promising evidence converging on the particular genetic mechanisms involved in individual variation in musical ability (e.g., Tan et al. 2014), and there is overwhelming evidence that about 50% of the variance in personality (i.e., the domain in which we are likely to see variation in affective response to music) is genetic (reviewed in Johnson, Vernon, and Feiler 2008).

But even assuming no genetic influence on one's musicality or on personality factors that would be involved in the affective response to music, Jabbour's claim also requires that we believe that Jabbour's training as a classical violinist has had no bearing on the way he fiddles or on how he cognitively processes the music. In reality, Reed, lacking violin training or deep immersion in the aesthetics of classical music, would have physical and neurological qualities that would differentiate the sounds he made on the instrument and his approach to old-time fiddling generally from Jabbour. Furthermore, Jabbour's exposure to modern popular music and other music that Reed was not exposed to likely meant that the harmonic conventions, for example, thought to be appropriate by Jabbour were likely different from what Reed might have thought appropriate.¹⁰⁵ In

¹⁰⁵ Lest I be accused of picking on Jabbour, we might make the same argument against a young insider old-time musician today and his or her exposure to bluegrass, country, southern rock, pop music, etc. were he

describing how the Hollow Rock string band shaped the music he'd learned from older insider musicians into their own style, Jabbour notes how "the chords were usually of my own devising. My fiddle mentors rarely gave specific guidance for chording each tune..., so in many cases we literally invented the chords" and how "our band loved the way ['Over the Waterfall' – a tune learned from Reed] plummets down, as if over the waterfall, at the end of the first strain, so we matched some intriguing chords to it and began playing it regularly" (Ibid. 121, 127).

Being born into a cultural group, in the case of music, results in perceptual and cognitive changes in the domain of music (due to early and frequent exposure and experience) that cannot ever be learned by outsiders, who, while eager to play and hear the music like a native, did not have frequent exposure to the music early in their lives, nor do they tend to learn to play the music in the same way as do insiders. Equally important, outsiders have to invest considerable time and energy and must physically relocate to the home of the music in question to develop anything approximating the deep extra-musical associations that native insiders will automatically have with the music (e.g., connections to family, ancestors, neighbors, mentors, particular places and objects, historical events, etc.) – many of which are impossible for the outsider musician to ever have (e.g. having a father who taught you the music as it was taught to him by his father). These real and immutable differences between insiders and outsiders affect *how* they play

or she to claim to be carrying on old music traditions with such fidelity to the old styles that they had somehow conquered the influence of modern music on his or her playing. In practice, I've never met an insider musician who would make such a claim. In fact, most have been forthright in admitting that modernity in its various manifestations has made it impossible to play and to hear the music like the parent generation musicians did.

the music, *why* they play the music, and, most importantly, what the music *means* to them. No amount of theorizing or attempts at equivocation will change this reality.

But it would be unfair to criticize folklorists, anthropologists, and social theorists for concentrating on the socio-cultural issues of folk music revivals and altogether ignoring the actual music and musicians' experience of it – we can't realistically expect scholars in these fields to have enough knowledge of musicology or music psychology to do so. Especially in the case of something like old-time music, which is dominated by instrumental tunes, there often no text to analyze. And because almost everything that has been written about folk music revivals thus far has been from folklorists, anthropologists, and social-theory-oriented ethnomusicologists, we should not be surprised that it seems like scholars on this topic have invoked every possible reason for why these outsiders become so enamored with a foreign music *except* for a fascination with the music itself – its sound and its structure and its affective power. Yet if ethnomusicologists stay firmly in the social theory box when researching in this area, it will be left to music psychologists, who often have no training in ethnographic fieldwork methods or enough time or guidance to have learned the particularities of the different music-cultures they might study, to investigate both the music itself and how its meaning and affective response varies among the different types of people who play it. It would be a great shame if ethnomusicologists were not included in this research, especially if it is their own choice to not participate.

Also at issue here is the nature of what “empiricism” means to those doing ethnographic research and what it means to scientists in other disciplines (e.g., music psychology) whose research topics might overlap with ethnographers'. Ethnographers in

fields such as cultural anthropology and ethnomusicology would be unlikely to consider their own research as not being “empirical” when the term is defined in the general sense as that which is based on direct observation or experience rather than solely on logic or speculation. This direct observation and immersion in the culture being studied is the ostensible point of conducting fieldwork, and it is this fieldwork that differentiates ethnographic research from so-called “armchair” methods (in ethnomusicology it was a crucial shift from the laboratory-based research done in the discipline’s early years). Obviously, empirical (in the above sense) observations can be made quantitatively or qualitatively, with both methods being more or less appropriate for certain situations and research questions. Yet to most scientists (e.g., experimental psychologists), empiricism represents a research methodology that, in the goal of obtaining objective truths, seeks to eliminate many of the methods that ethnographers privilege (e.g., reflexivity, emic and etic perspectives, relativism, multivocality, etc.).

Cognitive musicologist David Huron wrestled with this question of the nature of empiricism and competing research methodologies in a 1999 lecture, arguing that at the source of these methodological differences between disciplines lies an epistemological debate over the nature and utility of evidence and the types of claims that can be made based on evidence. Huron observed that “in the case of the physical and social sciences, most researchers are theory-discarding skeptics. They endeavor to minimize or reduce the likelihood of making false-positive errors. That is, traditional scientists are loath to make the mistake of claiming something to be true that is, in reality, false” (14). Huron contrasts this with the approach of humanities scholars, who “have tended to be more fearful of committing false-negative errors. For many arts and humanities scholars, a

common fear is dismissing prematurely an interpretation or theory that might have merit - however tentative, tenuous or incomplete the supporting evidence” (Ibid.). He goes on to note that while “for traditional scientists, the principal methodological goal is to demonstrate that the recorded observations are unlikely to have arisen by chance,” (Ibid.) for humanities scholars, “dismissing an observation as a ‘mere coincidence’ is problematic. If the goal is to minimize false negative claims, then a single ‘coincidental’ observation should not be dismissed lightly. For many arts and humanities scholars, apparent coincidences are more commonly viewed as ‘smoking guns’” (Ibid., 15).

The above distinction, as well as issues regarding various forms of reductionism and questions of research aims that Huron also addresses have been debated at length in recent *Ethnomusicology* articles, and it is not my goal to rehash them here.¹⁰⁶ Instead, I find the most important contributions from Huron’s essay to be his discussions of “data-poor” vs. “data-rich” fields and “low-risk” vs. “high-risk” theories. He claims that “many humanities activities address ‘low risk’ hypotheses in the sense that committing a false-positive error has modest repercussions” and that “data-poor [humanities] disciplines simply cannot be expected to satisfy high standards of evidence” (Ibid., 30). While certainly not as immediately consequential as a false-positive error which finds that a life-saving cancer drug works when it in fact does not, the sort of false-positive errors

¹⁰⁶ E.g., ethnomusicologists today typically seek *understanding* rather than *explanation*, and, if operating in a postmodern paradigm where many “truths” are equally valid, would be loath to make use of the various methodologies used by scientists to reveal “objective” truth and would instead embrace researcher biases or subject’s folk theories for their behaviors. Taking this to an extreme, it could be argued that my earlier ethnographic research is no more or less “true” than what the statistical measures revealed in this dissertation. Some might argue that, for example, my master’s research was “true” for my 2009 self, while this current research is “true” for my 2015 self, but that neither represent an objective reality (an impossibility anyway for true postmodernists).

that can result from unrigorous humanities scholarship do have important consequences.

