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THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WORDS AND MUSIC  
IN MUSIC THERAPY IMPROVISATION:  
AN EXAMINATION OF A  
THERAPIST'S METHOD

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Arts in  
The Steinhardt School of Education  
New York University  
2006

UMI Number: 3247771

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have had the good fortune of being surrounded by generous and wise colleagues, friends and family who have supported my writing of this document in a myriad of ways.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee chair, Barbara Hesser, who has been a mentor and supporter of my professional development since I was an undergraduate at NYU in 1977. To paraphrase Dizzy Gillespie acknowledging Louis Armstrong, “No her, no me!” She is the major influence in my development as a clinician, teacher, and supervisor. Thank you for all that you have done. Kenneth Aigen has been contributing to my development as a researcher both formally and informally for many years. His tremendous vision and organizational skills are qualities I came to rely upon in a variety of circumstances, and I am grateful for his comradeship; he has been a guiding light in the formation of this document and shared in the joys of discovery with me. Margot Ely has been an inspiration since I first had the pleasure of being mesmerized by her as a student in her qualitative research seminar. She has always managed to convince me that doing research can be enjoyable as well as interesting. I truly enjoy being with her and upon reflection consistently realize the layers of wisdom she has and how much I have learned from her.

David Marcus has a special kind of genius and has been an indispensable writing advisor and supporter. I cannot thank him enough for his willingness to share his own expertise on the topic, share his expertise as a writer, plow through

the material with me and pull me through when I felt like giving up. Words fail to adequately express my gratitude for your help.

Thank you to my doctoral support group. Tina Brescia has been a special supporter and has been someone I have been able to count on time and time again. I always look forward to her sensitive perceptions and insights. She is a loyal colleague and friend who supplied emotional support and academic guidance. During crunch time she gave me the much needed emotional push and concrete suggestions that made the dissertation much more organized. Peter Jampel has also stayed invested in the process with me and has supplied key insights at important moments during the writing process. Suzanne Sorel has always made time to give me feedback and emotional support. My support group continued to function even after each one of them completed their own doctoral work and I am grateful that they were willing and able to fulfill their commitment to me.

I would also like to thank Joanne Loewy and Jane Edwards who lent their considerable expertise with solid feedback and suggestions, patiently reading material and pointing me in the right direction when I needed help.

I would like to acknowledge two teachers who displayed a genuine interest in the study: John Gilbert and Ester Boyum. The time I spent with them bolstered my belief that the topic of the study actually was interesting, worth writing about and could be tackled successfully.

Mark Spellmann has been a guide and mentor in many ways. Thank you for consistently extending yourself to give editing suggestions and moral support.

Thanks to all my friends in the NYU community - Frank and Judi Bosco, Susan Feiner, Diane Austin, Terry Watson, Nina Guerrero, Dan Gormley, Andrea Frisch, Benedikte Scheiby - who understood when I needed emotional support. A deep and special thanks goes to Noah Shapiro who knew when I needed to take a break. His ability to keep me laughing kept me sane during the last few weeks when I was in danger of falling apart.

Thank you to Clive Robbins and the staff and trainees at the Nordoff-Robbins Center who had to tolerate the effects that writing this dissertation took on my every day interactions with them. I realize that my stress level rose and I appreciate the support I received from everyone while I worked on completing the document.

I would like to thank Greg Colodarci who guided me in the construction of the website and helped with the implementation of the notation, and helped to calm me when things looked bleak. Thanks to Jeremy Viner who worked very diligently to get the notation into shape.

My family is my solid ground, my home base, and I could not have completed this document without their support. Helene Turry has been dealing with my requests for help since grade school. It was in some ways unfortunate for her but fortunate for me that she was so gifted and could and did lend her intelligence to me throughout my adult life. My son Max was born as I started this and throughout the almost 6-year process he gave me the joy I needed to keep going. He has always given me motivation, perspective and a respite when I needed to find a way to take a break.

Finally, thank you to my partner Ann. Ann Turry has been the holder of all my tensions, worries, suffering, and struggles. Thank you for putting up with me and staying supportive of the process even when it was painful to do so.

And of course, I want to thank Gloria, for her willingness to embark on a journey that led to the gems that I could examine and write about.

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## CHAPTER I

## OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Words and Music: Introduction

Client sings: *You listen to me deeply*

Therapist plays: Single tones from the piano gently, slowly, sounds sustained to create harmony which contextualizes the client's melody, creating momentum and leaving space for the voice to continue

*And that makes me cry*

A new minor harmony from the piano supports the sentiment of the words

*Just when I got used to not ever being heard*

The tender accompaniment pauses, then comes to a temporary resting place

*I stopped talking*

A countermelody from the piano gently echoes the melody

*Oh I seem to talk*

A pulse generated from the melody is now present in the harmony

*People thought I talked*

There is a rhythmic quality that now creates a gentle swing

*But I didn't speak from my heart*

A song form with pulse and phrase structure emerges

*Music goes to places that words can never go*

The intensity builds

*Music goes to places that words can never go*

The lyric repetition solidifies the song form

*Finding my true voice*

The music begins to cadence, slowing down and clearly heading for the tonic

*Not being afraid*

The music and words slow down

*You listen to me deeply*

A final harmonic cadence

*And that makes me whole*

The music and words come to a place of completion

The interaction described above represents a decisive moment that took place in a music therapy session where the spontaneous vocal expression of the client combined with the therapist's music from the piano to create a song of great clinical importance that contributed to the client's overall improvement. Many

improvised songs were created during the course of treatment, and the audio recordings of them comprise the material under study. All of the material analyzed in this study was drawn from this one course of treatment: the therapy process of a woman who came to music therapy as a result of being diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Throughout this document the client will be referred to using the pseudonym Gloria. I was the therapist who created the music with her.

The improvised songs that emerged over the 8-year period of time under study came in a variety of forms and styles. They were sung in different ways that revealed different aspects of Gloria's personality and her changing emotional state. The unfolding of the song form allowed me as therapist to guide and alter Gloria's psychological process while offering a creative vehicle of expression.

The audio recordings that comprise the archival material under study were produced as a routine component of the clinical method of Nordoff-Robbins music therapy. As researcher I examined the relationship between the lyrics and the music in these improvised songs. The quality of the songs in this course of therapy -- the combination of musical form and psychological process revealed in the songs -- afforded an opportunity to understand how particular musical elements can have a psychological effect on the client, and how a client's musical expression can reveal her psychological condition. The study illuminates my method of improvising music when a client sings words and includes detailed analysis of the musical events that took place during the creation of the songs.

The research framework that provides the context for the study is naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and the clinical framework that provides the context for the therapy process is Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy (Nordoff & Robbins, 1977).

The improvised songs chosen for examination offer an opportunity to understand the linkages of musical processes with psychological processes. In music therapy research to date there has been limited focus on words and music, and on the linkages of musical processes and psychological processes. While the topic of improvisation in music therapy has been widely written about (Nordoff & Robbins, 1977, Bruscia, 1987, Aigen, 1995, 1996, 2005, Aldridge, 1991, Amir, 1990, Ansdell 1995, Austin, 2001, 2003, Brown and Pavlicevic, 1996, Etkin, 1999, Fidelibus, 2003, Forinash, 1992, Hesser, 2002, Keith 2004, Lee, 1989, 2000, Pavlicevic, 2000, Sorel 2005, Turry 1998, 2002, Turry & Turry 1999, Turry & Marcus 2003, 2005), the subject of the relationship between words and music and the therapist's creative process has not been examined in great detail (Robarts, 2003). In a recent extensive review of research studies involving an analysis of the music in music therapy (Ole Bonde, 2005), not one study included music in relation to words that were improvised and sung by a client. By examining the unfolding improvisation process that led to song forms, this study may be helpful in illuminating the integration of psychological and musical processes in the service of a client.

I have practiced music therapy since 1981, became certified in the Nordoff-Robbins approach in 1991, and in 1994 became the first music therapist

recognized as a qualified trainer in that approach. The work studied here is a continuation of my overall clinical approach in relation to music and lyrics that has been implemented over a period of twenty years. This body of clinical work has been the subject of previous research (Ritholz & Turry, 1994; Aigen, 1997, 2002; Turry & Turry, 1999; Logis & Turry, 1999; Sorel, 2005; Turry & Marcus, 2005). The present study builds on the previous research with a particular emphasis on the relationship between music and words in the creation of improvised songs.

The research method is a combination of naturalistic inquiry and my own approach to musical analysis influenced by my training as a Nordoff-Robbins therapist. Since every session is recorded and closely analyzed in the Nordoff-Robbins approach by a coding method called indexing, a data collection and analysis component is built into the treatment method that can be utilized for research. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter V. The research processes described by Lincoln & Guba (1985), Strauss (1987), Bogdan & Bilken (1992), Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmetz (1991), and Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul (1997), were utilized to generate data and develop findings.

The musical analysis includes transcriptions in a variety of forms, including detailed written descriptions. The descriptions are influenced by Lee (1989, 1995, 2003) who described the importance of musical analysis in understanding the clinical significance of improvisations in a music therapy context. My analysis is also influenced by Cooke (1959) whose premise was that music is a language of the emotions and can be understood more explicitly when

considering specific musical constructs. I also rely strongly on the ideas of Robinson (2005) who developed a method of understanding music by hearing the psychological dramas inherent in musical forms as they develop.

I include several types of narrative forms in reporting the findings. One is a detailed description and analysis of excerpts with findings embedded within the narrative. Another describes findings within categories. I have also used metaphor and literary devices employed in qualitative research procedures described by Ely (Ely et al., 1997) such as the description of music and words at the beginning of this chapter. Some findings relate to an understanding of Gloria's therapy process. Some findings relate specifically to the Nordoff-Robbins music therapy approach. Others relate to the broader profession of music therapy, and to the general topic of the relationship between words and music.

### Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy

The Nordoff-Robbins approach to music therapy emphasizes the clinical benefits inherent in the unfolding creative process. Paul Nordoff was a professional composer and concert pianist who had tremendous improvisational skills. He teamed with Clive Robbins, an experienced special educator who was looking for a creative approach to help difficult to reach children with serious developmental delays. Working together they brought their special skills to bear and between 1959 and 1974 developed a unique music therapy approach. The distinctive qualities of the method include the idea that the dynamic forces inherent in musical elements (i.e., tones, melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tempo, etc.), are the primary agents for change, and that spontaneous improvised

music making between therapist and client is the primary therapeutic activity. Nordoff and Robbins (1977) believed that music offers “an enormous and potentially unlimited range of active, self integrative experience that is available for therapeutic use” (p.2) and that every human being has an inborn set of musical sensitivities.

The therapy process in this approach has the therapist “engaging the client by creating aesthetic musical forms meant to access these musical sensitivities” (Turry, 1998, p.161). A major belief underlying the method is that the client’s musical expression is reflective of a core aspect of his or her personality, and that gains in the therapy process can be understood by an analysis of the client’s musical expression. As Aigen (1996) explains, “by acting on a person’s music, the [Nordoff-Robbins music] therapist is directly engaged with the most central aspects of the person’s being” (p.145).

The optimum relationship that forms between therapist and client is that of a co-active partnership. The client’s responses are essential to the process; the therapist listens carefully and improvises music that meets these responses. The aim of the co-creative musical process is to help the client further grow and develop. Since it is a music-centered approach (Aigen, 2005), the relationship develops within the musical process and the clinical techniques and strategies grow from this.

The clients that Nordoff and Robbins worked with were primarily children, many of whom were non-verbal with serious developmental delays. Improvised songs were created by the therapists based on the children’s needs and



responses. Since the work was developed, the Nordoff-Robbins approach has been utilized with a variety of populations including adult clients looking for an alternative to traditional verbal psychotherapy. These participants in the music therapy process bring the capacity to share their thoughts and describe their feelings and images with words. This has led to a new development in the Nordoff-Robbins approach. In the course of therapy discussed in this study, allowing for the integration of spontaneous verbal sharing with improvised music making has led to the creation of song improvisations in a mutual fashion. The client provides the words often in melodic form and the therapist provides the harmonic form that furthers the development of these emerging melodies into full-fledged songs. This new development is a natural evolution of the Nordoff-Robbins approach. Originally most of the clients seen by Nordoff and Robbins did not create their own words. Treating adult clients who do create melodies and words allows for this new development of mutual co-active improvised song creation between therapist and client.

Working with verbal adults who articulate their needs, have an awareness of how unconscious dynamics may be affecting them, and who bring with them the potential for relationship dynamics to emerge between therapist and client, has necessitated an integration of psychodynamic understanding with musical awareness on the part of the therapist to a greater degree than was required by the original work with children. The work studied here is an advance within the Nordoff-Robbins tradition as it illustrates how musical and psychological processes are manifested through the creation of song improvisations.

### Outline of the Presentational Format

There is no standard presentational format when writing the qualitative research report. I have made the decision to share the context of the research first, with Chapter II being a synopsis of the therapy from which the archived material was chosen. This gives the reader the opportunity to listen to the archived material, and to understand the context of the research as it is presented in the subsequent chapters. I want to emphasize how important I believe it is for the reader to listen to the excerpts. Listening will elicit a more complete understanding of the material under study and fuel an investment in uncovering the findings embedded in them. The audio excerpts are the gems that were tapped into so that the findings could emerge. They go way beyond the musical transcription in allowing the reader to become immersed in the material and develop a deep understanding of the relationship between the words and music.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) write that “the naturalist begins with the assumption that context is critical” (p. 200). This study is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of Gloria’s therapy. I am using this particular therapeutic collaboration to talk about the topic area regarding music and words. Since the material grows out of the therapy process I will give a synopsis of the therapy in order to provide context for the reader. This is important so that the reader can gain a perspective on the material and judge for themselves the findings as they emerged in the analysis. Though the study is an examination of my therapy method, supplemental information regarding clinical issues that relate to the emerging music and words in the material under study will be included at various

points throughout this document to help the reader keep the clinical context in mind.

There are four relevant contexts for understanding this study: the research milieu that is the therapy context; the clinical practice of music therapy that includes a review of the relevant literature; my personal stance as a clinician and researcher; and the musicological context. Each of these areas will be discussed in the following four chapters. Only after these contexts are shared do I then explain my actual research method. I acknowledge that this is unorthodox, but my intention is to help the reader understand in as complete a way as possible my process as a researcher.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH MILEU: THERAPY SYNOPSIS

In order to begin to understand the relationship of the words to the music in the improvised songs that became the data for this study, the reader must first understand the therapeutic context in which these songs were created. The context includes how the material was created, and the people who created it. Robinson, who has articulated a method of understanding the qualities inherent in musical compositions (2005) states that, “an interpretation of a piece of music should be consistent with what is known about the composer -- including his compositional practices, beliefs, and attitudes -- and it should account for as much of the piece as possible in a consistent way” (p.332).

Ole Bonde (2005) who reviewed musical analysis done by music therapy researchers writes that, “any description or analysis of the music must be related to the context -- the client’s personality, life story, culture, and, of course, pathology or problem area”(p. 505). Presenting a synopsis of the course of therapy during the period studied will help the reader understand more fully the context of the material under discussion in the study.

#### The Participants

There were two participants in the creation of the material: Gloria, a self-referred adult client; and Alan Turry (myself) as therapist. I have been practicing music therapy since 1981 and have experience with a variety of client populations. Improvisation, both on guitar and piano, has been my main clinical

tool since I began practicing music therapy. From 1990 to the time of this writing, I have worked at the Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy as therapist, teacher, supervisor, Director of Clinical Training, Co-Director, and most recently, Managing Director. My clinical work includes extensive experience with children and adults having developmental, emotional, psychological and/or physical challenges. In recent years I have increasingly incorporated contemporary theories and models of music psychotherapy into my clinical practice with self-referred adults. I continue to use improvisation and improvised songs as a foundation for my work, integrating theories of Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy with theories developed from the music psychotherapy area of practice.

My compositional approach to improvisation is influenced strongly by my own interest in contemporary music, my study of world music and idioms influenced by the approach of Nordoff and Robbins, and my own experience playing music with a wide variety of both peers and clients from many cultures.

### Beginning Music Therapy and the Clinical Issues that Emerged

Gloria's path to music therapy was a circuitous one. A tall, sensitive woman in her mid fifties, she was single and living a comfortable life in a large city. She grew up in a neighborhood of the city with her parents, who were Irish immigrants, and her sister. Both of her parents were deceased at the time she began music therapy. She described being close to her sister, a professional artist who teaches at a University. The relationship with her mother, who had a very strong personality, was related as deeply tumultuous. According to Gloria, her

mother was quite demanding and expected Gloria to do exactly what she asked her to do. Gloria described living in fear of her mother and feeling smothered by her. She attributed the following difficulties she experienced as an adult to the effect her mother had on her as she grew up: relating to others in social situations without fear; trusting her own judgment; and her own critical attitude toward herself which often stifled her. Gloria recalled her father as a warm caring person who did not understand her problems, but tried to soothe and calm her as best he could. Gloria had previously spent many years in verbal psychotherapy to try to undo the effects that her relationship with her mother had on her.

Gloria was an accomplished professional, having achieved a level of success that afforded her the ability to own an elegant, roomy duplex apartment. Working in a predominantly male profession, she became a vital trainer and planner for the company. She received many accolades for her accomplishments. She described herself as a good organizer and someone who could get the best out of people.

#### “I’m in a Crisis”

Gloria was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma stage four, a serious form of cancer in 1994. The lymph nodes in her neck contained small tumors that she could feel. This shocked and frightened her. She described herself as walking around “like a Zombie,” frozen emotionally, after receiving the news. After hearing the unanimous consensus of six different oncologists that her condition was indeed life threatening, she struggled to remain hopeful. A part of her wanted

to give up. At the same time she sought to deepen her trust in God, which gave her solace.

Although Gloria had undergone years of psychotherapy, which she said she had found very useful, she did not choose to return to that kind of support structure. She prayed to God for guidance and what came to her in response was the idea that she might sing. She had no formal musical background, and found it strange to consider singing in response to her situation. Yet she was drawn to pursue this idea. After visiting several singing teachers, she asked her dentist for a referral. Her dentist suggested music therapy. After collecting the names of several music therapists, she chose me after determining that the commute was preferable. She arrived to her first session unaware of the difference between a voice lesson and music therapy.

“What do I do?”

During that first meeting I explained that music therapy was a creative process of musical exploration and expression, and that we would be making music together by improvising. I encouraged Gloria to explore the musical instruments placed in the room. She giggled as she tried out making sounds, slightly embarrassed yet engaged in the process. This playful exploration intrigued her, and she later explained that it was the first time she had laughed since her diagnosis.

As we considered whether music therapy was something she wanted to pursue, Gloria asked me if I “was in it for the long haul” -- realizing that there

could be some very troubling times ahead as she faced an uncertain future. I took her question to heart. Based on her diagnosis and the impending medical treatment she would have to undergo, her condition could deteriorate. I considered the commitment I was making and assured her that I was ready to embark on whatever path the future held. I was moved by her courage, and recognized that music could be an important resource for her as she faced a frightening situation.

After hearing my affirmative response to her question and having had a playful musical experience, Gloria agreed to attend music therapy sessions. This was the beginning of an intense long-term music-making partnership as we improvised music together each week during the sixty-minute sessions. The time period covered during the creation of the improvised songs included in this study is a little over eight years.

#### “Walking around like a Zombie, I have No Voice”

Important clinical concerns in the initial stages of music therapy included repression of feelings and denial. Gloria described being unable to believe that she was sick, and actually seemed to be considering avoiding medical treatment. Much of the music and songs improvised in the early sessions had to do with her coming to terms with the fact that she was ill and dealing with the emotional responses to this acceptance.

