

Singing the Night

Lullabies as Reflexive Practice in Music and Peacebuilding

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[See table of contents](#)

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Article abstract

This paper explores singing lullabies as a practice that opens spaces to reflect on 'night' as a sonic and sensory experience with implications for research in music and peacebuilding. Using arts-based and autoethnographic approaches, I ask: Can singing lullabies (Juvancic 2010) open a space to examine how sounding at night shapes a researcher's 'peace' imaginary? This question aims to expand understandings of the 'self' as a site of an "aesthetics of resistance" (Möller 2020), or the notion that individual reflection and action sustain social engagement in music and peacebuilding scholarship. These understandings can contribute to interdisciplinary conversations on self-reflexivity and performance as ethnographic access points to peace imaginaries in Night Studies.

SINGING THE NIGHT

Lullabies as Reflexive Practice in Music and Peacebuilding

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Introduction

Singing at night creates a space to invent peace – imagine it in my fingers and bones. The feel of the guitar strings, the hard surface of the instrument pressed against my stomach, the ache in my back from sitting too long. Peace imaginary as a moment in the body, sound and place – this shifting place of family and crickets and soft colour outside a bedroom window (Entry, Reflective Journal, Aug. 6th, 2021, 8:24 p.m., Family Home, Rural Setting).

In their 2013 collaboration *Inventing Peace: A Dialogue on Perception*, filmmaker Wim Wenders and philosopher-filmmaker Mary Zournazi write: “Peace requires inventing. What else could ‘inventing’ mean here than the creation of something new” (45)? They go to reflect on the question, “How do we invent peace?” (2013: 47). Referring to the work of French philosopher Henri Bergson, they note:

For Bergson, invention comes out of the creative potential of mind and memory. In essence, life is about continual flow of time (duration), just as the mind inhabits the world of memory and imagination. In this view, our individual lives are quintessentially embodied time, the creative flows and energies that arise out of the *real* as it is lived and actualised (47; emphasis in original).

Wenders’ and Zournazi’s notion of ‘inventing peace’ is a starting point for this arts-based, autoethnographic exploration of singing lullabies at night (Juvančič 2010; Ascenso 2021). More specifically, the idea that inventing peace involves an interplay of imagination and memory, embodied in the creative flows and energies of life, suggests the possibility of conceptualizing peace as an imagined, mundane and multisensory experience (Mac Ginty 2019; 2021; Mannergren Selimovic 2019; Väyrynen 2019a). In the sections that follow, I argue that such conceptualizations can be explored and

supported by opening particular reflexive spaces. Here, reflexive spaces are understood in conjunction with the concept of self-reflexivity, or the capacity to critically deconstruct one's own role in action for constructive social change (Levesque 2019; Shields 2020).

Zournazi provides an example of such reflexive space by recounting her grappling with the meaning of 'peace' during a train excursion through the Australian landscape (2013: 51-69). Her grappling includes minute observations of other passengers, snippets of conversation, attention to her body, as well as memories and insights from other places and times in her life. At one point, she observes: "Maybe that's it: when we are *with* the world, with people, in their presence, with things, in their presence, with places, in their presence, there is...an openness into which peace can enter...fullness of being, a concord, an accord, a mutual agreement, a harmony" (2013: 67; emphasis in original; Howell 2021). Zournazi's train reflections afford her readers a glimpse into the multiple ways in which an individual researcher's environment, memories, conversations, bodily sensations and relationships play a role in the constitution of reflexive spaces in which to critically engage with 'peace.'

Recognition of the need to create such spaces is not new. Scholar and peacebuilding practitioner, John Paul Lederach (2005; 2010), for instance, underscores the significance of spaces in which peacebuilders ask the questions: "Who are we? What are we doing? Where are we going? What is our purpose?" (2005: 176). He continues: "These are the questions that keep cropping up but as things stand have precious little space to be explored within [peace oriented] professions themselves" (176). As will be discussed in this article, the need for peacebuilders to reflect on these and other questions, particularly as they relate to experiences of self-care and self-awareness, remains an important but under-researched area of study in peacebuilding scholarship (e.g., Pruitt and Rose Jeffrey 2020; Rose Jeffrey and Pruitt 2019; Vaittinen *et al.* 2019).

For his part, Lederach argues that cultivating stillness and space for reflection is not a passive activity. He writes:

The paradox is this: Stillness is not inactivity. It is the presence of disciplined activity without movement. Stillness is activism with a twist. It is the platform that generates authenticity of engagement, for it is the stage that makes true listening and seeing possible (2005: 104).

While concepts such as 'authenticity' and 'true' listening can raise concerns (e.g., authentic and true in what sense? According to whose

experience? In which context?), the idea of slowing down and being still as part of scholarship has gained traction in different fields (e.g., Brown *et al.* 2016; Shields and Hesbol 2020). Echoing Wenders, Zournazi and Lederach, applied ethnomusicologist Katarina Juvančič (2010) affirms: “Taking a reflexive stance towards others and ourselves (self-reflexivity), we take into account our own position and the construction of reality that we create through our involvement with others. Reflexivity reveals how we handle our own humanity in unconventional circumstances, how we cope with the challenges of a researcher’s role and what we learn from our experiences” (117).