As Huron states,

humanities disciplines deal with human behavior, civil society, and culture. Humanities scholars regularly make claims about human nature, about moral and immoral conduct, and render advice about political, educational and cultural institutions. Scholars' views concerning these areas of human affairs can, and often do, have significant impact. (Ibid)

In some cases, what might seem like a “low-risk” theory can have unforeseen consequences in unforeseen areas. For example, most humanists are still resistant to the idea of human behavior being biologically (genetically) driven and therefore do not “plug in” their findings to those from the biological and psychological sciences on human nature, human evolution, etc. (see Slingerland 2008 for more on this proposed approach to consilience). Psychological and evolutionary explanations for why humans might behave in the way they do (e.g., those based on behavioral genetics – innate, partially-heritable personality differences) would be unlikely to resonate as useful to an ethnographer operating under a strong social constructivist paradigm, and this results in the immediate consequence of overlooking what could be important evidence in support of the scientific theory and in enriching our humanistic understanding of the phenomenon. But the long-term consequence of an outright rejection of scientific evidence in humanistic fields is potentially devastating to the continued relevance of those fields and to the intellectual growth of students who rely on professors to update their knowledge in light of new technologies and discoveries both within their own disciplines and across all of academia.

Furthermore, it boggles the mind to think how one could conceive of an ethnographic research site (especially when hundreds or thousands of people are camped

out playing music together) as anything other than data-*rich*, although it is probably up to the researcher to mine that data for the first time. Huron notes that computing technology has made what was once a data-poor field (historical musicology) data-rich in the sense that algorithms can now analyze staggering numbers of musical scores and transcriptions, uncovering patterns that would have been invisible without new developments in technology. In the case of old-time music we have a significant body of musical recordings which could be used to this end, but we also have living musicians, and the available technology for human psychological and neuro-biological research allows for the collection of data that has never before been possible. To not take advantage of the data that could potentially come from these methods troubles Huron:

The prospect of gaining access to increased data is not merely an opportunity to be taken or ignored, as one pleases. Where pertinent data is readily available, it is morally reprehensible not to use it since failing to use the data increases the likelihood of making both false-positive and false-negative errors. In short, empirical data deserves our attention for precisely the same reason that small amounts of historical data warrant the historian's best interpretive efforts: failing to attempt to learn from the information at hand is to encourage and condone ignorance. (Ibid, 30-31)

Even without fMRI machines or a database of transcribed music and customized software for analyzing that database, ethnographers and other humanists can still make use of more simply collected and analyzed data to bolster their research and scholarship (as I have attempted to do in this dissertation).

When questions about a phenomenon that an ethnographer is researching could be answered (in part or in whole) via the methods used by experimental science, statistics, or any other method suited to the research question, that ethnographer ought to employ those methods. That this is not currently being done as standard ethnographic practice is unfortunate, and in this sense, I argue that the ethnographic research paradigm which has

dominated contemporary ethnomusicology is incomplete. Again, my criticism of scholars throughout this dissertation who operate in that arena is due to their particular research areas (Appalachian music or cross-cultural musical experience) and not necessarily because their scholarship represents the most egregious examples of what I consider an incomplete research approach. This same critique should be levied against my own prior research in this area, and this dissertation was, in part, undertaken to attempt to better answer questions I had initially investigated ethnographically. The findings from my own ethnographic research for my master's thesis were not necessarily rendered invalid by the findings from this present research;¹⁰⁷ rather, they were strengthened and enriched by the use of quantitative methods that took over when traditional ethnography had failed to yield the requisite data.

Future Directions

Ethno-Ensembles

What better experiential example of the revival-transformation phenomenon could there be for students than the ethno-ensembles which already exist at many universities around the world? And in what better context could a professor/instructor highlight these insider/outsider differences? Yet due to the nature of these ensembles (often restricted to enrolled students, led by a professor who is usually an outsider¹⁰⁸, a focus on learning the music itself at the expense of the socio-cultural dimensions), the majority of students who

¹⁰⁷ Though the chapter devoted to "Carter," in light of this new research, would have been restructured to reflect that he was probably not a good example of a typical insider musician

¹⁰⁸ Though this was not as common in the early days of these ensembles, when they were led by insider artists-in-residence. Some ensembles still are taught by insiders, or are team-taught with an insider and an outsider faculty member.

pass through them leave with a skewed or missing understanding of the difference between what they were playing, how they were learning, and their perception and cognition of and affective response to the music compared to deceased and living insider musicians. Referencing research on these aspects (if it exists at all) might have less appeal to students and instructors than would integrating insiders into the course or requiring that students travel to insider performances, festivals, events to discover for themselves to what degree their experience is different from current or historical practice.

Practical concerns, chiefly proximity of the school to traditional musicians and events and finding and choosing musicians who adequately represent various forms of traditionality certainly make this difficult or impossible for some programs. Yet these aforementioned issues ought to be incorporated into the ensemble curriculum using whatever means is possible. If nothing else, perhaps students could be asked to analyze their own lived experience of playing the music and compare them with classmates'. It should be stressed to students that this reflexive approach is not an attempt to teach *how* to perceive and process music "as an insider would," or that a student who plays string band music on the banjo ought not to use it to have peak experiences, but is rather for them to not come away from the music with a naïve understanding of its affective qualities based only on their own experience.

Many of the issues addressed by this dissertation are also found in the chapters of the edited volume *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* (Solis 2004), particularly questions regarding the degree of similarity in musical understanding and significance between musical insiders and outsiders. In a majority of the music-cultures discussed in this volume, the students and teachers taking

on the foreign music are located on opposite sides of the globe, or at least on different continents (e.g., gamelan from Indonesia, music from the Middle East, drumming from West Africa), and the majority of students learning these musics have little to no experience with the foreign musics (e.g., with the microtonal system used in Middle Eastern musics, with the rhythmic organization of African music, with almost all aspects of *gamelan*).