But it turned out her serious illness was in her in her own words, “the tip of the iceberg.” Much of her life’s anguish came pouring out as we began to



create music together. Gloria shared that the sense of being stifled, of being rendered powerless by having cancer, was related to life long feelings of being stifled, of having “no voice.” Though the feeling was familiar to her, she had never framed the issue in quite that way. In a series of powerful improvised songs, she revisited the isolation, fear and oppression of her childhood -- the period of having “no voice” -- and was able both to accept and to nurture the child that she had been and to some extent still was.

These developments deepened her commitment to the music therapy process and its results. She was surprised, impressed and proud of her ability to improvise music that was both intensely meaningful and aesthetically fulfilling. She also was appreciative that she could address long-term issues at great depth and experience some degree of resolution.

#### “Music Takes us to Places that Words Could Never Go”

Around a year into treatment Gloria bought a piano. She was determined to keep music around her and had begun to tentatively improvise when she had the time to do so at home. Buying a piano had significant implications. As a child, Gloria described having terrible fights with her mother over practicing the piano. Her mother insisted that she practice and she resisted. Her overall relationship with her mother was intensely turbulent, and the piano was often the focal point of their struggles.

The acquisition of the piano seemed to initiate a process of bringing her mother back into her consciousness, of accessing and addressing vital issues concerning their relationship, beginning in childhood and following through to

her mother's death. During the long period that these issues were addressed, Gloria came to appreciate herself both within and outside her activities in music therapy. She acknowledged her ability to create music that was not only expressive and clinically beneficial, but eloquent as well.

#### "I was Lonely and Afraid"

As treatment continued, Gloria sang about her lifelong compulsion to overeat, her struggle not to abandon hope, her loneliness when handling social situations, and her own inner critics judging her efforts. Gloria began to feel more confident in communicating what she wanted to hear in the music I was creating, and would cue me with her style of singing or suggest with her body language (snapping her fingers, swaying her arms or moving her head) what tempo and style she wanted the music to be. She took more risks in trying different kinds of vocal styles, using different areas of her vocal range as she sang. The sense of mutuality in the music-making process grew between us as Gloria gained confidence and we had a body of experiences from which to build. I could anticipate what direction Gloria's melody could take, and she could hear the harmonic direction I was taking. This led to improvisations that emerged sounding like fully formed songs.

Though the content of the improvisations still depicted conflictual material, and Gloria often experienced feelings of intense sadness even as she sang, she was sure that the direction we were taking was a positive one. She felt that by continuing to stay connected to her music, she was affirming the internal changes she was making and fighting her tendency to give up. She explained that

the music from the piano encouraged her to continue her exploration and expression even when the feeling she was experiencing in the moment was intensely painful. She felt contained by the music and safe to explore these feelings. Gloria expressed gratitude for being listened to and responded to within the musical collaboration. The therapeutic alliance forged by music making created a safe environment for her musical emotional exploration. The content of the exploration was not unknown to her as she had been in verbal psychotherapy previously. But she described the intensity and vivid emotional exploration of the issues as unique, as was the sense of wholeness and satisfaction that came with the completion of a musical creation. Creating and singing a melody was particularly satisfying as it helped her engage completely into the flow of the music and gain a sense of freedom unimpeded by her critical judgments. She described herself as being more compassionate and accepting towards herself after these musical experiences.

### Examples of Improvised Songs

In order to provide the opportunity for the reader to gain as direct access as possible to the material under study in the context of the therapy process, the following descriptions of improvised songs are presented in chronological order. Including the actual words that Gloria sang and offering access for the reader to listen to the material under study is also a way for Gloria to speak directly to the reader.

**[To listen to the following excerpts go to [alanturky.com](http://alanturky.com)]**

### Uncharted Waters

There were times when Gloria experienced strong feelings of fear as we began to make music, and the lyric content containing imagery of being lost in the ocean (*"Uncharted Waters"*) was a way that Gloria found to express words related to these feelings. Singing together gave Gloria the sense of safety and support she needed to not only talk about the fear, but also to express her feelings while experiencing feelings of fear. Gloria explained that facing and working on her fears in this way was only possible through music.

*We might think we are lost*

*We are in uncharted waters,*

*The sailing is not always smooth*

*The darkness*

*We are in uncharted waters*

*We may feel like we are lost*

*No I don't want to see these sights*

*No I don't want to see these sights*

*I want to know where I am and where I am going*

*We are in uncharted waters, we are in uncharted waters*

*We are in uncharted waters, we are in uncharted waters*

*We will see sights that are frightening*

*We will see sights that are frightening*

*We will see sights that are frightening*

*Go ahead go ahead*

*God won't leave you God won't leave you*

*Go ahead nothing can separate us from the love of God*

*Not the water not the fear not the darkness, nothing*

*Not height nor depth, nor powers nor principalities*

*Nothing, not fear, not darkness, not uncharted waters no nothing, can separate us  
from the love of God*

The lyric, “*we will see sights that are frightening*”, relates both to the emerging emotional states that could emerge for Gloria in the current session as well as in future sessions, and situations outside of the sessions. Gloria commented that the music allowed her to access feelings and imagery about significant events in her life that could not be accessed verbally. She recognized the power of the experience and thus was willing to enter into “*uncharted waters*.” It is interesting to note that Gloria sang “*we may think*” and “*we may feel that we are lost*,” but not that we actually are lost.

As the improvisation came to a close she sang about God to comfort herself and find solace, something she has done in several of the improvised songs.

The music contained both tender consonant tones and dissonant tones with shifts of tonal centers and at times the whole tone scale is utilized. This amplifies the quality of “feeling lost” which is sung about, and mirrors the emerging sense of apprehension as to what the future holds. The singing together and warm harmonies provide support at the same time. A blend of emotional qualities is

contained within the improvised song that shifts and transforms as the music unfolds.

### Scared and Paralyzed

*“Scared and Paralyzed”* was a blues improvisation that grew out of an exploration of a frightening dream Gloria had about two hats. She described the dream as triggering feelings of being scared, paralyzed and frightened. In the session she decided to name each hat and joked about the names, singing them with a vocal quality and phrase structure that suggested a blues form to me. The experience became a paradoxical one as the song contains fearful imagery yet has celebratory and joyful qualities as Gloria sings in the blues style and laughs heartily while creating the words and melody.

*We can name each hat*

*Scared and paralyzed*

*Scared and paralyzed*

*I can put on my scared hat*

*I can put on paralyzed*

*Scared and Paralyzed*

*Scared and Paralyzed*

*Scared and Paralyzed (Laughing in time to the music)*

*Scared and Paralyzed*

*My two hats*

*Scared and Paralyzed*

*We've been to this one before*  
*She lifted each hat and looked inside*  
*She lifted up each hat and looked inside*  
*And what do you think she saw?*  
*A label*  
*Scared and Paralyzed*  
*She put on scared first*  
*And she started shivering in her boots*  
*Scared and Paralyzed*  
*A pair of hats floating around*  
*Scared and Paralyzed*  
*This is so silly*  
*Scared and Paralyzed*  
*A pair of hats floating in the elevator*  
*She put on paralyzed*  
*She put on paralyzed*  
*She stood straight*  
*She looked out*  
*She was paralyzed with laughter*  
*Scared and Paralyzed*  
*A pair of hats floating in the elevator*  
*Scared and Paralyzed (laughing)*

Paradoxical experiences where contrasting qualities were contained within one song form were particularly noteworthy for Gloria and seemed to have special clinical significance. Her psychological stance around a particular issue or feeling seemed to shift or expand after these experiences.

### All My Life

This is an improvised song in which Gloria describes her life long struggle to become more of a participant in life and less constricted by her conflicts. In the song she acknowledges that she has made progress but recognizes that it is still a challenge for her. As we start, Gloria actually cues me by snapping her fingers to indicate she would like me to infuse the music with a pulse.

*All my life I have tried to be here*

*All my life I have tried to come into the light*

*It has been a long journey*

*All my life I have tried to come out of the dark*

*All my life I have walked with my crutches with my chains*

*With my blindfolds*

*All my life I have tried to throw them away*

*All my life I have tried to cut the chains*

*Slowly one by one I have taken them off*

*Slowly one by one they have fallen away*

*All my life, I have tried to take the chains off*

*To walk without the crutches*



*All my life I have tried*

*All my life*

### Open Up My Arms

“*Open up my arms*” refers to the desire on Gloria’s part to embrace the world, and accept the life enhancing activities and possibilities that can bring her more satisfaction. One of the issues Gloria sang about was her tendency to hide and her ambivalence about being noticed. She recognized that her self-defeating behaviors were a way to keep her from being in the world in a more fulfilling way. During clip one Gloria began to cry. Several times during the improvisation process Gloria stayed connected to the creative process of improvising and singing while also feeling strong emotion and crying.

*It’s a real illness this compulsive overeating*

*It’s a real illness, it’s a real illness*

*Oh these compulsions, they’re real*

*They make you sick*

*They take away your soul, your heart, your spirit*

*It’s a real illness*

*It’s a real illness, real illness*

*Real...oh*

*Oh...oh...oh...oh...oh (singing a nonverbal melody)*

*Oh...oh...oh ...oh... oh (after her singing, therapist plays melody, she cries)*

*It’s pretty*

*Ooh...ooh...ooh....ooh*

*I open up my arms, I sing my song*

*I open up my arms (soft moans after the phrase)*

*Ooh...ooh....ooh... ooh (therapist sings after her phrase ends)*

*I open up my arms (therapist joins in singing)*

*I open up my arms,*

*I say stop hiding*

*I open up my arms*

*I say stop hiding*

*I open my arms*

*I ask you to come in*

*I ask you to come in*

*I open up my arms*

*I ask you to come in*

Later in the same session (clip two) Gloria sang about what triggered her crying during the singing.