Considering these ideas, I ask: Can singing lullabies open a space to examine how sounding at night shapes a researcher’s ‘peace’ imaginary? This question aims to expand understandings of the ‘self’ as a site of an “aesthetics of resistance” (Möller 2020), or the notion that individual reflection and action sustain social engagement (e.g., engagement with others in both scholarly and community contexts). In her chapter “Singing from the Dark’: Applied Ethnomusicology and the study of Lullabies,” Juvančič (2010) connects her understanding of reflexivity to sound and singing. She maintains that lullabies are far from simplistic, irrelevant songs, but can often act as “strategies for coping with dead-end situations in which people may find themselves” (126). Stated differently, as a practice, singing lullabies can be conceptualized as a way of knowing, reflecting on and taking action in one’s life and in one’s relationship with others (Ingold 2020).¹

How do these ideas relate to the theme of this Special Issue on Nocturnal Ethnographies? To answer this question, I leverage my own sonic and sensory experiences of “inhabiting the night” (Gwiazdzinski and Straw 2015) through the practice of singing. Similar to the dynamic process of inventing peace Zournazi describes at the opening of the introduction, Luc Gwiazdzinski and Will Straw state that the night can be conceived as “a space of reflection where new modes of critical thinking can be developed” (2015: 2; my translation). They also assert that night can be experienced as a threshold – where one moves from the external and public dimensions of our lives to the intimacy of private-home spaces (2015: 3, my translation; also see Shaw 2018).

1. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers who noted the importance of exploring the potential of lullabies from a comparative and cross-cultural perspective. While the focus of this article is on an arts-based, autoethnographic approach to the singing of lullabies in a particular scholar’s understandings, Gintsburg and Kogan’s (2021) analysis of lullabies sung on the island of Soqatra (Gulf of Aden, Yemen) is a recent example of scholars undertaking a comparative and cross-cultural approach.

These understandings provide an initial definition of ‘night’ to situate the insights that arise from my arts-based, autoethnographic approach to singing lullabies in a small urban apartment and a family home in a rural setting. The principal objectives of this approach, as articulated below, are to engage with the multiple dimensions of peace (Olivius and Åkebo 2021), or to use Wenders’ and Zournazi’s turn of phrase, to answer the questions: How do I invent peace? What are the implications of this inventing for my scholarship, including my capacity for self-reflexivity? How does singing lullabies at night in particular places expand my capacity to listen and know: bodily, sonically and spatially?

The main ethnographic argument undergirding these questions is that singing lullabies enables an individual researcher to meaningfully locate themselves at night (Lederach and Lederach 2010). More specifically, singing creates a space to encounter the night as a sonic and sensory experience with implications for how a researcher imagines and navigates ‘peace’ as a deeply embodied and emplaced aspect of daily life (Brigg 2020; Brigg and George 2020; Howell *et al.* 2019; Coyles *et al.* 2021). This contention is explored over four sections using practices, concepts and questions arising from several fields of study: peace and conflict studies, night studies, and the emerging field of music in peacebuilding (Robertson *et al.* 2020).

In the first section, I outline my chosen methodology, drawing connections between arts-based research and autoethnographic approaches and practices. The second section examines formulations of peace as embodied and emplaced in everyday life (Mac Ginty 2019; 2021). Research in peace and conflict studies that address notions of space and place as well as insights from the field of music in peacebuilding will be discussed in this section. In the third portion of the article, I consider my own arts-based, autoethnographic experiences of imagining and singing peace at night. The conclusion reflects on some of the implications as well as future directions for interdisciplinary research at the intersection of song, singing, night studies and peacebuilding practice.

Methodology: Inhabiting the Domestic Night

What signals the beginning of night? The sound of a parent’s footsteps on the stairs, the click of their bedroom door, the muffled voices of the nightly news? Or the jingle of the dog’s collar as she settles beside the bed? The crickets outside the window? The ink-colored trees shadowed against the late evening sky? The glow of the streetlights? Perhaps the absence of people taking their

evening stroll after supper? (Entry, Reflective Journal, Aug. 3rd, 2021, 8:12 p.m., Family Home, Rural Setting)

In chapter five of his book *The Nocturnal City*, Robert Shaw (2018) discusses “the representation of the urban night, looking at how the night appears in culture and how this connects to lived experiences of the city” (83). Of relevance to this article is Shaw’s analysis of what he refers to as an “aesthetics of the night-time city” (83). He underscores that this aesthetics is not comprised solely of representations (e.g., discourse) but involves a constellation of “aesthetic tools,” namely, “lighting, colour, sound, sensation” (83). As he notes, these tools shape the social practices that individuals and communities engage in at night.

Using examples from Western literature, Shaw describes two “visions” of the night-time city: as spectacular and as a spectacle (2018: 93). He explains that the first vision characterizes the nocturnal city as space to be engaged with, whereas the second vision imagines the night-time city as a place to explore from a distance (93–94). He suggests, however, that as a lived experience, the nocturnal city can be lived as both spectacular and as a spectacle through a range of activities: walking, exploring, observing and listening (87–93).

I refer to these visions of the night-time city because they acknowledge, among other aesthetic tools, the role of sound and sensation in shaping nocturnal experiences. They also suggest that ‘night’ is a layered, multifaceted phenomenon, involving individual and collective ways of knowing and acting (e.g., Diamanti 2018). As others have observed, “the night has its frontlines, its anchoring points, its bastions of continuous time, but also its little pockets of resistance, where city dwellers hold onto their classic life rhythms, in zones of withdrawal wherein their resistance has been victorious” (Gwiazdzinski *et al.* 2018). From an ethnographic and performative perspective, I am interested in these “pockets of resistance” and “zones of withdrawal,” particularly as these are manifest in Shaw’s description of the “domestic night” (2018: 97–109).

For Shaw, domestic urban spaces are a distinct nocturnal experience, one depicted as existing on a spectrum between care, safety and protection on the one hand, and isolation, fear and control on the other (101). Recognizing this spectrum draws attention to the powerful emotional and embodied resonances of the domestic night; resonances that can be experienced as either constructive or destructive. In other words, Shaw acknowledges the domestic night as an ambiguous, affective and aesthetic

space, which can provide insight into different ways of knowing and dwelling as part of the night-time city. His acknowledgement further underscores the importance of not idealizing or romanticizing the home at night across different contexts and communities. While the home at night “can be both an inward- and outward-reaching space” (102), the ways in which this space is lived requires careful analysis and contextualization.