We might start by asking what attracts these students to these foreign music ensembles in the first place, and what, if anything, do these students have in common in terms of musical aptitude and personality? David Harnish lists some of the different motivating factors that bring different types of musicians to the *gamelan*:

The majority of my gamelan students have been music majors, and slightly more than half have been graduate students. They gravitate toward playing gamelan for various reasons. Some, often percussionists, seem enchanted by the vibrant rhythms; others, such as composers, seem more interested in structures; ethnomusicologists are captivated by the whole music culture suggested by the instruments and their sounds. (2004, 131)

But he also notes what sounds like cohesion in personality factors among his students:

Many students who consider themselves outside the norm somehow feel accommodated by the presence of the gamelan and the other students similarly attracted.... Many of my students dress more casually or colorfully, have more body piercings or dyed hair, and frequently participate in drama or other arts. They are also more apt to smoke than the average student.... All typically express alternative and sometimes subversive takes on food and popular culture. (2004, 131,137)

From Harnish's description we might hypothesize that these students would have above-average Openness scores, as well as other personality measures such as Absorption, RDEES, etc. Echoing Harnish's observations, Michelle Kisliuk, who teaches a form of African polyphonic singing at the University of Virginia, has noticed a consistent similarity in terms of her students' personalities. From her description they seem to

exhibit the same sort of openness to experience that Harnish's gamelan students exhibit. Kisliuk also notes that her students tend to be empathetic liberals concerned with the environment and social justice, though there are sometimes "other types of people" who have a negative effect on the group dynamic:

Often students who choose (or pass the audition for) this engaged and self-challenging kind of learning environment already have personalities and values that make them at least latently open to a spirit of musical collectivity. Those who succeed are also open to being changed by others, and are often looking for ways to actively change their world for the better (many are environmental science and anthropology majors – the 'granola contingent,' as their classmates call them). Of course other types of people are also in the class; some detract or even destroy the synergy of the group, while others, to their own and their classmates' surprise, add invaluable to the multifaceted collective spirit. (Kisliuk and Gross 2004, 256)

When I asked Kisliuk for clarification of who these "other types of people" included (since I assumed she was referring to perhaps wealthy, conservative, xenophobic students), she clarified that she meant

students who, before enrolling in the class, had very little exposure to African culture and/or vernacular cultures and therefore harbored certain biases and prejudices handed down from generations of biases toward and ignorance about Africa, and biases toward and ignorance about arts that may not fall into the "elite" category. These students can come from any number of backgrounds, whether "Republican" or "privileged" or not, since they can include African American or even African students who have been educated or enculturated into the biases I've mentioned. It might also include the more cynical student, who gets great grades by playing the grade game with their intelligence, but rarely is asked to invest themselves in a more vulnerable ways that inevitably bring in issues of cultural politics. These might include Korean-born engineering students, for example, or football or basketball players who, especially if they are African American, might be surprised by what they learn. On the other hand, students (who could be from any of the groups I've mentioned above) who, either from family background or education (they may be Anthropology majors or African American Studies majors or nonconformist artist/musician types) come already armed with the critiques of those biases.

It would take empirical data to examine to what degree personality factors were correlated with these biases that Kisliuk mentions and to what degree they influence the

students' experience of the music. Were instructors to have their students each semester complete a brief survey instrument assessing personality factors and musical background and preferences, we would immediately have an enormous amount of data with which we could begin to develop a general theory, supported by empirical data, of what sort of students tend to enroll in these sorts of ensembles.

We might then ask how students and instructors are perceiving and processing the music in comparison to native musicians. The authors in this volume give examples of perceptual/cognitive differences (e.g., misinterpreted stress patterns) that become audible in performance and also those that might not be obvious to an audience but which certainly result in a different internal conception of the music. Gamelan instructor Hardja Susilo emphasizes how important it is for students to learn to think like Javanese musicians:

I don't mean just emphasizing beat eight instead of beat one, but actually *feeling* that a gong signals the end of a phrase....You couldn't hear these different thoughts in the mind of the players during the concert, except when they get out of synch....Learning a culture, in this case a music culture, is not just learning how the natives physically do it, but also how they think about it. (Harnish, Solis, and Witzleben 2004, 57–58)

With some effort, instructors might be able to design studies of their teaching effectiveness in this area by assessing students' performance on musical tests at the beginning and end of the semester and comparing them with responses on those same tests by insiders in that musical tradition. Without empirical data to determine to what degree a student (or instructor) is "actually feeling" the particularities of the musical structure in the manner congruent to an insider, instructors decide such matters by intuition (if they think about them at all). For example, although David Locke seems to recuse himself from the goal of teaching to his students what this music *means* to

Africans, he feels that he is qualified to speak about how the *structure* of the music works as an insider:

I talk about the context for music in Africa, but I do not presume to understand what it means to Africans. I have learned to perform music played by Africans, but despite having cracked the code of African rhythmic, I hesitate when it comes to extramusical meaning.... Since the metrics of African music are elusive... students always ask, "How do they hear it?" Assuming the native role, I simply say, "We hear it like this." (2004., 182)

This is a bold claim to make based on intuition, considering that Locke's assumption that he is equivalent to an insider when it comes to understanding "African rhythmic" means that he is therefore equivalent to a native teacher in conveying these concepts to students. In response to Locke's performance training resumé, which Locke listed in an article he wrote on Ewe drumming, Kofi Agawu asked,

Why do we need to know all this about the author? Does the listing of teachers, places of study (including several simultaneous locations), and periods of apprenticeship tell us much besides the fact that the author is not an armchair ethnomusicologist, but one with hands-on experience of African music? For this biographical information to be pertinent, some indication of the author's *competence* as drummer or dancer must be given. (1992, 258)

This passage seems to imply not that Agawu questioned Locke's competence necessarily, but rather that extraordinary claims (i.e., competence in a foreign music equivalent to an insider) require extraordinary evidence (i.e., training sessions or time spent immersed in a foreign music does not necessarily predict competence, and competence in performance does not necessarily predict a similarity in the area of musical *meaning* with insiders).

Anne Rasmussen, writing about her Arab and Middle Eastern ensemble, struggles to reconcile her own personal musicality with her duty to teach what is essentially an entire corpus of foreign music and its associated traditions to her students. Rasmussen's

background as a classical pianist and cellist and as a jazz singer and pianist is certainly subject to her observation that

whether or not one is born and bred in a musical tradition, one's musicality is the result of a patchwork of experience. A culturally specific sense of musicality may certainly be developed through the process of being native to that culture, but musicians' musicalities are also collections of encounters and choices: pastiches of performances they have experienced, the lessons they have taken, the people with whom they have played, the other musicians they admire, other musics that they play or enjoy, and the technical and cognitive limitations of their own musicianship. (2004, 225)

Rasmussen seems to have a different attitude than does Locke (i.e., she realizes her perception of the music will always be differentiated from insiders' perception by virtue of the factors she mentions above), but this is also based on her intuition and not on empirical data. She might, for example, test more similarly to Arabic musicians on various musical perception tests than would Locke with African musicians, and her confidence in teaching and her students' learning of the music might be helped by that sort of evidence. In line with Rasmussen's skepticism about the possibility of shedding decades of Western musical experience, Kisliuk takes the stance that students ought to be aware of how differently they conceptualize and perform the music than do African insiders and that it would be futile to think it could happen any other way. She encouraged her students to compare their sound to recordings of BaAka singers

in terms of rhythmic nuance and harmonic relationships, watching out for unconscious infusions of musical habits that sneak in from the dominant aesthetic. These neither can nor should be entirely "removed," of course, any more than we could or should magically change who and where we are. (Kisliuk and Gross 2004, 255)

This represents probably a more realistic approach to how to best manage the perceptual and cognitive barriers that students will have to face in learning a foreign music, but this too could be made more rigorous and effective by systematically identifying and

assessing these “musical habits,” how they change over the course of the semester, and how effective various types of students are at circumventing these “unconscious infusions.”