*Why did that make you cry?*

*Why did that make you cry?*

*Well Alan, first thing I think of is*

*It made me cry, cause you listen to me deeply*

*You listen to me deeply*

*You listen to me deeply*

*Can you tell me why else it made you cry?*

*Can you tell why else it made you cry?*

*We'd like to know. Yea? We'd like to know?*

*We'd like to know*

*Well maybe the other reason is that there's pretty in me*

*Like you said*

*There's pretty in me*

*Getting shtupped down*

*Getting kept in jail*

*With all that eating*

*All that desperation*

*What's pretty in me*

*Not showing*

*Not coming out*

*What's pretty in me*

*Buried under, buried under, buried under*

*An earthquake of food*

*Sadness, buried under*

*An earthquake of food*

*Sadness, desperation, repetition*

*Buried under an earthquake of food*

*Sadness, desperation, repetition*

*An earthquake of food*

*Leaving me pinned, chained, locked, crushed, smashed*

*An earthquake of food*

*How can I open my arms*

*If I'm crushed, smashed, pinched, constrained, eheww*

*How can I open my arms*

*If I'm buried under an earthquake of food*

*Repetition, oh how can I fly*

*How can I open my arms*

*Oh, another earthquake victim*

*Ahhhahhmm, Badoobadowaybadadoo*

*I'm going to open my arms*

*How I want to open*

*To open, to open my arms*

*That's why I was crying*

*I want to open my arms*

*I want to sing my song. Ohh*

*Open your arms (therapist sings)*

*I'm buried under an earthquake of food*

*I want to open my arms*

*Sing your song (therapist sings)*

*I'm buried under*

*Open your arms (therapist sings)*

*I'm buried under*

*I want to open my arms*

*I want to open my arms and sing*

Gloria often sang questions to herself as she reflected on her experience. Playing the melody on the piano that Gloria sang triggered her intense emotional reaction. During times of intense emotional expression I supported Gloria by singing with her, often playing in a blues form, and creating a solid harmonic accompaniment so that she could feel confident knowing the future direction of the musical form.

### The Songs Later in Treatment

#### "Finding My True Voice"

Several of the themes of her improvisations later in treatment -- "*Lets get on it with it,*" "*I'm going somewhere,*" "*I want to swim with the Dolphins,*" and "*Music takes us to places that words could never go*" -- contained a general sense of hopefulness, that she was tapping into previously dormant resources and was indeed changing. Her intonation became more accurate as she became more present and tuned in to her musical and emotional experience.

#### "I Want to Sing My Song"

As the period under which the excerpts being studied here came to a close, Gloria continued to try out different ways of being involved with music and sharing her process. She gave concerts, lectures, workshops and interviews

sharing the music and telling her story. During an interview on a public radio station where she participated in a panel discussion on the healing effects of music, she talked about her music therapy process. Gloria explained that the music allowed her to experience emotion triggered by the content of the words she sang, and this helped her to experience life more fully, both inside and outside of the session. She reported feeling less isolated, and that her involvement in music was helping her to feel less depressed. She was proud to report that her cancer had remained in partial remission since the remission first occurred many years ago.

During the interview she identified herself as a creative artist. Her sister, a successful architect, had always been identified as the artist in the family. Gloria was the businesswoman, the organizer. But now, as she continued to gain confidence in expressing herself in music, Gloria allowed herself to try out and internalize a new identity as a creative artist. And she considered this entire process to have a healing effect on her relationship to her mother, and consequently with herself. The critical voice within her had not been eradicated, but its strength and intensity had abated.

### Communication in the Musical Relationship

An analysis of the content of the improvised songs presented here revealed the following theme statements regarding the communication of the client and the therapist. They are included here to give as complete a context as possible for the reader.

### Themes in Lyrics Created by Gloria

- Before I have to die at least let me feel
- I want to be heard but I'm afraid
- I'm trying to find what lies within me that will help me
- Why do I keep returning to painful feelings
- Sometimes I feel like giving up
- I am learning to value who I am
- Being creative in music helps me to overcome my pain

### Themes Implicit in the Therapist's Music as Messages to Gloria

- I am listening to you
- It is safe to say or do or feel anything
- I will be with you in your exploration of painful feelings
- You can go on
- You are capable of feeling and expressing more than pain
- There is always music
- Being together in music is healing
- I encourage you to listen to yourself

These themes of what the client communicated to herself and what the therapist and client communicated to each other happened in the music making process. The therapeutic relationship was built through the experience of improvising together.

### CHAPTER III

#### PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT: THE FIELD OF MUSIC THERAPY AS IT RELATES TO THIS STUDY

##### Introduction

The field of music therapy is now present as a form of professional practice throughout the United States and in many parts of the world. Because music is such a powerful medium, music therapy is a widely practiced form of treatment with every age group and with all kinds of populations who need services including but not limited to children with autism, individuals with Alzheimer's disease, individuals with psychiatric disorders, those in need of physical rehabilitation, and self-referred adults seeking a creative approach to emotional difficulties and personal development. Music therapy can address emotional, physical, social and cognitive goals depending on the needs of the client. As a result, a variety of areas of practice have been developed within the field. I will survey the areas of practice that relate to the particular material under study here. Since there is common ground between these areas of practice I will be relating them to each other as I discuss them under their individual categories.

##### The Relationship Between Physical and Psychological Well-being

Medical Music Therapy continues to develop as music therapists work within hospital settings and work with a variety of client populations. There are numerous specialty areas in which music therapy is used in medicine, including neonatology, pediatrics, physical rehabilitation, general medicine, radiology,



pulmonology, surgery, anesthesiology, pain management, intensive care, cardiology, obstetrics, gynecology, dentistry, oncology, endocrinology, and prevention (Dileo, 1999).

It is important to distinguish between Medical Music Therapy, which involves a therapeutic relationship within a particular professional specialty, and music medicine, which is a treatment used by a variety of health professionals. Understood in this context, music medicine is an adjunct to a host of medical treatments. It can take the form of providing background music during a procedure. For the most part, music medicine is a treatment that utilizes receptive, rather than active music experiences.

Medical Music Therapy “involves a therapeutic process, a music therapist, and a relationship that develops through the music and process” (Dileo, 1999, p. 4). A wide range of possible active approaches is utilized, including live music making between therapist and patient. Often the focus of music therapy may be broader, not limited to the presenting medical situation of the patient. Though Gloria’s medical condition triggered her participation in music therapy, her overt intention was not to treat her medical condition, but to find ways to cope emotionally with its psychological effect on her.

The success of the holistic health movement is revealing of the consensus in the general population that there is a strong relationship between the nature of an individual’s mental condition and physical condition, and between the individual and the environment (Chopra 1990; Benson 1996; Northrup 1998). Within the field of psychotherapy, body oriented therapy has been an established

sub-branch of psychotherapy for several decades. Beginning with the work of Reich (1945) and established predominantly with the work of Alexander Lowen (1993), this approach to therapy addresses both body and mind and recognizes the importance of the relationship between the two. The effect of music on the body as well as on mood has been researched extensively (Altshuler, 1948; Rider, Mickey, Weldin, & Hawkinson, 1991; Rider, 1997). Studies have shown changes in respiration, blood pressure, and body temperature when listening to or playing music (Loewy, Hallan, Friedman, et al., 2005). Robinson (2005) writes that “music affects us on the inside; it affects us physiologically and motorically” (p. 376). She also states, “music affects us emotionally by affecting our bodies” (p. 411). Jenny’s (1974) work in the field of Cymatics suggests that listening to and playing music effects the body on a cellular level. Hesser (2002) writes that “reading *Cymatics* and studying the concepts of the New Physics (Bentov, 1977, Bohm, 1980, Capra, 1975) scientifically confirmed for me the intuitive feeling that we live in a universe of moving, dancing particles and that all life is vibration manifested in different forms” (p.2).

In this context, music psychotherapy can be a vital treatment modality for medical patients. Hesser (2002) points out that it is not unusual for normal and high functioning adults to seek music psychotherapy when facing immediate health crises. Dileo (1999) states “music psychotherapy can be undertaken with a medical patient to improve his psychological adjustment, but it is becoming increasingly clear that this may and will influence his or her medical condition. The individual cannot be compartmentalized, and neither can prevention or

treatment” (p.6). Loewy (1999) writes that music psychotherapy work with clients who have medical conditions “always involves a balance of ascertaining how the mind affects the body and how the body affects the mind. Music therapy can bridge the way these two systems interface” (p. 194). Singing may be of particular value in making this interface. Sokolov in Gaynor (1999) says, “The throat is a physical and symbolic bridge between the head and the heart. Therefore singing can become a way of developing a relationship between the mind and the emotions” (p. 102).

Gloria did not seek music therapy with the overt intention of treating her medical condition. She continued to visit her oncologist on a regular basis to determine her status and whether she would need conventional medical treatment. Music therapy was the only regular therapy she attended during the period under study. She herself attributed her improved physical state (her tumors shrunk and did not progress) to her belief in God, a change in diet, and singing.

#### The Relationship Between Musical and Psychological Understanding: Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy and Music Psychotherapy

Working with the psychological condition of the client falls under the domain of music psychotherapy. Music psychotherapy “can speak to the whole person and offer important possibilities for the treatment of emotional problems” (Hesser, 2002, p. 6). Aigen (1999) writes that “music therapists who work with the emotional lives of their clients and who seek to effect change in the domains of affect, cognition and behavior feel comfortable using the term ‘music

psychotherapy' in order to differentiate their work from therapists whose main focus might be increasing immune system response" (p. 77). Hesser (2002) has been a primary force in developing training regarding the practice of music psychotherapy. She delineated three levels of music psychotherapy based on the work of Wolberg (1967): Supportive Music Psychotherapy, Reeducative Music Psychotherapy and Reconstructive Music Psychotherapy. Hesser (2002) has emphasized in her writings and teachings the power of music in creating opportunities for self-exploration, building avenues for communication, and forging relationships that can foster intimacy and trust between the therapist and the client.