Such analysis and contextualization are paramount when exploring the role of sound and sensation as part of the domestic night, in this case through singing, reflecting and listening. Similar to the domestic spaces in which they are often sung, lullabies can be characterized as ambiguous, affective and aesthetic (Bilal 2018; Gintsburg and Kogan, 2021; Gómez-Castellano 2013; Pryor 2020). They are diversely understood as containers that can lovingly hold singers and listeners (Boyce-Tillman 2000: 54) as well as practices that pass on memories of pain, particularly as these relate to experiences of violence, displacement and dispossession (Bilal 2018; Muti and Gürpınar 2021; Sutton *et al.* 2021). Speaking of lullabies, Samantha Dieckmann and Jane Davidson observe:

Singing lullabies in the home is meaningful not only for the infant or child audience, but also for the performing caregiver...The genre also facilitates emotional expressions, as the privacy of singing to one's infant is a safe space to address the complexities, contradictions and frustrations of parenthood, familial relations, and broader societal issues and political conflicts. Because of these qualities, lullabies offer strong connections to the past while providing a vehicle for addressing the challenges of resettlement, coping with trauma, and conflict resolution (2018a: 160).

With these ideas in mind, the choice of using arts-based, autoethnographic approaches to address my main argument is twofold. First, arts-based research practices such as singing and song composition are considered processes that contribute to “art-making as a way of knowing” (Leavy 2018: 4). As Patricia Leavy explains, arts-based practices are methodological tools that can be leveraged in all stages of research to address questions “holistically”: from the perspective of the imagination, the body and the senses (4, 5, 9). Leavy also argues that this holistic approach can create space for a critical and in-depth exploration of the self in relationship to others and the world, hence resonating with Wenders’ and Zournazi’s musings that inventing peace involves being present with the world, with people, with things, and with particular places.

Second, autoethnographic practices such as documenting one’s reflections, personal listening practices and movements through different

spaces (Findlay-Walsh 2017), compliment Leavy's description of arts-based research. Simply put, autoethnographic methods examine experiences of the self to reflect on shared values, cultural expectations and social practices (Holman Jones and Pruyn 2018). Of particular relevance to this study, they have been used to explore researchers' formulation of their identity in relation to sound in certain spaces (Wang 2014). For example, in her article *Mapping an Existential Territory: An Autoethnography of a Sound Researcher*, Jing Wang (2014) uses autoethnographic methods to reflect on the shifts, ruptures and connections she experienced in relation to sound and territory as an international student moving from China to a small, urban setting in the United States. She notes: "Autoethnography generates changes in a poetic, intimate, and interpersonal way. It works on the fragile and ephemeral verge between inside and outside" (2014: 488).

The holistic approach of arts-based research in combination with autoethnography's capacity to poetically and intimately attend to the 'fragile and ephemeral' connection between one's internal and external worlds, provides an access point to lullabies as an ambiguous, highly contextual and multisensory experience (Ascenso 2021; Gintsburg and Kogan 2021; Sutton *et al.* 2021). This approach also underscores that the complexities, emotions tapped and implications of particular performances of lullabies cannot be captured with analyses of lyrics alone. Juvančič (2010), for instance, maintains that: "Unveiling emotional and intimate facets of lullabies as well as analyzing the act of soothing or lulling in situ, therefore, has to include the research of body movements, gesticulations, and non-articulated sounds as well as thick description of the performance context" (125; Baker 2016). Framed by Shaw's discussion of the 'domestic night,' the methodology used for this article involves approaches and practices that take seriously Juvančič's contention about analyzing lullabies *in situ*, e.g., with reference to bodies, emotions and performance spaces.

Between July and August 2021, I documented several nightly lullaby singing sessions using a digital recorder, a cellphone and/or a laptop. The timing of these sessions ranged from 8-11 p.m., involved acapella and accompanied singing (e.g., with acoustic guitar), and took place in two domestic settings: an urban apartment in a mid-sized Canadian city as well as a family home (e.g., childhood home) in a rural setting. Lullabies from the group songbook, *Rise Up Singing* (Blood and Patterson 2004), were sung as well as lullabies from the author's familial context. Examples include the Welsh lullaby *All through the Night* (Blood and Patterson 2004: 131), which the author sang to her own nieces as children, and *Home, Home on*

the Range, an American folk song familiar to the author's mother (Personal Communication with Author, May 17, 2021).

In addition to these lullaby sessions, night sounds at both settings were recorded. A reflective field journal was also kept, capturing in a different format, the sonic and sensory dimensions of the performance contexts (e.g., living room, porch, bedroom). Entries were logged before and after the singing of particular lullabies as well as when the researcher found herself awake at different times of the night. Finally, the researcher composed an original lullaby adapted from a poem written in May 2021. The original lullaby (see Annex) was played alongside the other lullabies chosen for this arts-based, autoethnographic piece and mirrored the use of rudimentary chords (e.g., A, D, G) represented in the group songbook, *Rise Up Singing* (Blood and Patterson 2004).

The ethnographic objectives of applying these approaches and practices were to create a self-reflexive space to be with and listen more deeply to the night, as experienced by a particular musician and peace and conflict studies scholar. Listening in this context is understood as "a practice skill that helps forge places through bodies" (Duffy and Waitt 2011: 122). Sound geographers Michelle Duffy and Gordon Waitt affirm that listening is not only "an embodied, place-making practice" (120) but also one that enables an individual to orient themselves or pay attention to "an unfolding of the self in place" (131). Such 'unfolding' is constituted by responses to sounds in different places as well as an individual listener's memories, life stories and values (121–122).

This understanding of singing and listening as mechanisms to orient oneself resonates with correlations made between music and night discussed by Giacomo Bottà and Geoff Stalhl (2019) in the introduction to their edited volume, *Nocturns: Popular Music and the Night*. They comment: "The physiological power of the night is hardwired into us; it is the dark where hearing becomes the primary sense informing us of predator and prey, friend and foe, safety and danger; and it can be music that guides us towards one or the other" (5). In their view, the night is a "time-space that fosters new kinds of meaning and mattering" (3), a fostering that can involve the singing, hearing and embodied self. The questions arise, however: How do these understandings and practices provide insight into the act of 'inventing peace' in nocturnal domestic spaces? I turn to these questions in the section below.