We also ought to be interested in how the meaning and function of this music changes as it is taken up by these ethnomusicology ensembles. While differences in musical affect are not mentioned with as much frequency as cognitive differences in these essays, Ali Jihad Racy (an insider) is concerned with “teaching the music as an experience, or as feeling” and asks “are we really speaking of the shell or of the emotional core?” For Racy, “the music is strongly connected with emotions. *Tarab*, which means ‘ecstasy,’ is an emotional state that is embedded in the music.” He wonders how to “teach the repertoire as a musical-emotional package” and whether his students “are feeling the tonic note or the notes of emphasis or the cadential patterns in ecstatically meaningful ways” (Marcus and Solis 2004, 161–162). Yet Racy also acknowledges that music “can be heard in many ways”:

I am not always sure if my students are hearing the music the way I am hearing it. It is clear to me that they are getting something out of the music. Are they appreciating it in their own ways? When they hear a good *qanun* solo, are they moved by the tone color, the texture, the technique, the motivic structures of the phrases, etc.? Are they deriving pleasure from the performative process as such or from piecing together the music as a coherent aesthetic system? Or are they responding to the overall ecstatic content of the performance? (2004, 163–164)

Obviously, one way to help answer these questions would be to conduct a well-designed survey of his students or possibly, with the assistance of experimental psychologists, conducting actual experiments.

Outsider instructors also might be more conscientious about how their own affective responses to the music color their perception of the music’s significance and

how they teach this to their ensembles. David Locke, a “secular suburbanite born of a Yankee Unitarian mother and New York Jewish father” found himself “drawn to African music” and “gripped by the clapping, singing, and sounds of healing” (2004, 169). Having spent extensive time training in Africa, Locke’s “feeling for the music draws upon powerful memories of Africa” (Ibid., 175). As Locke describes the affective power of African drumming music, he remarks on the two-way interaction between teacher and student that seems to put everyone [into] a transcendent zone” (Ibid., 176). This claim could be made stronger and understood better through a more focused and rigorous study of the phenomenon. And, similar to what many insider musicians have told me, Locke notes that an African musician, Abubakari Lunna, “explains to the inwardly-directed American student that in his culture drummers play for their audience, never for themselves” (Ibid., 184). However, Locke also argues that “when powerfully performed ... music creates sufficient conditions for listeners to construct their own context. Meaning and exhilaration of the senses should emerge from the immediate response to what is seen and heard” (Ibid., 180). But is Locke talking about just outsiders? In Lunna’s culture are there no musicians who have strong/trance experiences when playing?

More insider/outsider clashes are illustrated by Anne Rasmussen’s essay, in which she recalls that her experiences of playing music in Arab-American contexts have included “performances in nightclubs and at weddings and parties where the interaction between musicians and audience purposely culminates in the common goal of collective euphoria” (2004, 218) and that through her work with her school’s Middle Eastern Ensemble, she has “come to realize that the aesthetic pillars of the music may be somewhat different for me than they are for other performers of the music” (Ibid.). Of

course, perception and cognition certainly work to influence musical meaning. In the excerpt below, Rasmussen weaves these two issues together in explaining the discrepancy between her ideal version of this music and various native teachers' ideal versions. Rasmussen speaks of Arab and Middle Eastern music as being like a "sauce" that requires a certain mix and proportion of ingredients to turn out right, and, running with this analogy, Rasmussen observed:

In my ongoing experience as a learner, however, I have found few "native" teachers who articulate pedagogically the spices I consider key to the sauce. Perhaps, as insiders, my teachers of Arab and Middle Eastern music have been unaware of how remarkable the live aesthetic sounds to the outside ear. Perhaps heterophony, delayed heterophony, creating melodic variations on the fly, and echoing and responding to a fellow player's solo line – what amounts to the "messiness" of the music – are the result of practices so inherent in the music that they cannot be explained or taught. Or perhaps the same musical texture of interaction that excites me is actually something that some of my past teachers find undesirable. (Ibid., 219–220)

The question here is whether or not she has identified musical components that are both heard and desired by insider musicians or whether she has, instead, identified musical components that *she*, as an outsider, finds important and desirable in the music.

Depending on an instructor's scientific and mathematical background, resources, and appropriateness for the course, all of the issues pointed out in these chapters could be investigated more thoroughly using at the least simple surveys to gather quantitative data, and for those so inclined, using more formal experimental methods.

Hypothesis Testing

If one spends enough time in this music listening to different musicians and thinking about the links between individual personality, biography, sex, genetics, etc. and those musicians' musical behavior, he or she will likely start to perceive patterns and relationships that merit scientific investigation. Why is it that, for example, that the music

that certain musicians, including many who participated in this research, make with their instruments sounds “traditional” to my ear? What is it about their playing that marks them as not being an outsider? Is it particular nuances of pitch? Particular rhythmic motifs? Things that would be considered mistakes in classical music? What is it about the playing of outsider fiddlers, especially young, classically-trained female fiddlers that gives them a characteristic sound which is recognized as being the same in some way by many old-time musicians? The first step in answering any of these questions is to choose a research design that would circumvent the various biases of the researchers (i.e., establish that this seems to be a legitimate phenomenon that many musicians perceive and validate that empirically).

Tunes recently composed by revivalists and meant to sound like traditional old-time fiddle tunes sound, to me and to many of my informants and musical colleagues, different than the old tunes of anonymous composition. Why? Perhaps they sound different because it is difficult to compose tunes that sound like cousins to the older corpus of tunes. Well, then why is this the case? What conclusions can we draw from the structure of revivalists’ compositions? Measuring musicians’ reactions to musical stimuli composed specifically to test various aspects of perception and cognition is common practice in music psychology, and it has precedents in earlier ethnomusicology. This is an ideal sort of exercise that would unite an ethnomusicologist and a psychologist: a psychologist would have little hope of designing an ecologically valid and culturally-sensitive experiment and stimuli, and an ethnomusicologist would have little hope of designing a rigorous experiment and analyzing the statistical data.