Working in depth and for a sustained period, music psychotherapy affords the client the opportunity for lasting personality change. This relates to the level of reconstructive music therapy, which Hesser describes as helping the client to "achieve extensive alterations of character structure, promote positive personality growth and expand the potentials of the individual" (pp.16-17).

A music psychotherapist addresses therapeutic issues that do not relate merely to a client's outer behavior or physical condition but to the inner life of perception, thought and feeling. Kenneth Bruscia (1998) distinguishes between two forms of Music Psychotherapy. In Insight Oriented Music Psychotherapy, the "therapist uses music experiences and the relationships that develop through them as the means of bringing clients greater insights about themselves and their lives, while also inducing the necessary psychological changes therein (p.219)." He then goes on to define a second type of music psychotherapy, which addresses the idea

of music being the central force, called Transformative Music Psychotherapy, in which:

the therapist uses music experiences and relationships that form through them in order to access, work through, and resolve the client's therapeutic needs; verbal techniques are used only if or when they will enhance the music experience and its therapeutic potential. It is within the music experiences that the client and therapist develop their relationship, and the client makes the necessary changes. The music experience is therapeutically transformative and complete in, of, and by itself, independent of any insight gained through verbal exchange. Thus, most often, music is used *as* therapy (p. 219).

The Nordoff-Robbins approach is transformative music psychotherapy. Those who train in the approach must already be certified music therapists and work hard to develop facility to improvise music responsively with clinical intention. This enables the therapist to use the music *as* therapy. The therapist's improvised music is inspired by his or her impressions of the client; the music "creates the emotional substances of the contact and sets the ground for interactivity" (Nordoff & Robbins, 1983, p. 144). By recording each session and meticulously studying and documenting them before the next session takes place, the Nordoff-Robbins therapist creates opportunities for future musical interventions that move the client's therapy process forward. The approach:

is music-centered in that musical processes are viewed as the primary vehicles of change. It is a form of music psychotherapy in that relationship

factors are considered, and there is recognition that music affects the psyche. It is a transpersonal discipline in that the approach utilizes music to harness the client's will and recognizes that peak experiences can help clients transcend behavioral or dynamic patterns that impede self-enhancement (Turry, 2001, p. 347).

The Nordoff-Robbins approach is predominantly about music making and the musical relationship between therapist and client. By utilizing musical improvisation, a Nordoff-Robbins therapist can help the client express thoughts and feelings in music that are often difficult to express verbally. This can be vitally important for medical treatment. "The inability to express emotion is seen as a ... significant correlate to illness, in particular, in cancer patients" (Dileo, 1997, p. 133). Many emotional experiences are triggered in those diagnosed with a serious illness. Feelings of helplessness are common. Patients often feel as if they are damaged and isolate themselves. They can experience tremendous anger, overwhelming sadness, paralyzing fear, and powerlessness in the face of their situation. They can often feel confused and out of control.

Improvisation allows for emotional exploration to continue even during difficult emotional states. It "acts as a catalyst in illuminating painful feelings" (Turry & Turry, 1999, p. 172). An important tool both in music psychotherapy and in Medical Music Therapy, improvisation helped Gloria to give her voice to emotions she could not speak of and allowed her to stay connected to the ongoing process even during times she considered giving up.

Being diagnosed with a life threatening illness can be a traumatic event. Gloria described being frozen, paralyzed with fear and walking around like a “Zombie.” This self-description is consistent with van der Kolk and van der Hart’s (1989) clinical description of those suffering from psychological trauma. With Gloria, her diagnosis triggered a resurfacing of past traumatic events around her relationship to her mother and the stifling effects it had on her as an adult. Slotoroff (1994) writes that improvisation is an effective tool in helping traumatized clients regain the ability to assert themselves, and how important this can be in helping them to overcome a sense of helplessness. Austin (2001) suggests that singing is uniquely effective in helping the traumatized person feel his or her strength and authentic voice. This idea has particular resonance in considering the work with Gloria as she has been able to sing directly about her experience of “finding my true voice” in the course of her music therapy treatment.

Though an important component for the client in the music therapy process is the expression of feelings, the Nordoff-Robbins approach recognizes that “musical acts of expression go beyond the pure release of personal feeling or even their symbolization (Aigen, 2005, p. 256).

Aldridge (1996) states that:

whereas personal emotive expression may be the first step in the process of healing, the continuing therapeutic process is to give articulation to a broad range of human feelings... When we introduce form and order into the creative act then we promote a higher form of human articulation. This

is the process of healing; the escape from emotive fragmentation to the creative act of becoming whole (p.18).

Gloria described the collaborative process as one where she began to experience a sense of wholeness with the creation of and completion of improvised songs.

The improvisations explored here have words and melodies. Words and melodies shape the improvisations into song forms. Improvised song forms can be especially helpful when patients with medical needs are trying to cope with the pervasive uncertainty of their situation due to their illness. Improvised song forms help to externalize intense feelings and “provide a non-intrusive way of offering direction through emotions such as confusion, despair and turmoil” (Turry & Turry, 1999, p. 172). The combination of words and music helps to integrate cognitive and affective processes. The song form allows for the words and music to be recalled by the patient and can be a reminder of an idea or image that provides comfort during difficult moments outside of the therapy session.

The power and effectiveness of song forms such as the ones examined in the present study can be particularly important for patients who are coping with their prognoses. Song forms can “provide a necessary sense of security, mastery, and predictability essential to achieving a wide range of clinical goals” (Turry & Turry, 1999, p. 173). Song forms can often result from the improvisational process undertaken by Nordoff-Robbins therapists because of the emphasis in the approach in improvising utilizing tonal structures and forms. These forms provide the “vehicle of transformation of the emotional energy that is otherwise dissipated



through the mere discharge” (Aigen, 1995, p. 245) of emotional expression. The song form is a durable and meaningful result of the clinical process.

### Community Music Therapy

Though Community Music Therapy is a relatively new designation of music therapy practice, its rudiments have existed since the early origins of the profession. It has emerged as a formal area of practice as therapists have sought out theory outside the framework of psychotherapy and made efforts to tie music therapy to the natural environments in which people make music together.

Ansdell (2002) describes community music therapy in part as,

an approach to working musically with people in context: acknowledging the social and cultural factors of their health, illness, relationships and musics.... It reflects the essentially communal reality of musicing.... The aim is to help clients access a variety of musical situations, and to accompany them as they move between ‘therapy’ and wider social contexts of musicing.... It involves extending the role, aims and possible sites of work for music therapists (pp. 120-121)

This area of practice has relevance here in that Gloria has shared her experiences in music therapy by learning the music of her therapy as songs and performing them, creating a sense of community for herself. The public sharing and preparations for them became a part of the overall music therapy treatment process. Publicly sharing the results and accomplishments of the music that was created privately in a music therapy session was an effective way of reinforcing a

sense of achievement. Also it validated changes she was making internally. Performing seemed to help her develop a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. She became involved in building her own community by inviting her audience to live in her experience and involving musicians in the preparation and performance of the music that was originally created in the individual sessions. She also entered more fully into the community by facilitating workshops for cancer survivors and participating in creative arts groups with other cancer survivors.

The process of community sharing was a way for Gloria to affirm that the pain of her life was something that did not overwhelm her in the present. She did this in part by organizing the shape of the concerts so that there was an overriding form in the presentation of the songs and excerpts. They did not remain in chronological order but in category. In the first section she placed her pain songs - songs and excerpts "about the darkness." The next section of the sharing included songs and excerpts containing elements of the struggle to overcome her personal turmoil. The last section included the hopeful songs, even celebratory ones. The performance gave her a way to shape her process the way she wanted it to be. By doing it she reinforced her understanding that she was more than her painful feelings and that she could feel hopeful about her future. Rather than ruminate on her feelings, she was making plans and participating in life in a more active and fulfilling way, through her involvement with music.

The collaboration with Gloria was unique in relation to community music therapy. It did not start out as an area of practice that would fall within the scope

of community music therapy, but evolved naturally in this direction as the course of therapy evolved. Also, there is a tendency in the developing theory of community music therapy to exclude intrapsychic work as irrelevant (Ansdell 2002, Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004). The course of therapy that generated the material under study here clearly had elements of both intrapsychic exploration and community sharing.

### Research in Music Therapy Related to Words and Music

A review of the research on words and music in music therapy reveals a tendency on the part of researchers to study each as a separate phenomena rather than examining them together, even when they emerge simultaneously as in the formulation of improvised songs. This is problematic when considering the interconnected nature of words and music in songs and the power that songs have in terms of therapeutic impact and meaning. Magill Bailey (1984) reported on the effectiveness of songs in working with cancer patients and their families. She describes the major themes from the patient's song choices and came up with nine categories including songs of hope and songs about feelings. She came to the conclusion that the themes of song choices often corresponded to what she described as the three stages of the music therapy process: "contact, awareness, and resolution" (p. 10). Dileo (1999) writes about the importance of songs in the treatment of oncology patients. Though she does not address the process of improvising songs, her thorough description of why songs are important in general and how they function specifically for clients who are medically challenged is relevant for this study. She postulates that songs "provide resources

for resolving conflicts” (p. 152). The concept of resolution is particularly significant for Gloria as her lyrics often depict conflicts and her search and discovery of solutions. However, both Magill Bailey and Dileo do not include any detailed analysis of the music of these songs. Their analysis and conclusions are based solely on an analysis of the lyric content.