Peace and Peacebuilding as Embodied and Emplaced in Everyday Life

With the windows closed, I can just hear the chorus of insects, the rumble of passing cars. Wenders and Zournazi suggest that: “Peace begins with listening” (2013: 39). Listening to whom? To what? At what scale and in which direction? How do we begin to listen for peace in our own lives? (Reflective Journal Entry, Aug. 10th, 2021, 8:41 p.m., Apartment, Urban Setting).

The meaning of the word ‘peace’ and how it shapes experience in different contexts is not simple or clear cut. Affirming this statement, in her recent work *Corporeal Peacebuilding: Mundane Bodies and Temporal Transitions*, Tarja Väyrynen (2019a) emphasizes the importance of examining the ways in which individuals and communities come to ‘know’ peace in the intimate, embodied and mundane aspects of their daily lives (3-5). Väyrynen argues: “People experience war, conflict, peacebuilding and peace as felt and corporeal” (2019a: 35). Peace, in this understanding, is not merely a political process undertaken in the aftermath of violence and war. It is a deeply human experience interwoven with bodies, emotions (Dieckmann and Davidson 2018b), places (Ostashewski 2020) and vulnerabilities (Väyrynen 2019b). Roger Mac Ginty, who has worked extensively on the idea of everyday peace, affirms that this peace is “the stuff of everyday life – the actions and thoughts that constitute how we embody and live life as individuals, families, and communities” (2021: 2–3).²

In their study *When Blood and Bones Cry Out*, Lederach and his daughter, Angela Jill (2010), observe that there is something particular to music and sound that allows individuals and communities to “...deepen and touch aspects of human experience that require constant nurture and exploration” (128; emphasis in original). Their examples include fieldwork in various conflict and post-conflict settings as well as stories from their own lives. As part of this work, John Paul contributes chapters that weave together his extensive involvement in peacebuilding with his experience of music, the ways individual musicians have shaped his life story (e.g., Bob Dylan: 83–88; Van Morrison: 111–144) as well as engagement with sound through specific instruments (e.g., Tibetan singing bowl: 89–110).

2. Mac Ginty co-directs the “Everyday Peace Indicators (EPI)” project with Pamina Firchow (2018; 2020). As he notes: “The project allowed the collection of significant amounts of data and analysis of how communities see peace and conflict in their own lives” (2021: 17). Of particular relevance to the present work is Mac Ginty’s recognition of the family and home life in what constitutes everyday peace in various contexts (2021: 161–189). While it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the EPI project at length, it is an important resource for those interested in the role of the everyday in understanding and living out ‘peace’ in different settings.

One of the main points that Lederach and Lederach address is the need to pay attention to our encounters with music and sound to generate shifts in conventional understandings of peace as static, linear and sequential (2010: 4–5; 72). In contrast, they argue that encountering music and sound creates new metaphors for peace and conflict studies analyses: peace as circular, iterative, evocative and spatial (2010: 105–110). Speaking of sound and song specifically, Lederach and Lederach acknowledge: “Sound and song become tools that locate a person, provide a compass that makes sense of things and creates meaning” (2010: 129; Howell *et al.* 2019).

These reflections resonate with conceptualizations of peace discussed in the field of music in peacebuilding as well as scholarship on spatial approaches to peace. Referring to his own evolving definitions of peace and peacebuilding, Olivier Urbain writes:

Today I prefer to use the term ‘peacebuilding,’ which reflects more adequately the process, the daily efforts, constant struggles, and occasional successes of ordinary people. I take into account the fact that human vulnerability, unplanned obstacles, and power struggles never fail to try to block our path, as we try to move toward the realization of the abstract idea of ‘peace’ (2019: 333).

In a similar line of thinking, and operating out of a concern for embodiment, locality and space, M. Anne Brown, Morgan Brigg and Nicole George underscore the need for researchers to acknowledge their own ‘emplacement’ (Brigg 2020; Brigg and George 2020; Brown 2020a, 2020b). Attuning to one’s emplacement emphasizes that a researcher’s knowledge base, theories and practices emerge from “somewhere” (Brown 2020a: 434): a body; a home; an academic institution; a local community. Echoing Urbain, Brown suggests that emplacement further recognizes that a researcher’s understanding is always partial and shaped by being in relationship with “others and the world of which we are part” (2020a: 435).

Despite these recognitions, a reoccurring challenge arises when engaging with music in the context of peacebuilding: its ambiguity. Music has been and continues to be used for both constructive and destructive purposes (Stock 2018; Urbain 2019). Urbain notes that, no music, including no single song, is universal (2019: 335). “Each musicking event,” he asserts, “is unique, and will have effects that depend on audience, their musical experiences, the timing, and many other factors” (335). As an example, he cites the documentary *Songs of War* by musician and composer Christopher Cerf. The documentary explores the use of songs, including those from the American children’s television program *Sesame Street*, in the torture of

detainees at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib (2019: 334). In the context of research, a belief in music to effect change at individual and collective levels can be profoundly inspiring. It also requires contextualization (Rodríguez-Sánchez *et al.* 2018) and analysis of the ways in which the body, sound, space and place intersect to shape particular experiences and understandings.