But old-time musicians themselves can take an active role in generating valid research questions if the general suspicion of science and analytical approaches to what they are doing was to be ameliorated. As Woolf suggested, “When the old-time community shares these inner experiences of the music it establishes a scientific-like community of communicating observers, comparing notes on phenomena, experimenting with instruments, comparing results” (208). Internet forums and social media would be an excellent way to crowd-source this sort of investigation. Rather than being an interesting but inconsequential aspect, music perception and cognition is at the core of the social configuration of this musical culture. It is through this disciplinary framework that we could examine how easy or difficult it is to learn a new melody, play chords to a novel melody, learn the structure of a “crooked” (irregularly metered) tune, or how dexterous one must be on an instrument to play a certain melody. Chordal accompaniment, which generates a significant amount of debate and judgments about a player’s musicianship and knowledge of tradition, is an area that can and should be examined empirically. Systematically examining the choices that rhythm players make when accompanying a novel melody, for example, can reveal much about the implicit or explicit rules that that musician has learned. Mapping these out geographically or by social cohort, we could begin to understand larger patterns of musical schemas in use, which might help clarify our understanding of regional stylistic differences in this music. In 1963, Dorothea Moser claimed that

guitars and banjos used in present-day instrumental groups usually tend to distract unfavorably from the melodies and distort the harmony in a sometimes frightening manner. This is especially true in the case of so many modal melodies which the untrained mountain banjo or guitar player attempts to harmonize with the only three chords he generally knows – I, IV, V7. This paucity of harmonic devices for the accompanists is due to the fact that so many of them learned

accompaniment technique from cheap chord booklets sold by music stores or mail order houses. These booklets invariably explained how to play in ‘all available keys’ but only illustrated the above mentioned chords in each key. (74)

51 years have passed since this bold assertion (that the harmonic conventions of old-time music were chiefly the result of circumstances to do with mail-order chord booklets, and not because of the musical preferences of the musicians, dancers, etc.) was made without, to my knowledge, any rebuttal or further formal investigation.

Although this dissertation has focused primarily on old-time *musicians*, the amount of questions that musicological analysis of old-time *music* could help to answer is staggering. Almost any dimension of the music would be fair game for a proper experiment or for further analysis. For example, as part of my survey packet I asked participants to list 10 of their current favorite old-time tunes. Although I planned only a basic analysis of these lists for this study, I thought it wise to take advantage of people’s willingness to give me this information, as I might not have the chance again. As I looked over the lists, I, of course, began to detect what looked like patterns, correlations, and evidence of my theories, but these need to be analyzed empirically – a difficult, but not impossible, endeavor. While I and others intuitively might be able to accurately identify characteristics of some musicians based on their lists, it would take a staggering amount of data gathering to make any strong claims based on this data. While I implicitly recognize certain tunes as being associated with certain types of musicians (e.g., the Garry Harrison tune “Dull Chisel” is just not played by traditional musicians from SW VA, NW NC. It is a glaring indicator of that person belonging to the national old-time

revival scene¹⁰⁹), understanding what repertoire might tell us about individual musicians via empirical analysis ought to be a rich research area in the future.

To use myself as an example, there is much research potential in examining what tunes musicians tend to play frequently. Despite the prevalence of 2-part regular meter (i.e., 16 measures, w/ 4 beats per measure) old-time tunes which are harmonized only with the I and V chords (I would estimate this includes 25% of commonly played tunes), only 15 of the 131 tunes that I could lead on fiddle (~11.5%) use only the I and V chords. Of those 15 tunes, 11 have some other musical characteristic that makes them distinctive (e.g., plucks with the left hand, irregular meter, three or four parts, mixolydian modality, a tempo change, require a special tuning, etc.), leaving 4 out of 131 tunes (~3%) which fit the above characteristics. I can't recall ever consciously avoiding learning these tunes on the fiddle (though I've played guitar to them in jams countless times), yet the evidence strongly suggests that those sorts of tunes did not appeal to my brain as much as tunes with more chord changes or with structural, rhythmic, or tonal irregularities.

So how might we go about systematically looking for structural similarities among somebody's favorite tunes? If I had a hunch that this person seems to enjoy tunes with frequent I – IV motion, I would need to transcribe those tunes, including the chordal accompaniment (which varies), and determine how to operationalize this chordal motion. Is there a baseline level of I – IV motion in old-time fiddle tunes to use as a comparison? Obviously, there is, though calculating this would require a large enough sampling of the

¹⁰⁹ By this I mean the community of outsider old-time musicians who, while scattered geographically around the country, know one another, communicate electronically via Facebook or other social media, and who rendezvous in person at the various fiddler's conventions, music camps, dances, and other events that tend to attract geographically dispersed musicians (e.g., Clifftop). While there are certainly regional differences in terms of tune repertoire, the Garry Harrison tunes have spread around the U.S. and also to other countries (esp. in Europe) with small old-time communities, and I have heard his tunes played by outsiders, but never insiders, at many different conventions.

corpus of old-time tunes (estimated to be somewhere around 5,000) to use inferential statistics. Systematic musicologists like David Huron have at their disposal tens of thousands of compositions – transcribed into digital files that are able to be analyzed by music-analysis software. While Huron has included folk songs in his database, someone had to transcribe these, opening up multiple theoretical rabbit holes (i.e., Well, which version do you transcribe? Which chords do you use to accompany the melodies? Etc.). Several musician-scholars have attempted musicological analysis of old-time music, especially fiddle tunes. Although there has not been a comprehensive old-time music theory laid out, many scholars have made transcriptions, identified tune families and types, and have attempted historical research linking Appalachian tunes to their British Isles ancestors (e.g., Burman, 1968; Burman-Hall, 1975; Frisch, 1987; Goertzen, 1985; Guntharp, 1980; Titon, 2001). There also exists a massive volume of fiddle tune transcriptions, *The Milliner-Koken Collection of American Fiddle Tunes* (2011), which contains 1404 transcriptions – more than enough for a systematic musicologist to use as a data set for preliminary analyses.¹¹⁰

As I have argued in this dissertation, ethnomusicologists now have a larger toolkit to bring to our studies of revival musics, or any traditional music that is taken up *en masse* by musicians from outside the tradition. We ought to take advantage of those tools whenever and however possible. My initial ideas for how to research this topic involved the use of musical stimuli and several simple experiments. In practice, this proved to be quite difficult. However, one future plan of research involves the creation of sound examples that would be evaluated by old-time musicians on various criteria. By

¹¹⁰ Although to what degree these tunes are representative of the popularity of various old-time tunes now and historically we cannot know.

constructing novel melodic stimuli and then determining the chord progression musicians would prefer to accompany that melody, for example, we can learn much about the way individual musicians conceive of this music harmonically. In fact, I composed a few melodies for the purpose of determining conventions of using the IV vs the vi vs the I chord that I thought: 1) conformed to the stylistic constraints of old-time melodies, generally, 2) were distinct enough from other tunes that participants would not easily copy and paste chord progressions from similar traditional tunes onto them, 3) used a melodic structure that would be ambiguous as far as chord choice (e.g., an emphasis on the 6th scale degree, which could be harmonized using a IV, vi, or I chord). These would have to be verified by a sample of musicians as sounding “old-time” enough to be ecologically valid, then tested on a different set of musicians.