This tendency to leave out the musical analysis in researching music therapy content that consists of words and music together can also be seen in Austin’s research. Austin (1996, 1998, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2002, 2004), a music psychotherapist who employs vocal improvisation in her practice, has written extensively about traumatized clients and the power of singing in working to overcome the effects of trauma. Her focus on how singing can both tap into deeply held psychological conflicts of the client and be an instrumental factor in finding resolutions to those conflicts is quite illustrative and important for the field. She has developed specific techniques utilizing vocal improvisation. In a previous publication (Turry & Turry, 1999), her vocal holding technique, which alternates two chords in order to establish a harmonic container for the client to sing with, was compared to the improvisational song forms created in the course of music therapy under discussion in this proposed study. Though her approach is improvisational, many of the musical parameters are pre-determined. Austin’s technique pre-determines the harmony and overall musical structure before the actual improvisation. The client chooses beforehand the two chords he or she wishes to sing with, and these two chords are maintained by the therapist without much variance. Much of the improvisational aspect of the approach comes in the

way the therapist sings with the client. The music from the piano remains, for the most part, unvarying. In her own doctoral study (Austin, 2004), the words were examined in detail to understand the psychology of the client and the therapy process, but the musical elements were not analyzed in detail.

Colin Lee, (1989, 1991, 1995, 2003) a Nordoff-Robbins trained therapist, has promoted the importance of musical analysis both in his clinical work and his research analysis. His approach is to concentrate solely on musical processes, allowing for the musical direction of the improvisation to guide the process. He advocates approaching therapeutic improvisations in a compositional fashion. It is a music centered approach (Aigen, 2005) and radically departs from the traditional integration of explicit clinical goals. Rather than trying to understand the subjective experience of the client, the therapist in this approach is encouraged to listen extremely closely, microsecond to microsecond, to the music of the client and respond musically.

Lee emphasizes that because as a therapist he is listening first and foremost to the musical elements, and utilizes his compositional skills in responding to the client, he will remain true to this approach as a researcher and focus on the musical elements. Lee is concerned that too much emphasis is put on explaining improvisation in therapeutic terms and not in compositional terms. By studying the music created by therapist and client as a composition, he believes that a greater understanding of the therapy process will take place. His approach has been an important contribution to the field in emphasizing the musical

elements. However, his research does not include analysis of music that includes words being sung.

The research examples cited above illustrate the tendency of researchers to study either the words or the music but not the two together in music therapy research. This study attempts to fill this gap by integrating the analysis of words and music. It is relevant not just in terms of my own building upon the tradition of Nordoff-Robbins work but the discipline-wide issue of separating music and words and the resulting separation of musical and psychological processes.

### Musicological Context

Recently, music therapy researchers have begun looking outside the music therapy literature to the field of musicology in order to understand the musical processes occurring in music therapy (Aigen, 2005; Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004; Pavlicevic 2003; Ruud, 1998; Stige, 2002). There are studies outside the field of music therapy that examine the relationship between music and words in songs (Everett, 1999; Johnson & Larson, 2003). The musicological perspective brings a lens to bear that is relevant in examining the material under study here. This relevance runs both ways. What we discover in music therapy is relevant to people and disciplines outside of music therapy (Aigen, 2005). References to music therapy are being made in musicological studies (Robinson, 2005). Bringing in material from this related field helps to broaden the perspective and such material is included in this study. This is done with the hope that this study may be useful for those outside of the field of music therapy as well. The work of Cooke (1959), Beardsley (1981) and Robinson (2005) will be included in the

chapter on the research method, with Cooke's and Robinson's ideas being primary resources.

### Perspectives on Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy and the Integration of Psychological Constructs

Nordoff-Robbins music therapy is an improvisational approach that developed with disabled children. Since its original formulation it has been applied in numerous contexts. In Germany pioneering work was done with all kinds of patients with medical conditions including coma (Ansdell, 1995). Nordoff-Robbins therapists in Great Britain pioneered work with self-referred<sup>1</sup> adults looking for an alternative to traditional verbal psychotherapy. Working with a variety of client populations has influenced the Nordoff-Robbins area of practice as ideas related to the particular clinical focus are integrated into the approach.

As with any clinical method as it evolves there are ongoing debates about what changes are consistent with its origins and what constitutes a new approach. Within the Nordoff-Robbins community, there has been an ongoing discussion that has included letters and articles (Aigen, 1996; Ansdell, 1997) published in the newsletter of the International Association of Nordoff-Robbins music therapists, portions of a book chapter (Turry, 1998), published articles in music therapy journals (Streeter; 1999b, Pavlicevic; 1999, Ansdell; 1999, Brown; 1999, Aigen;

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<sup>1</sup> This was a term first utilized by the Director of the London Center Pauline Etkin in describing clients who were capable of referring themselves to therapy. It is generally used to describe higher functioning adults, the "worried well," struggling with life issues but not in need of in-patient treatment.

1999) and dissertations (Sorel, 2005) identifying areas of controversy regarding the integration of psychological constructs into the Nordoff-Robbins approach.

Ansdell (1995) has argued that using psychological constructs in describing the processes comprising creative clinical improvisations that take place in Nordoff-Robbins music therapy distorts the essence of the musical interaction. Taken to the extreme, these constructs are abstractions that are used for analysis and interpretation of experience, rather than the experience itself. Ansdell argues for a phenomenological approach in describing the musical interaction of therapist and client, and emphasizes the importance of describing in order to truly understand the improvisation process rather than assign meaning and interpretation too quickly. In his view, if a Nordoff-Robbins therapist enters into the clinical situation with a particular preset perception with regard to the psychological condition of the client and the therapeutic relationship, the careful listening and responding focus that the therapist needs becomes distorted or dissipated entirely.

Because sensitive listening is of paramount importance in the method, many Nordoff-Robbins therapists reject the idea of approaching a music making experience with a pre-conceived idea regarding the client's psychological condition or the dynamics between therapist and client because this distorts not only how the experience is described, but how the music is perceived. Beginning with a theory of the client's condition or an approach to the client is seen as "a mindset that compartmentalizes a situation rather than filling it with potential development and creativity" (Turry, 1998, p. 163).



Streeter (1999) has argued that Nordoff-Robbins therapists who do not integrate psychological constructs run the possibility of creating blind spots for themselves which would lead to detrimental results for the client. Her position is that musical awareness and psychological thinking are two separate and distinct entities, and that the Nordoff-Robbins therapist must make a conscious effort of including both in his or her practice. She points out case studies written by Nordoff-Robbins therapists that reveal a lack of awareness with regards to the feelings the therapists were experiencing and how it was impacting on the therapeutic relationship.

In response to Streeter's position, Aigen (1999) argues that musical awareness and psychological thinking are not separate at all, and that the therapist does not have to "leave the field of musical interaction, or the process of thinking through music, and enter the domain of psychological theory to tune into the inner state of the client which is expressed musically" (p.78). Because music is a multi-level phenomenon, its expression by the client can tell us about his or her psychological condition. Music is a vehicle for psychological awareness and communication, and the musical experience a way to gain "access to the psychological domain which our emotional lives inhabit (p.79)."

In a previous publication (Turry, 1998), I have made the case for integrating psychological thinking and musical awareness. Focusing on the relationship dynamics between the therapist and the client, the study included musical manifestations of relationship dynamics such as transference and countertransference and how the quality of the therapists' playing can reveal

hidden thoughts and feelings regarding the client and the therapeutic relationship. I have sympathy for the positions taken by both Streeter and Ansdell and believe, like Aigen, that it is possible to keep musical processes at the forefront while allowing for psychological considerations.

Robbins himself has no hesitation in identifying Nordoff-Robbins music therapy as a form of music psychotherapy, calling it “Psychotherapy in Music” (1996). He deliberately uses this term as opposed to music psychotherapy to emphasize that the psychological elements lie within the overarching experience of music making, rather than placing music within the psychological domain. This is similar to saying that the process is music *as* therapy as opposed to music *in* therapy in that the significant changes occur as a result of the musical process.

One of the issues relating to the integration of psychological concepts into the Nordoff-Robbins approach is interpretation. Streeter insists that interpretations are a necessary part of the therapists approach and are done verbally. Aigen (1999) states that “one can operate from a music-centered position that is itself psychotherapeutically informed, regardless of the use or non-use of verbalization in the service of interpretation” (p. 79).

Because the Nordoff-Robbins therapist can respond with musical fluidity, it is possible to respond musically to the psychological state of the client or the emotional expression heard in the client’s music. The therapist can respond both musically and psychologically, based on his or her understanding of the client’s psychological needs and how they have manifested in the musical form being created. Robinson (2005) believes that this kind of response can be heard as

commentary by the composer within pre-composed pieces of non clinical music. She sites the example of a piece written for voice and piano by Brahms where the composer is commenting on the psychological condition of the singer as she sings the melody of the piece.

Another area of debate involves the act of the therapist processing events with the client in order to make explicit the significance of the musical experience. The idea is that this will help the client integrate the experience by consciously referring to it and understanding it. Sorel (2005) in her examination of Nordoff-Robbins music therapy with a mother and son dyad, points out the experiential nature of the approach, and quotes family therapists Whitaker and Burberry (1988) to support her point that interventions that intensify experience can be more therapeutically valuable than those which attempt to cultivate an understanding of that same experience. Understanding events through processing may lead to a more sophisticated understanding for the client without actually changing the way the client lives or feels.

There is published literature regarding Nordoff-Robbins work with adult clients. Ansdell (1995) devoted a book to adult clients treated by a variety of Nordoff-Robbins therapists, illustrating how the work which began with disabled children has developed and is being applied to a wide variety of adult clients. There were significant findings related to music and its quickening effect, and an elaboration of the mutual music making process of the client and therapist, which Ansdell has called “the musical between” (p.68). There was little examination, however, of the clients’ intra psychic processes and how music affected their

inner psychological world. Further, there was little discussion of the therapist-client relationship and its effect on the therapeutic or musical process, and there was no direct material on the interaction of words and music. A study of excerpts drawn from the therapy process that is under discussion in this dissertation has the potential to provide insights into Nordoff-Robbins work with adult clients.

Aigen's (1997) study on a group of developmentally disabled adolescents receiving Nordoff-Robbins music therapy did include an analysis of the function of the lyrics in relation to the group process. The lyrics of several songs were included in the body of the study to capture the essence of each individual in the group, a flavor of the interactions among members and illustrate the overall character of the group's development through time. These were improvised songs that grew out of the moment, in a similar fashion as the songs under discussion in this study. However, many of the songs' melodies were initiated by the therapist, and the creation of the lyric and song forms – due to the nature of the clients' disabilities – relied on the therapist to a much greater degree. Also, Aigen's study did not examine in detail the interaction between the lyric and the musical elements.