Such contextualization and analysis contribute to what Urbain calls, “proactive peacebuilding” (2020: 55–60). He remarks: “By proactive peacebuilding, I mean a range of activities for peace that various agents undertake based on their understanding of what they can do in the here and now, even when there is apparently no violence occurring nor any violent conflict emerging” (55). As previously acknowledged, Urbain situates this formulation within his evolving understandings of peace and peacebuilding as a teacher, scholar and practitioner (2020: 60). “The associations and connotations of the term peacebuilding,” he explains, “are shifting quickly based on the realities of different environments and moments in time” (60). In light of such shifting, Urbain proposes that a proactive peacebuilding comprises four main elements: inner peacebuilding, communicative creativity, planetary awareness and preventative peacebuilding (2020: 57–59).

It is beyond the scope of this article to address each of these elements in depth (Urbain 2016; 2020). Urbain’s description of “inner peacebuilding,” however, has significance to the practice of singing lullabies at night. Rooted in the theories of peace scholars Daisuka Ikeda and Johan Galtung, Urbain writes that inner peacebuilding begins “with oneself and plac[es] the emphasis on one’s own potential to initiate change first” (2016: 225). Stated differently, turning inwards to experiment with and disrupt one’s own assumptions, beliefs and values is foundational for cultivating peacebuilding ‘skills’ such as creativity, compassion, courage and wisdom (Urbain 2016; 2020). From his own perspective, Lederach (2020) confirms: “In the face of dehumanizing conflict, sonic experience can create spaces to feel beauty within and around us, a process of rehumanization ultimately necessary in the processes of rebuilding flourishing communities” (155). Locating ourselves as human beings *and* as peacebuilders, then, is an intrinsic part of being present with beauty within, around us and ultimately in others.

At the same time, Urbain is acutely aware of music’s ambiguity and the role it may play in an individual’s ‘inner peacebuilding.’ He stresses that, in situations of protracted conflict, oppression and intense structural violence, the suggestion to “simply work on oneself” and cultivate one’s

own “inner qualities” can be highly insensitive and inappropriate (2020: 58). In circumstances where it is possible, however, inner peacebuilding, including with and through music, can create space to grapple with the “messiness of the work” (56) and deepen “one’s participation in the here and now, based on repetition and circularity that is one of the functions of music according to Lederach” (2020: 56). Lederach concurs, claiming that music creates spaces for individuals and communities to work and reflect ‘holistically,’ meaning both at the level of the inner life, the body and the social world around them (2016: 198).

What are the implications of these ideas for the study of song, including lullabies, and the practice of singing at night? This question is discussed in the following section in connection with my own arts-based, autoethnographic practices. The discussion begins with a definition of song as a threshold in conversation with imaginative worlds (Ang *et al.* 2019). Framed by Urbain’s description of inner peacebuilding as a generative and reflexive activity, the above question can be reformulated: How does singing lullabies at night act as an imaginative threshold through which a researcher locates themselves bodily, sonically and spatially in relationship to ‘peace’?

Locating Oneself: Partial Knowing as an Aesthetics of Resistance and Care

The streetlights have come on. Outside, the crickets and other insects have become louder. Somehow, I can now hear the leaves on the trees in the yard. It is as though someone has turned the volume down so that the leaves and the insects can sing... Where is the academic legitimacy in making links between the sound of leaves at night and strategies of building peace? (Entry, Reflective Journal, Aug. 6th, 2021, 9:10 p.m., Family Home, Rural Setting).

In a chapter titled “Music and the Aesthetics of Resistance,” Frank Möller (2020) argues that resistance involves more than just the intellect (182). “It can be grasped in its entirety,” he contends, “only in a combination of intellectual and sensuous reception” (182–183). The suggestion that resistance is an intellectual, sensuous and affective experience has implications for how one conceptualizes music and peace as objectives of study and practice. In a similar vein to Lederach’s and Lederach’s call for new metaphors to shift understandings of peacebuilding, Möller contends that the relationship between music, resistance and peace, requires approaches that acknowledge “interpretation, imagination and creativity as inevitable ingredients of analysis” (2020: 183). He goes on to state that aesthetic approaches also require attuning to the ways in which music and peace affect our sense of time, place and belonging (184).

Drawing on his background as a photographer, he writes:

Like images, music rarely operates on observers in isolation; it is almost always embedded in larger cultural, political and emotional configurations, some of which are deeply personal, and not susceptible to generalization. Music always has a geographical dimension: it is produced somewhere, it is performed somewhere and it is listened to somewhere (2020: 184).

How individuals listen, sing and resist, then, is understood as deeply embodied, affective and emplaced. The approaches used to engage with these activities, as Möller argues, need to be versatile, able to account for knowledge gained through the body, emotion and place (Lehner 2021; Premaratna 2019). With these approaches in mind, the focus on singing lullabies during ‘domestic nights’ can be considered a twofold effort: 1) to explore Shaw’s claims that domestic nights are a ‘distinct nocturnal experience’ (2018: 101); and 2) to reflect on the everyday, including the home, as a site where peace can be imagined and enacted (Mac Ginty 2019; 2021).

These ideas can be placed in dialogue with definitions of song as a ‘threshold,’ an ‘open space’ and a ‘teacher’ (Ang *et al.* 2019). In the multi-authored piece “What Is a Song?” (Ang *et al.* 2019), for example, singer Gey Pin Ang states: “A song is a journey with a threshold of doorways” (81), characterized by conversations with another/something other as well as an interplay with “imaginative worlds” (81). In a similar vein, Ditte Berkeley observes:

A song is a playground. Sometimes it’s a war-zone, sometimes it’s a dark place where the voice carves through the thick air, others it is a channel of light aiming in different directions. Sometimes it is just an open space, a blank page – that one, I suppose, is the hardest for me. The song is my teacher. It helps me grow, through its history, through its conditions and requirements (Ang *et al.* 2019: 85).

Lullabies can be considered songs in this sense: a threshold, an open space, a teacher. As research on lullabies in different contexts has emphasized, they can become a space for imaginative encounters, growth and resistance (Baker 2016; Bilal 2018; Dieckmann and Davidson 2018; Muti and Gürpinar; Pryor 2020).