While some old-time musicians certainly have strong experiences when playing by themselves, probably at home, or possibly along with a recording, the most common context for strong experiences happens live with other musicians, most commonly in a jam session but also when playing on stage at contests or for dances. To what extent this is due to special sounds and responses and social experiences that can only occur in live settings is open to investigation. One could imagine a scenario in which a computer and well-placed loudspeakers could be programmed to provide real-time, dynamic accompaniment for an old-time musician. Perhaps robots could even be programmed to play this accompaniment on actual acoustic instruments (e.g., guitar, bass, banjo, and fiddle). Such technology already exists, though probably not in a refined enough form to pass the test of a blindfolded human musician not being able to tell the difference between man and machine. Until experimentation tells us otherwise, we can assume that

the only possible means of achieving the sound and setting necessary for most old-time musicians' strong experiences is through live interaction with other musicians.

There are innumerable questions about the history of this music that we will likely never know the answers to: Who were the musicians who first created and sustained this music? What psychological and physiological qualities predisposed them to become musicians in the first place? Why did they make the melodies that they did? What did they think the emotional character of their tunes was? In what way might they have differed in terms of personality and behavior from other members of their community? But there are some deep, pressing questions that we might have a chance at answering. For example, to what extent might insider old-time musicians today represent aberrations within their local communities? Why are contemporary insider musicians attracted to playing *this* music rather than to the bluegrass that is far more popular in Appalachia today? To discover that *insider* old-time musicians are statistical outliers across a multitude of psychological measures compared to their non-old-time-playing peers might leave the “authentic” and “insider” distinctions, already on shaky ground, stripped of their explanatory power and political relevance. Such a discovery would force the distinctions that we researchers and scholars make in regards to old-time musicians to be based on empirically measured musical, behavioral, psychological, and music-psychological factors, rather than on unconfirmed and imprecise notions of “cultural differences.” Depending on how we designed the research, we may find that insider musicians actually have more in common (in some domains) with outsider musicians than they do with the people in the traditional communities that they are claiming to represent.

Making a claim like that, or any other that would carry great significance in how we understand music revivals, music perception and cognition, and musical affect, requires that ethnomusicologists approach our research from a perspective that seeks to understand what music means for our informants but which also accepts scientific explanations, even if they call our informants' understandings into question. Of course, if ethnomusicologists are reluctant to make such an epistemological leap, any research claim, even when only focused on understanding rather than explanation, can be made stronger and richer by the use of less-biased and more rigorous methods, the collection of empirical, quantitative data, and by always keeping the *music* at the center of whatever we study. If our scholarship fails to focus on the music as the basis for whatever else we concern ourselves with, it might be because we are not looking at it closely enough. It is, after all, or it ought to be, the uniting factor of all ethnomusicological research.

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Appendix A: Survey Packet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Gender: M / F

Age: _____

Primary instrument (what you play most often) in old-time music:

LOCATION

Current city/town/county of residence: _____

How long have you lived there? _____

Previous locations lived over last 10 years:

Hometown (where you attended K-12 school):

Where did your parents grow up?

EDUCATION

Highest education level attained (e.g., high school, some college): _____

Degree(s) earned (list discipline also, e.g., "B.S., Physics"): _____

EMPLOYMENT

Current job: _____

Previous job(s): _____

MUSICAL BACKGROUND

For how many years, approximately, have you been playing old-time music? _____

Which other instruments, in addition to your primary instrument, do you regularly play in old-time music?

Please describe all formal musical training (e.g., lessons, school or church classes, etc.) you've had (e.g., "6 years of trumpet in middle and high school"):

Do any elders in your family also play old-time music (e.g., parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts)? If so, where do they live and what instruments do they play?

Other than old-time music, which other genres / styles of music do you play and/or listen to regularly (list particular musicians / bands if applicable)?

Indicate the frequency with which you have experienced the following due to playing and/or listening to old-time music by writing the corresponding number (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) in the blank next to the statement.

- | Never
1 | Rarely
2 | Sometimes
3 | Often
4 | Always
5 |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. _____ | Tears, crying | 6. _____ | Change in breathing rate | |
| 2. _____ | Shivers, shudders, chills | 7. _____ | Change in chest pressure | |
| 3. _____ | Goosebumps | 8. _____ | Lump in throat or stomach | |
| 4. _____ | Tingling | 9. _____ | Dizziness | |
| 5. _____ | Sensation of warmth | | | |

Indicate to what degree you agree with the statements below by writing the corresponding number (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) in the blank next to the statement.

- | Strongly
Disagree
1 | Slightly
Disagree
2 | Neither
Agree
nor
Disagree
3 | Slightly
Agree
4 | Strongly
Agree
5 |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. _____ | Good musicianship is more important to me in a jam session than somebody's ability to socialize. I usually play in jam sessions for the music rather than the company. | | | |
| 2. _____ | I can usually identify my favorite parts or structural features of my favorite old-time tunes. | | | |
| 3. _____ | I like my favorite old-time tunes mainly because they remind me of a link to a particular person / place / time period. | | | |
| 4. _____ | I like my favorite old-time tunes mainly because of their musical structure (e.g., melody, rhythm, chord progression, etc.). | | | |
| 5. _____ | I do not have a strong understanding of music theory as it relates to old-time music and would struggle to explain the structure of a tune using terms from music theory. | | | |
| 6. _____ | Each old-time tune has a distinct character and expresses particular ideas, moods, or emotions. | | | |
| 7. _____ | I am not very particular about “right” or “wrong” chord progressions in old-time music. | | | |

- 8._____My ideal jam is one in which there is a small group of talented musicians taking the music seriously rather than a large group of moderately skilled musicians who have a more relaxed approach to playing old-time.
- 9._____I feel strongly that some old-time tunes are "good" tunes and others are "bad" tunes, from a musical standpoint.
- 10._____Generally, my favorite old-time tunes have a musical structure that makes me feel something or seem to have emotional power.
- 11._____To say that old-time tunes fall into 3-4 basic categories (e.g., "happy," "sad," and "spooky") is a gross over-simplification. The emotional character of tunes is much more nuanced than that.
- 12._____I prefer to play the tunes that I already know in a jam and dislike having to learn new tunes on the fly.
- 13._____I usually refer to chords by their name (e.g., "G," "D," or "A") instead of by number (e.g., "put a five chord there").
- 14._____I can have an intensely rewarding jam experience playing with strangers, so long as the music sounds good.
- 15._____At jams and festivals I tend to place a higher value on human interaction and camaraderie than I do on high-quality musicianship.
- 16._____I prefer to play old-time music with people that I know who are from where I'm from.
- 17._____I sometimes hear people at festivals playing "weird" old-time tunes that I don't like or care to learn.
- 18._____A large part of my skill and repertoire as an old-time player has come from taking lessons, attending workshops, or watching instructional videos.
- 19._____I prefer to have an audience and/or dancers when I play old-time music and would rather play for others than for my own enjoyment.
- 20._____I enjoy the challenge of learning new melodies in jam sessions or figuring out appropriate chords to new tunes.
- 21._____I tend to feel certain emotions strongly when old-time tunes go to a certain chord or reach a certain chord in a repeating chord progression.
- 22._____I like it when guitar players use different or unexpected chords that still "work" for the tune.
- 23._____I tend to like "crooked" tunes, tunes in an unusual tuning, or rare tunes that hardly anybody else plays more than the popular and regular ones.