Gudrin Aldridge (1999), a Nordoff-Robbins practitioner undertook a study of her work in the treatment of a woman with breast cancer. She closely examines the music created spontaneously between herself and the client. She concentrates on the meaning of melody in relation to the need for self-expression in the client. Aldridge suggests that improvisation may be particularly suited for this type of client because it is an approach that can be individually tailored to address the

unique needs of the client. The creative process offers a client afflicted with cancer an opportunity to “not only play her physical weakness and affliction but express her individual potential in the moment” (p. 140). The case she describes does have common ground with the one under discussion, but is different in several significant ways. In Aldridge, the client did not improvise words, and did not sing. The melody was played on an instrument. In addition, the scale used to improvise the melody was chosen and established by the therapist before the improvisation began.

The music under discussion in this study had significant clinical benefit for the client, and unlike Aldridge’s approach it was not predetermined. Unforeseen melodic and harmonic directions, changes of meter, dynamics and register were commonplace within one improvisation. Changes in the overall feel and style of the music could occur at any time.

Nordoff and Robbins (1968, 1977) worked with children and adolescents. In their writings they do address the importance of songs and the need to sensitively set music to words and words to music. A large number of originally improvised songs became a body of repertoire utilized for clients in both individual and group therapy. Songs about the client, about what they were doing, and encouraging interaction and awareness as well as learning concepts were the main topics of the songs. The songs are utilized as a training resource in the Nordoff-Robbins training course in cultivating sensitivity to melodic direction and harmonic formation in relation to words. Though always inspired by the

client and in response to the clinical situation, the songs, which were later published, were created by the therapists.

There was one course of treatment that Nordoff and Robbins undertook and documented by Aigen (1998, pp. 27-58) that has particular relevance to the study under discussion here. This was a situation where Nordoff created songs with a child during a course of individual therapy that emerged from the powerful emotions the child was experiencing internally and in which the child collaborated with Nordoff on a more equal basis by contributing melodies and words. These improvised songs were psychologically significant to the child and the experience of creating and expressing the song was a key factor in the reported success of the therapy.

Robarts (2003), a Nordoff-Robbins trained therapist who has integrated psychodynamic therapy theory into her approach, examines the improvised songs created in a course of music therapy with a girl who suffered early trauma. She eloquently describes the quality and potency of improvised songs:

When a song arises in music therapy, we hear something special. Freshly minted in the moment, song comes from the deepest roots of our being, our embodied self, and enters the creative flow of life. Person means literally “to sound through” and so the voice, with its subtleties of intonation, rhythmic flow, intensity, and texture, carries the essence of each person’s individuality. As a bridge between our inner and outer worlds, and in the borderland between conscious and unconscious life, song can communicate our innermost feelings. Whether in a rush of joy or

anger, in the turmoil of anxiety or the tranquility of musing and reflection, when a song grows from spontaneously expressed feelings it is in a sense both a container and transformer of feelings, whereby new meanings may be forged. Songs seem designed to communicate something essential and significant, and are at their most powerful when drawing from lived experience. In music therapy, they can become a means of experiential integration, addressing past and present and helping the client look ahead to the future (p.142).

Robarts' study is directly related to the material under discussion here. She describes her method in creating the songs with her client, a child named Lyndie, stating, "as her song develops, I accompany her, maintaining a steady pulse, harmonically enhancing changes of mood, vocal inflections, and evolving imagery" (p.166). She sought to deepen the emotional content of Lyndie's words with the music she created with her at the piano. Robarts brought predictability in chord progressions to create a safe refrain to return to "when the musical development of emotional expression" (p. 158) was more than her client could handle in the moment. Robarts clinical approach was similar to the approach taken in creating the material in this study. It does not contain a detailed analysis of the words and music as the improvisation unfolds.

So this study builds on the current literature regarding Nordoff-Robbins music therapy in several ways. It addresses the dearth of literature regarding adult work and psychological processes. It addresses directly the interaction between

music and words, something that has not been extensively written about. And it sheds further light on the shared mutual process of song formation – words and music – between therapist and client, with special focus on the musical directions that emerge within the process of improvisation and how these can result in music that has clinical significance and benefit for the client.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOURCES THAT INFORMED THE RESEARCH METHOD AS IT DEVELOPED

#### Introduction

As I engaged in the research process, I relied on my training as a researcher and my experience as a therapist. In addition, I found supplemental sources that supported the direction I was taking as the method developed. These sources were not predetermined and were not included in any preliminary literature review. They were discovered as the research process was already underway and helped to solidify ideas that were emerging as I engaged in the research.

In this chapter I have included the ideas of Deryck Cooke (1959) and Jenefer Robinson (2005) as well as reviewing some of the original Nordoff-Robbins (1968, 1977), (Robbins & Robbins, 1998) material with regards to their musicological ideas and an analysis of their pre-composed songs as it relates to words and music. There is also a brief discussion on the fusion of words and music as described by Beardsley (1981). All of these authors contributed to my method of analysis.

#### The Central Issues of This Study

As the research process unfolded, it became clear that I was drawn to consider several issues regarding the archived material. The three central issues are

contained within this analysis regarding the interconnected nature of music and words in clinical improvisation:

1. How music helps to shape and define the emotional meaning of the words.
2. The relationship between music and emotion.
3. The relationship between emerging musical process and psychological process.

#### The Sources Used to Explore These Issues

Both Cooke and Robinson have developed ideas that helped me to make explicit the tacit understandings I had regarding the elements of music and the relationship of music to emotion and psychological processes.

Cooke's analysis was more specifically about musical elements and their emotional qualities. His ideas about major and minor tonalities, how tempos create different types of tension and the significance of the direction of tones were particularly useful.

Robinson focused on the importance of psychology and emotion in understanding what qualities music holds. She developed a method of understanding music by hearing the psychological drama inherent in musical forms as they develop. Her emphasis on music as an emerging and shifting process, and how this was directly related to emotion as a process that emerges and shifts through cognitive monitoring, was helpful in considering the material under study.

I do not consider the ideas that Cooke and Robinson articulate as absolute truths. But as I listened to the material under study and tried to understand it more

clearly, Cooke and Robinson's ideas made many of my intuitive hunches about the music-word relationship more explicit. This happened during the research process; therefore I have included their ideas in this chapter to help explicate my research method. This will help the reader in understanding how I developed the findings.

Because the musicological analysis that I developed as part of my method to generate the findings is based on many of their ideas, I have included a fairly detailed summary of Cooke's and Robinson's writing.

#### Deryck Cooke: Musical Elements as Components of an Emotional Language

Although I discovered the work independently, Cooke (1959) was included in a list of recommended reading by Nordoff and Robbins (1977). This explained a sense I had as I first discovered Cooke's writing that his ideas were consistent with, and a good complement to, the treatment method and philosophy and thus appropriate to consider during the analysis.

Cooke believed that music is a language of the emotions and can be understood more explicitly when considering specific musical constructs.

#### Music and Emotion

Cooke, like Nordoff and Robbins, believed that music is essentially an emotional experience. Music "relates to a deep unconscious creative self" (p.16) and revealed an aspect of the emotional life of the person who created it. He believed that "an artist's emotions are not the playthings of trivial events, being rooted in his unconscious, where they form his basic life-attitudes; they are not in

his superficial everyday reactions, but in his deep, enduring self” p. 235.

Therefore a composer’s work was revealing of his or her personality and emotional life.

The process of constructing a musical form such as a song combines emotion and intellect-this crafting of musical elements enhances its expressiveness. He felt that the “the laws of musical construction aid rather than impede emotional expression” (p. 32). These are all ideas that are consistent with Nordoff and Robbins philosophy and a major reason why I delved deeply into Cooke’s writing.

Cooke’s premise is that it is possible to understand music- the directions of tones, the relationship between tones, the effect of rhythm and dynamics – more effectively and more explicitly, as a language of the emotions. This is because “there are basic expressive laws of the medium” (p.15). He believed that “since notes, like words, have emotional connotations; it is, the supreme expression of universal emotions, in an entirely personal way, by the great composers” (p.33). Basing his observations on the natural laws of the harmonic series, and how composers have shaped musical elements through different historical periods, Cooke has devised a way of decoding the elements of music and identifying emotional qualities.

Like Meyer (1956), a seminal musicologist who has been a major influence on the study of the effects of music, Cooke believed that the key element of the emotional aspect of music comes from its tensions that are created between tones. These tensions are caused by three dimensions – pitch, time, and

volume. Of course, the tensions of pitch, time and volume occur simultaneously in music and interact one upon the other. Cooke points out that it is essential to discover “which of them is the fundamental one, on which the others merely act (however powerfully) as qualifying influences” (p. 38).

I have included a summary of these dimensions in the appendix, as an understanding of the tensions and resolutions in music is an important component of the research approach to the material under study.

### Diatonic Music as the Context

Though he mentions Organum, church modes and other tonal systems that predate our present day tonal system, Cooke limits his analysis to diatonic music, the basis of our western tonal system. It is this context, the major and minor scales, with harmony based on the relationship between the Tonic (triad built on the first step) and Dominant (triad built on the fifth step) that is the context for his tonal analysis. In terms of harmonic construction, the major triad and the minor triad are the context that Cooke uses. Though he recognizes that there are many exceptions based on how all the elements of musical tensions interact, he goes along with the basic premise that a major triad generally has a quality of pleasure or happiness, and the minor triad a quality of sadness or pain. He relates his understanding of intervals within this harmonic context.

Cooke’s analysis of the intervals includes all the 12 tones a half step away from each other between the root and the same tone an octave higher-the chromatic scale. In this way he includes tones that are outside the established major scale or minor scale in diatonic music, but his analysis is done in the

context of the major and minor scale, and harmony based on major and minor music. I have included a summary of his description of the intervals in the appendix.