To provide one example, Rebekah Pryor (2020) situates lullabies in relationship to the materiality of the singing voice and its function in daily life. She argues that these songs act as narratives, capturing the cycles and dynamics that “both articulate our humanness and call us to notice the

humanness of others” (7). Stated differently, they act as a relational space, expressing through the singing voice a “capacity for self-affection and -preservation, *and*, to the loving, hopeful posture of meeting and being met, holding and being held by different others with whom we are in relation” (10; emphasis in original). It should be noted that the singing of lullabies is not encompassed by the relationship between parent and child alone or relegated to the intimate spaces of the home. Lullabies can be sung by a range of individuals who consider themselves ‘caregivers’ (Boyce-Tillman 2000). They have also been used as intercultural encounters in choral settings (Dieckmann and Davidson 2018), in recounting experiences of natural disasters (Sutton *et al.* 2021) and as part of art projects addressing inclusion (Baker 2016) and community well-being (Ascenso 2021).

Of particular interest to the present discussion is the evocation of song – and in turn, lullabies – as ambiguous, multi-directional and spatial. As described by Juvančič, Dieckmann, Davidson and Pryor throughout this article, singing lullabies engages not only the individual singer but also their relationships with others, mobilized through imagination, the body, emotion, place and performance. How then to leverage lullabies and the practice of singing to reflect on the sonic and sensory dimensions of night? How do these dimensions contribute to a researcher’s knowledge of peace? Returning to the experience of stillness and its capacity to cultivate one’s attention, Lederach queries: “What makes stillness possible? Stillness requires a commitment of patience and watchfulness. Its guideposts are these: slow down. Stop. Watch what moves around you. Feel what moves you” (2005: 104).

As a singer, scholar and peacebuilder, what moves me? How, ultimately, do I slow down, pay attention and listen? The practice of singing lullabies at night helped to reflect on these questions by constituting moments of stillness where a deeper listening became possible. Furthermore, the frequent act of singing created space to notice my own being “*with* the world, with people, in their presence, with things, in their presence, with places, in their presence” (Wenders and Zournazi 2013: 67; emphasis in original). As I explain in a reflective journal entry:

Lullabies are part of an immediate family history. They are tied to this house, these rooms, this yard with its tall trees and wide branches. They are also connected with relationships – to loved ones, to particular rituals and routines we enacted to co-create the night in one particular home-space. It is becoming increasing clear that my ‘peace imaginary’ is emplaced – pulling on this history, these memories, relationships, and sounds. It is inextricably tied

to home, my body in space/place, the presence of others (human, animal, and non-human). It is also tied to my experience of music and to the performance of singing itself" (Entry, Reflective Journal, Aug. 28th, 2021, 9:44-10:28 p.m., Family Home, Rural Setting).

While such 'attuning' on the part of individual researchers may be considered of little relevance to building peace as a larger socio-political process, its potential implications are given weight when brought into conversation with the questions and ideas raised by Lederach and Urbain. These scholar-practitioners underscore that individual reflection and action sustain social engagement. Social engagement, as Lederach and Urbain have emphasized, requires the cultivation of stillness, slowing down and listening; in other words, spaces in which to undertake one's own inner peacebuilding and/or answer the questions: "Who are we? What are we doing? Where are we going? What is our purpose?" (Lederach 2005: 176).

Through their qualitative, arts-based research on creative movement (e.g., dance, music), Lesley J. Pruitt and Erica Rose Jeffrey (2019; 2020) have considered some of these ideas and questions. Pruitt and Rose Jeffrey work with youth peacebuilders in various contexts (e.g., Columbia, Philippines and the United States). In their research, they discuss the practice of creative movement on the part of peacebuilders in connection with notions of self-knowledge, self-care and quality of life (2019; 2020). They write:

The young peacebuilders involved in this research often referred to aspects of the self as critical for peace, with many expressing that peace could only be possible or sustained if it started in or was present in the self. They further explained that self-knowledge or awareness and self-esteem could both be crucial for this process, as could the ability to feel relaxed or safe in one's own physical body (2020: 159).

They suggest that caring for the self, in particular, is an underexplored area of peacebuilding scholarship (2020: 146) and that self-knowledge, including one's emotional state, is "a requisite for empathy, alongside self-other relational awareness" (2020: 143). M. Anne Brown (2020a) affirms a similar line of thinking by characterizing knowing as relational: "Recognizing knowledge as part of ongoing exchange is to acknowledge the partiality of what we, or any party to the exchange bring...to note the partiality of knowledge is also to recognize its open-endedness, that our understanding and ways of knowing are not settled, and do not exhaust or ultimately capture the complex interplay of reality but live as part of it" (437).

The practices of singing, composing and documenting lullabies at night concretized Brown's perspectives on knowing as not only relational but partial, open-ended and unsettled. More specifically, these individual actions facilitated a collision with critical edges, tensions and very clear gaps in my own understanding. In contradiction to the initial premise for this article, and to my surprise, I found myself sitting with a growing sense of ambivalence toward individual arts-practices and their potential contributions to building peace. The sense of ambivalence was captured in several journal entries:

The night [in the city] feels porous, as though we can stretch differently, sonically. There are so many different 'nights.' How do we move from our own ways of 'inhabiting the night' to understanding the nights of others? Through self-reflection, singing, writing? They feel inadequate...Inventing peace...the idea strikes me as necessary and highly problematic in this moment – 4:30 a.m. Facing what we assume we 'know' – how willing are we [am I?] to stretch to inhabit such tensions? Acknowledge what we don't know and listen to the stories of others in a state of 'porosity' and openness? (Entry, Reflective Journal, Aug. 12th, 2021, 4:18-4:30 a.m., Apartment, Urban Centre)

Does performing in this space [bedroom] actually contribute to a sense of peace? What connections am I trying to make?!... [Singing alone] is not the same feeling as when you sing a lullaby to someone else. The playing and singing feel hollow. Who am I trying to soothe? Is it even soothing? (Entry, Reflective Journal, July 21st, 2021, 9:05 p.m., Family Home, Rural Setting)