Please list below, not necessarily in order of preference, 10 of your favorite old-time tunes (instrumentals, or anything you could play as a “fiddle tune” without anybody singing). These could be tunes that you like to play, or tunes that you like to hear others play. You can list a particular version (e.g., John Ashby’s “Cluck Old Hen”) or just the general tune name and key, if you know it (e.g., “Cindy in D”).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Choose one of these tunes and see if you can describe what it is you like about it, or what is special for you about this tune, using as much detail as you can:

How I am in general

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who *likes to spend time with others*? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which **you agree or disagree with that statement.**

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree Strongly	Disagree a Little	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree a Little	Strongly Agree

I am someone who...

1. _____ Is talkative	23. _____ Tends to be lazy
2. _____ Tends to find fault with others	24. _____ Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
3. _____ Does a thorough job	25. _____ Is inventive
4. _____ Is depressed, blue	26. _____ Has an assertive personality
5. _____ Is original, comes up with new ideas	27. _____ Can be cold and aloof
6. _____ Is reserved	28. _____ Perseveres until the task is finished
7. _____ Is helpful and unselfish with others	29. _____ Can be moody
8. _____ Can be somewhat careless	30. _____ Values artistic, aesthetic experiences
9. _____ Is relaxed, handles stress well.	31. _____ Is sometimes shy, inhibited
10. _____ Is curious about many different things	32. _____ Is considerate and kind to almost everyone
11. _____ Is full of energy	33. _____ Does things efficiently
12. _____ Starts quarrels with others	34. _____ Remains calm in tense situations
13. _____ Is a reliable worker	35. _____ Prefers work that is routine
14. _____ Can be tense	36. _____ Is outgoing, sociable
15. _____ Is ingenious, a deep thinker	37. _____ Is sometimes rude to others
16. _____ Generates a lot of enthusiasm	38. _____ Makes plans and follows through with them
17. _____ Has a forgiving nature	39. _____ Gets nervous easily
18. _____ Tends to be disorganized	40. _____ Likes to reflect, play with ideas
19. _____ Worries a lot	41. _____ Has few artistic interests
20. _____ Has an active imagination	42. _____ Likes to cooperate with others
21. _____ Tends to be quiet	43. _____ Is easily distracted
22. _____ Is generally trusting	44. _____ Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

DIRECTIONS: The following are phrases describing people's behaviors. Please use the rating scale below to describe how accurately each statement describes you. Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same gender as you, and roughly your same age. Please read each statement carefully, and then on the line next to each statement write the number that corresponds to the accuracy of the statement (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5).

Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate nor Inaccurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
1	2	3	4	5

I...

1. _____ Complete tasks successfully.
2. _____ Have a vivid imagination.
3. _____ Love order and regularity.
4. _____ Like music.
5. _____ Try to follow the rules.
6. _____ Experience my emotions intensely.
7. _____ Work hard.
8. _____ Prefer variety to routine.
9. _____ Start tasks right away.
10. _____ Like to solve complex problems.
11. _____ Make rash decisions.
12. _____ Tend to vote for liberal political candidates.
13. _____ Handle tasks smoothly.
14. _____ Love to daydream.
15. _____ Often forget to put things back in their proper place.
16. _____ Enjoy the beauty of nature.
17. _____ Tell the truth.
18. _____ Feel others' emotions.
19. _____ Plunge into tasks with all my heart.
20. _____ Prefer to stick with things that I know.
21. _____ Carry out my plans.
22. _____ Avoid philosophical discussions.

Very Inaccurate 1	Moderately Inaccurate 2	Neither Accurate nor Inaccurate 3	Moderately Accurate 4	Very Accurate 5
23. _____	Like to act on a whim.			
24. _____	Believe that criminals should receive help rather than punishment.			
25. _____	Am sure of my ground.			
26. _____	Like to get lost in thought.			
27. _____	Leave a mess in my room.			
28. _____	Do not like art.			
29. _____	Break rules.			
30. _____	Am not easily affected by my emotions.			
31. _____	Am not highly motivated to succeed.			
32. _____	Dislike new foods.			
33. _____	Find it difficult to get down to work.			
34. _____	Am not interested in theoretical discussions.			
35. _____	Do crazy things.			
36. _____	Believe in one true religion.			
37. _____	Know how to get things done.			
38. _____	Spend time reflecting on things.			
39. _____	Am not bothered by messy people.			
40. _____	Do not like poetry.			
41. _____	Break my promises.			
42. _____	Don't understand people who get emotional.			
43. _____	Do just enough work to get by.			
44. _____	Am attached to conventional ways.			
45. _____	Postpone decisions.			
46. _____	Avoid difficult reading material.			
47. _____	Often make last-minute plans.			
48. _____	Tend to vote for conservative political candidates.			

DIRECTIONS: Please use the rating scale below to describe how much you agree with each of the following statements. Please read each statement carefully, and then on the line next to each statement write the number that corresponds to how much you agree with the statement (1, 2, 3, or 4).

Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Somewhat Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
1. _____	The personality of good musicians is what attracts me to music.		
2. _____	It would be difficult for me to pick up if a performing musician is distressed while playing.		
3. _____	I think that I can easily sense how performers feel while playing music.		
4. _____	I like to dance to music that is good for dancing.		
5. _____	I tend to still like poor music performances, if I can relate to the performer.		
6. _____	I never guess the emotions of the performer(s).		
7. _____	I prefer to watch live performers rather than listening to recordings.		
8. _____	Music is important to me mainly because it expresses something personal and touching.		
9. _____	I think that the musical identity of the performer should be far less important than the music he or she plays.		
10. _____	Listening to music gives me generally more images of people than of objects.		
11. _____	I do not really enjoy the atmosphere of big rave parties or rock concerts.		
12. _____	I have a poor sense of what is in a musician's mind.		
13. _____	When I listen to good instrumental music, it feels in a way like someone is telling me a story.		
14. _____	I never find the lyrics of a song to be meaningful to me.		
15. _____	When listening to music, I have thoughts about the emotional state of the writer/composer at the time.		
16. _____	I do not feel I am able to identify with the singers/writers of my favorite music.		
17. _____	I feel when listening to music I can understand the emotions the writer/performer is trying to express.		

Strongly Disagree 1	Somewhat Disagree 2	Somewhat Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
18. _____	I do not care about the lives of my favorite musicians at the times they produced a certain song/album.		
19. _____	I like to read the biographies of my favorite musicians.		
20. _____	It is unimportant to me to understand the emotions behind a song.		
21. _____	I could easily choose examples from my music collection of songs that make me feel relaxed, uplifted, sad etc.		
22. _____	It is difficult for me to imagine the state of mind of composers or what they might have been going through while writing a piece of music.		
23. _____	I often experience physical sensations such as tears, shivers etc when listening to certain pieces of music.		
24. _____	Music can give me sensations of chills.		
25. _____	Music is a kind of language that can be more effective than verbal language.		
26. _____	I am not interested in understanding the structure of a piece of music.		
27. _____	Music performance is only important in as much as it underlines the structure of the composition.		
28. _____	I do not believe that music represents the universe.		
29. _____	I think that people who do understand the rules of music composition gain most out of it.		
30. _____	I am not intrigued about the physics and acoustics of musical instruments.		
31. _____	I often wonder how the mechanics of musical instruments work.		

32. _____ I find it generally easier to understand a piece of music than to understand people's talk.
33. _____ It is unimportant to me whether other people have the same musical taste as me.
34. _____ I tend to avoid large concert audiences.
35. _____ I like hearing the different layers of instruments and voices in a song/piece of music.
36. _____ I have never found myself wondering what happens next in my favorite music.
37. _____ I find written music scores very interesting and I especially like the organized way that music is laid out.
38. _____ I do not find the rhythm of a piece of music particularly important and interesting.
39. _____ I like the way a song comes together from all its different parts.
40. _____ I think it is least important that music has mathematical foundations.
41. _____ At concerts, I like to see the roles of the different band/orchestra members and how it all comes together.
42. _____ I like to keep my music collection clearly ordered, e.g. alphabetically or by genre.
43. _____ I am not at all interested in the production side of music and the technologies involved.
44. _____ I like music to fit clearly into a particular genre, i.e. classical, folk etc.
45. _____ I am easily bored by songs with clearly defined structure (a verse and chorus, etc.).

DIRECTIONS: Please use the rating scale below to describe how much you agree with each statement. Please read each statement carefully, and then on the line next to each statement write the number that corresponds to how much you agree with the statement (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5).

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. _____ It is sometimes possible for me to be completely immersed in nature or in art and to feel as if my whole state of consciousness has somehow been temporarily altered.
2. _____ Sometimes when I am reading poetry or looking at a work of art, I feel a chill or wave of excitement.
3. _____ Certain kinds of music have an endless fascination for me.
4. _____ I enjoy concentrating on a fantasy or daydream and exploring all its possibilities, letting it grow and develop.
5. _____ Some music reminds me of pictures or changing color patterns.
6. _____ Different colors have distinctive and special meanings for me.
7. _____ When listening to powerful music I sometimes feel as if I am being lifted into the air.
8. _____ I often take delight in small things (like the five-pointed star shape that appears when you cut an apple across the core or the colors in soap bubbles).
9. _____ The sound of a voice can be so fascinating to me that I can just go on listening to it.
10. _____ Sometimes thoughts and images come to me without the slightest effort on my part.
11. _____ I can be greatly moved by eloquent or poetic language.
12. _____ The crackle and flames of a wood fire stimulate my imagination.

DIRECTIONS: Respond to each of the following items on a scale from **1** (does **not** describe me very well) to **5** (describes me **very** well).

1. _____ I don't experience many different feelings in everyday life.
2. _____ I am aware of the different nuances or subtleties of a given emotion.
3. _____ I have experienced a wide range of emotions throughout my life.
4. _____ Each emotion has a very distinct and unique meaning to me.
5. _____ I usually experience a limited range of emotions.
6. _____ I tend to draw fine distinctions between similar feelings (e.g., depressed and blue; annoyed and irritated).
7. _____ I experience a wide range of emotions.
8. _____ I am aware that each emotion has a completely different meaning.
9. _____ I don't experience a variety of feelings on an everyday basis.
10. _____ If emotions are viewed as colors, I can notice even small variations within one kind of color (emotion).
11. _____ Feeling good or bad – those terms are sufficient to describe most of my feelings in everyday life.
12. _____ I am aware of the subtle differences between feelings I have.
13. _____ I tend to experience a broad range of different feelings.
14. _____ I am good at distinguishing subtle differences in the meaning of closely related emotion words.

You're almost done!

Musician Type 1	Musician Type 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born and raised in or close to Appalachia or the rural South • History of old-time music in the family • Learned to play from mainly from older musicians who were family or neighbors • Plays a repertoire of mostly local or regional tunes • Plays in a particular style based on a certain musician or region • Feels that he or she is continuing a tradition that he or she was born into 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born and raised outside of Appalachia or the rural South • First person in the family to play old-time music • Learned to play mainly from recordings, lessons, or instructional materials • Plays tunes from all over • Playing style works well for playing a variety of old-time music but is not identifiable as being from a certain place • Feels that he or she is joining someone else's tradition as an outsider

Let's say that the two musicians above represent two poles on opposite ends of a line. Where would you place yourself on that line based on how much you have in common with each type? Circle one of the numbers below.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. Do you remember the first time you were strongly affected by hearing old-time music? Can you describe the circumstances and what it was like for you?
2. Say you're playing old-time music and everything is going right. You're having the most positive experience that you could have playing or listening to old-time music. Can you describe what would need to be happening musically to create this experience and what your conscious experience of it would be like?
3. Some people who play this music seem to do it because sometimes it seems to induce an altered state of consciousness, or a "trance-like" or "out-of-body" sort of state. Is that true for you? If so, is it usually with certain tunes or types of tunes? Does the music need to be a certain way for it to happen? Does it usually happen only when playing with certain people?
4. Do you find that the way you play and experience old-time music is affected by the use of alcohol or other psychoactive substances? If so, in what ways?
5. If you think about your favorite old-time tunes is there anything musically that they might have in common? Anything else they might have in common (from the same place or person, for example)?
6. Do you consider yourself to be easily or intensely affected by music generally? Can you identify any specific musical devices or contexts that tend to elicit a strong response for you?
7. Do you find that you are strongly affected by chord changes or progressions generally in music? How good are you at identifying chord changes by ear? Would you be able to explain why a certain chord is or is not what you want to hear at a certain place in a tune?
8. Do you have favorite sounds in old-time music? (Could be the sound of a certain instrument, the way a particular player plays a certain passage, the overall sound of an old recording, etc.)
9. Do you have favorite parts of certain tunes (e.g., that you wait for and especially enjoy each time they go around)?
10. One of the questions I asked was about whether tunes seem to have a distinct character or musical meaning. Can you describe what sort of groups those tunes might fall in if you had to group them and maybe give an example of a tune for those groups?

11. Can you name a few of your favorite old-time musicians what it is about their music you especially like?
12. Most people who really enjoy old-time music also really don't like when it's played in certain ways. Are you one of those people, and if so, can you describe the sound and structure of "bad" old-time music (in your opinion)?
13. What level would you say you are on your strongest instrument in old-time compared to other players today (beginner, beg/intermediate, intermediate, intermediate/advanced, advanced)?
14. On the last page of the survey I asked people to classify themselves on a spectrum ranging from Type 1 musicians to Type 2. Can you explain what factors led to you choosing the number that you did?