Singing lullabies by myself feels lonely, as though something is missing. Perhaps the idea of singing lullabies is evoking a memory: my mother singing to us; how we used to sing to my nieces. It was a nightly ritual: bedtime story, singing, sleep. (Entry, Reflective Journal, July 22nd, 2021, 9:24 p.m., Family Home, Rural Setting)

Sitting with this ambivalence underscored the distance between my intention to listen, understand and know differently and the challenge of realizing it in practice. In his afterword to Stahl's and Bottà's collection on popular music and night, Will Straw (2019) connects this sense of distance to the relationship between night and the issue of visibility (260). He writes: "Music in the night poses, in acute fashion, the question of the city's capacity to harbour forms of expression and experience which extend our sense of what is possible and tolerable" (260). Michael Drewett's (2019) chapter in the same volume provides an example that highlights the importance of querying who defines what is 'possible and tolerable' in different night contexts. He describes the difficulties faced by South African musicians in their travels at night during Apartheid (129–144).

Troubling one-dimensional understandings of experiences of possibility and so-called tolerance, he recounts stops at roadblocks, police harassment and the very real potential of arrest. Despite these difficulties and threats, musicians and audiences modelled both fear and resilience in a daily setting characterized by oppression and violence. In a sense, by encountering the world differently through music, musicians and audiences established “pockets of resistance” and “zones of withdrawal” in contradistinction to what those in political power considered possible and ‘tolerable’ in their specific context. He comments:

An evening of merriment and escapism could swiftly transmute into fear and anxiety. And even if it did not, the possibility that it could constantly hover over and within entertainment venues. But despite this, musicians and audiences persevered. Not everyone was at risk, but many were. And they continued to play their instruments and sing, to dance and travel to gigs (2019: 142).

From a scholarly point of view, Stacy Holman-Jones’ (2016) definition of critical autoethnography may shed some light on the challenges of ambivalence and visibility acknowledged above. “The ‘critical’ in critical autoethnography,” she contends, “reminds us that theory is not a body of knowledge – a given, static and autonomous set of ideas, objects or practices” (229). Theorizing, according to Holman-Jones, is “an ongoing, movement driven process” with deep links to our own stories (229). In this sense, critical autoethnographers draw on their stories to begin their analyses and build knowledge. She continues: “Theory is a language for thinking with and through, asking questions about, and acting on – the experiences and happenings in our stories” (229). Here, theorizing emerges from the body and involves “critically imagin[ing] a future world through the very performance of other ways of living, being, and becoming” (Holman-Jones 2018: 7).

While an individual practice performed in particular domestic spaces, my singing of lullabies became a threshold to imagine and embody potential resonances between night studies, music and peace. The arts-based, autoethnographic approaches used to document this practice involved not only my body and voice but also my emotions and memories. After a week of singing lullabies at night, I commented: “I feel the calluses on my fingertips. I curl myself around the guitar and close my eyes. I can feel the music work its way up my arm, weaving its path through my body” (Author July 22nd, 2021: Reflective Journal Entry). By singing, listening and being with particular domestic nights, the potential arose to understand

‘theory’ as inflected by the sounds of leaves and distant traffic, memories of lullabies and bedtime stories and the presence of an old, sleepy dog. This constellation of individual, bodily, sonic and emplaced theorizing enabled a sense of needing to stretch further to listen and know differently.

At least in my case, such stretching troubled assumptions about what constitutes ‘knowledge’ and knowing when it comes to peace. That is to say, the multifaceted, holistically approached and individually enacted singing and listening discussed in this article concretized the argument that peace is not only articulated through words or formal political processes. Building peace in certain contexts, including at night, may involve intimate practices such as imagining, maintaining and performing a home (Lederach and Lederach 2010). It may also involve a gamut of practices from individual learning and self-care to relationships established with one’s body to the dynamics of group singing rehearsals and public performances (Bithel 2018). The arts-based researchers and autoethnographers cited throughout confirm that these approaches are vital for capturing the ambiguity, complexity and diversity of ways in which individual reflection and action can sustain social engagement as well as the potential for opening interdisciplinary conversations on theorizing peace, music and sounding at night.

Conclusion: Peace, Place and Night Voices

Wherever you are, your place is a peace place, if only you would see it (Barrett 2010: 266).

How does space and sound shape our strategies of inventing ‘peace’? How do they shape the body and the voice and vice versa? Seán Street (2020) reminds us that the rooms that we occupy have their own sounds, whether we are present or not to listen to them. How do different rooms contribute to a peace imaginary? Why is this important? What insights does the act of listening to particular rooms at night bring to music and peacebuilding? Why is any of this important, from either a practice-based or scholarly perspective? (Entry, Reflective Journal, Aug. 10th, 8:43-9:41 p.m., Apartment, Urban Centre)

In the opening chapter to *Inventing Peace*, Journazi (2013) remarks:

Much of our everyday thinking and language is bereft of how to *imagine* and talk about peace. When I ask my friends and family how they would describe peace, the most common responses include the following: peace as the absence of war or the state of harmony in between times of conflict – something idealistic and even boring, but more often than not it is seen as unattainable. A fantasy (1, emphasis in original).

With this quote, Zournazi posits reasons why describing peace as an everyday practice can be challenging. Depending on one's context, 'peace' may not be a word that populates one's everyday thinking or vocabulary. Also problematic are understandings of 'peace' as merely the absence of war or as an 'idealistic' state of harmony. Finally, depending on one's life circumstances, 'peace' may simply be perceived as an irrelevant idea with little appeal or resonance with daily life. How then can imagining and talking about peace be integrated into everyday thinking, speaking and acting?

The goal of asking this question here, in the conclusion of the article, is not to provide a definitive answer. According to many of the scholars and practitioners cited above, a definitive answer may not necessarily be constructive and/or possible in certain contexts and communities. Simply put, as a human experience, peace is not easily boxed in: it can be concrete, fluid, creative and porous. It can also be elusive, stable and troubled. Similar to different experiences of music and night in both urban and rural places (e.g., Gwiazdzinski 2020; Gwiazdzinski and Straw 2018), peace is lived in many different ways. The focus on singing lullabies *in situ*, affords one way of acknowledging this diversity and the partial knowledges that each of us can bring – as artists, scholars, practitioners or some combination of all three – to interdisciplinary exchanges in Night Studies (Kyba *et al.* 2020).

I have argued throughout this article that singing lullabies enables an individual researcher to meaningfully locate themselves at night (Lederach and Lederach 2010) and that the practice creates a space to encounter the night itself as a sonic and sensory experience. This argument was supported with practices, concepts and questions arising from the fields of peace and conflict studies, night studies, and music in peacebuilding. More specifically, peace was described as an embodied and emplaced human experience, night as a time-space fostering reflection as well as new meaning and mattering, and song as a threshold through which to engage with this experience and time-space. I also suggested that this characterization of peace could be linked to Urbain's notion of inner peacebuilding and Lederach's concern about establishing moments of stillness where peacebuilders can grapple with their sense of self, direction and purpose in their professional settings.

The holistic approach of arts-based research alongside autoethnography's recognition of the body, story and emotions act as methodological access points to consider the performative dimensions of self-reflectivity itself. In other words, similar to Lederach's reimagining of stillness as 'activism with a twist,' self-reflection can be understood as an embodied,

moving and performative amalgam. Self-reflection acts as a performance through which to creatively stretch an individual researcher's sense of self as well as encounter the limits of their own knowledge and practice. Corroborating this conceptualization, Norman Denzin (2018) remarks: "As homo performan I engage with the world as a performative-I, as an embodied, moving reflective being" (16). With these remarks in mind, a future direction for research could be to apply Möller's musings on music and an aesthetics of resistance to interdisciplinary conversations on what constitutes legitimate theorizing on peace in everyday life, with a particular focus on night.

With regard to music in peacebuilding, such an aesthetics of resistance can contribute to a reflexive infrastructure that can support inner peacebuilding. Singing lullabies can, for example, be a catalyst for asking critical questions such as: How do songs act as thresholds in one's own life? Which songs meaningfully shape one's understanding of 'being at peace'? If singing is challenging, why is this so? Is it related to one's sense of exposure, to larger social and cultural expectations and/or norms? Does the experience of singing make one feel vulnerable, connected or alone? How does sound affect one's body or the spaces that one inhabits? What relevance do these queries have for one's own scholarship and research in different settings?

The practice of asking these questions can be linked to a final assertion by Lederach. Music, including song, he argues, can evoke a sense of being deeply human and connected (2020: 142). He comments: "Music has the potential to touch a place within us that remembers wonder and in the remembering, we re-member – that is, we recreate capacity for a deeper sense of awe and curiosity" (2020: 149). Through this potential to foster awe, curiosity and remembrance, music and song can provoke a sense of confronting power and the need to mobilize for change (144). They also can invoke reflection on oneself (146), others and the world. As Shaw reminds us, the domestic night at least, reaches inward and outward – much like the sonic and sensory dynamics of lullabies. One could characterize this reaching as having a relational quality, helping individual researchers recognize their critical edges, clear gaps that require listening and learning from the bodies, emotions, stories and places of others.

These ideas are of particular interdisciplinary import when addressing the ambiguity that characterizes music, peace and night-time experiences. Research on the sonic dimensions of violence and war (Daughtry 2015),

for instance, raises complex questions about the ways in which power dynamics inform perceptions of what it means to listen to the world. In his book *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma and Survival in Wartime Iraq*, J. Martin Daughtry (2015) comments: “[A]s I’ve stated elsewhere in this volume, listening to the world is not an innate, universal capacity, the logical result of ears encountering sound waves. Rather, it is something we learn how to do, and *we learn how to listen in an environment that is already shaped by and coursing with power*” (123; emphasis in original). How do we reconcile such a statement with the perception that, “Music is often seen as a force for good” (Windsor 2019: 281)? How do understandings of night as ‘pockets of resistance’ and spaces for reflection factor into our answers? What about the notion that listening is a skill that involves an ‘unfolding of the self’?

Perhaps Wenders’ and Zournazi’s original question can serve as a concluding thought and as a further direction for interdisciplinary research into nocturnal ethnographies: How do we invent peace in and through the many ‘nights’ that coexist in specific contexts and communities? This article has suggested that the sonic and sensory dimensions of night have significant contributions to make to such questions, at least where an individual researcher’s scholarship and practice are concerned. From an arts-based, autoethnographic perspective, inventing peace can involve: the rustling of leaves, the hum of street traffic, the pluck of fingers on guitar strings, the squares of light in neighborhood apartment buildings and the sound of familiar lullabies sung into the night.

Appendix

Poem, "Run"

Composed by Author, May 13th, 2021

*I run clear of the night sky,
holding your voice firmly
to my chest.*

*The rain weighs down the
leaves overhead. Stray
drops slip down
my face.*

*I do not know if
I will find you
or whether the stars
will stalk my path.*

*I will run until
The land dips and
I see new horizons:
A place to plant your voice
and rest my tired feet.*

Original Lullaby, Untitled

Composed by Author, August 10th, 2021; 9:51 p.m.

A D
I run clear from the night sky,
A
Your voice in my ears
D
The stars in your eyes.

G A
Sleep, my baby, sleep
G D
When you wake, I will

D A
Still my tired feet.

A D
I will run as your dreams rise
A
The moon, high and full
D
The stars in your eyes.

G A
Sleep, my baby, sleep
G D
When you wake, I will
D A
Still my tired feet.

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