### Tonal Directions

Cooke's analysis is done considering every note as it relates to the starting note, or tonic. It is important to take into account the direction of the interval, whether it is ascending or descending. Cooke had general ideas about directions. In a major key, rising in pitch expresses "an outgoing feeling of pleasure" (p. 106). There is a sense of striving in the ascending movement. Descending pitches in major "an incoming feeling of pleasure" (p.106). The same ingoing and outgoing relationship relate to minor, with the feeling of pain replacing the feeling of pleasure. Rising in pitch in minor can relate to feelings of pain that are protested against and/or affirmed. Falling in pitch in the minor can relate to "fierce despair or a powerful feeling of subjection to fate" (p.106). Many of the improvised songs Gloria and I created were in a minor key, and Cooke's ideas were helpful as I listened to the material.

This can be understood in a physical sense, as Cooke states "the whole thing is explained when we remember that falling notes are yielding to the tensional, 'gravitational' pull back to the lower tonic; rising ones are asserting themselves against that pull" (p. 105). He explains that pitch movement that has large leaps tends to express passion and unrest. Repetitions on a single pitch are "a monotonous deadness" (p. 109). He uses funeral marches that utilize one repeated tone to convey this quality as examples to support his theory. He

explains that pitch stillness or movement relates to emotional expression, stating “pitch tends to fluctuate according to the ebb and flow of the emotions expressed” (p. 107). Higher pitches relate to ethereality, lower pitches to earthiness.

#### Emotional Meaning of Music: Relative Not Absolute

Cooke makes a point to say that these are generalizations, tendencies, and not absolutes found in all pieces of music. He points out that “the ability to change the expressive quality of a note from moment to moment, and to give it two (or more) expressive qualities simultaneously, is the whole basis of the extraordinarily subtle emotional language of music” (p.72). There are much more nuances and blends of emotion that occur in music. His descriptions do give a basic building block on which to begin to understand the emotional quality of the music as it relates to its structural components.

#### Limitations of Cooke’s Approach as it Relates to This Study

Cooke’s analysis is clearly ethnocentric. It is based on white, European classical music tradition. He does not take into account world music traditions outside of the classical tradition. Early music based on pentatonic scales or the church modes are not examined in any detail. This is an important omission considering how much importance Nordoff and Robbins placed on world music outside the classical tradition like the Chinese pentatonic, Organum, and the church modes.

Also, his analysis does not take into account how popular contemporary music has utilized particular components of music. This has particular relevance

harmonically, as major seventh and ninth chords often function as resolved chords, and dominant seventh chords can also function as resolved chords in certain styles of music. Also, ambiguity and paradoxical qualities in music are not addressed.

Cooke did not study the process of live improvised music making. He looked at the history of how diatonic music developed and the work of composers during the period of 1400-1950 in order to establish a better understanding of music as a language of the emotions.

Cooke analyzed music not as a composer or player of the music, but from a listener's perspective. He did not take into account different interpretation of the same piece of music and how that might alter its meaning, and he did not take into account the experience of the music maker as he plays the music. Music is not a static object, but an activity that takes place when human beings participate by creating it and playing it. Elliott (1995) has introduced the term "musicing" to emphasize the fact that music has to do with people and action as a response to the approach to analyzing music as a fixed object on a page or recording.

Despite these limitations, Cooke's system is a good starting point and contributed to my own analyses of the material under study. His characterizations make sense to me and my approach to creating musical forms. It made sense to me as I listened to the excerpts under study here.

#### Cooke's Ideas as They Pertain to This Study

As I listened and analyzed the material under study, Cooke's analysis often confirmed a tacit understanding that I had regarding the meaning of music



in relation to the words. I listened to the directions of Gloria's melodies with an intuitive sense of their quality and meaning, and Cooke's ideas helped me to make explicit my discoveries regarding her musical expression. I became more sensitive to each element of music and how it was playing upon the overall mood of the music.

As I read Cooke's ideas regarding major triads as happy and minor as sad, I thought it was simplistic. Yet I found in the material under discussion relevance for this way of thinking, particularly in the excerpt entitled "*Do I Dare Imagine?*" where Gloria vacillates between hopefulness and dread, and I move from major to minor. This will be illustrated in detail in chapter VI.

#### Jenefer Robinson: Listening Emotionally to the Psychological Drama in Music

Robinson (2005) examines the relationship between music and emotion. She lays out the premise that if one listens to a piece of music for the psychological drama it expresses it is possible to experience and understand the emotional quality of the music. She encourages the listener to listen for the character or persona in a piece of music and what this persona is going through emotionally.

Like Cooke, Robinson emphasizes the complexities of music. A piece of music can quickly change in emotional character. She states that "music, like emotion, is a process, and so it is peculiarly well-suited to express not only particular emotional states but also blends of emotion, conflicts between emotions, ambiguous emotions, and the way one emotion transforms into another" (P.293).

Robinson believes that there are multiple reasons for our emotional response to music. We are moved by the craftsmanship and beauty of the work, what the piece expresses and how expressive it is.

Robinson emphasizes that “Musical expressiveness is a function of musical *process*, of the way in which themes interact, harmonies modulate, rhythms transform, etc” (p.304). A major point of her theory is that music reflects emerging and evolving processes, not simply static states. Music reflects the process of emotion as it unfolds, not just a fixed emotional state such as sad or happy.

Robinson believes that the musical process is uniquely suited to mirror the emotional process. Listening to the unfolding musical process one can recognize emotions related to struggle, desire, trying to achieve, failing, trying again, succeeding, and celebrating. These different qualities can be going on simultaneously, to create blends of emotion. A good example of this is Robinson’s description of a bittersweet quality heard in different pieces of music. Depending on the musical qualities it could be a blend of hope and resignation or sadness and nostalgia. She analyzes a piece by Brahms to illustrate her point, asserting that:

It is as if the protagonist is torn between acceptance and grief, hope and despair. Some of the minor passages have an undercurrent of major and major passages of minor. This Brahmsian ambiguity is what gives the

piece its bittersweet quality, and what enables the protagonist to express ambiguity between sorrow and hope, yearning and acceptance (p.319).

### The Combination of Music and Words

Robinson touches upon music and words and how they combine in an analysis of a vocal piece written by Brahms. In this analysis of a piece composed for a female voice with piano accompaniment, Robinson describes the combination of music and words as a way for the singer to express in “rhythm and tone of voice” (p. 313) how the emotion being expressed is affecting her physically. She compares music to dance to illustrate her point. Dance creates this opportunity with gesture and action. Music expresses emotion through gesture and movement like dance. In addition, a song does it through tone of voice and the opportunity to articulate thoughts and points of view.

Robinson considers song to have elements of both dance and poetry. Beardsley (1981) also utilizes poetry in trying to describe the music-word combination. He addresses the relationship between music and words in his development of “The Fusion Theory” (p. 344), the quality of how music and words combine. He judged the coherence of the fusion of the word-music combination, and found that the music did “not merely underline the words, and intensify their meaning, but [added] to them in some noteworthy way” (p. 346). Regarding the idea of poetry, he stated that “the musical substance of the song can be thought, by extension, to be a further exemplification of qualities of mind that would already be there to some extent in the tone and timbre of the voice if the poem were read aloud” (p. 345)

A major difference between the perspectives of Beardsley and Robinson is that Beardsley emphasizes the “quality of mind” where Robinson puts a premium on music’s ability to affect us physiologically and emotionally; her whole premise is that the experience is deeper, more than what we can consider with our minds.

### Musical Commentary

When listening to a piece of music that includes words Robinson describes that “we can hear the unfolding of her [the persona embodied by the singer] emotional state in the gradual development of melody, harmony and rhythm” (p. 317). The music reveals not just the emotions of the persona, but her shifting point of view. And the music also reveals the point of view the composer has toward the persona.

Robinson emphasizes that the composer, through making choices in the accompaniment of the singer, is reflecting upon the emotional state of the singer. She states, “the song is about the emotions it expresses. Brahms himself is commenting on the emotions his protagonist expresses” (p. 320). This concept of musical commentary was a useful concept for me as I listened to the material under study.

### The Building Blocks of Musical Structure and how They Work in Evoking Emotions

Robinson looks to Meyer (1956) and Sloboda and Juslin (2001) to help illuminate how musical structures evoke emotions by creating expectations and then either fulfilling or delaying those expectations. Particular musical elements,

such as syncopations, enharmonic changes, harmonic progressions, or tonal scales, help to create, maintain, confirm or disrupt musical expectations. The stronger the expectation created, and the build up of tension because of the expectation, the greater the emotional release upon meeting the musical expectation. Robinson explains that “our sense of tonality ... evokes powerful *desires* in us, notably the desire for closure and resolution” (p. 385).

### Constructing the Meaning of Music

Immersing oneself in a piece of music and noticing feelings of surprise or satisfaction as the music unfolds is a way to understand the structure of the music. (p.367). It is both the structure of the music and the drama enacted by the music and words together that the listener responds to.

Robinson is careful to say that there is no universally correct way to respond to a given piece of music, “because how we feel in response to music affects what we hear the music expressing” (p. 369). Therefore there will be differences in how music makes people feel and in how they understand the qualities of the music. Generally speaking, music can trigger physiological changes and shifts in a point of view.

### The Benefit of Musical Ambiguity

Another psychological component that Robinson refers to relates to musical ambiguity. She cites Sloboda (2000) who found that when music is ambiguous, it allows for the listener to project “subconscious desires, memories, and preoccupations,” they “rise to the flesh of the emotional contours that the

music suggests” (p.96). Ambiguity in the music creates great emotional intensity without defining the emotion; the listener can bring whatever feeling he or she may need to be expressed or illuminated to the fore.

### Experiencing a Feeling and Reflecting on the Feeling

Robinson takes great effort to explain that emotional response and cognitive appraisal are a part of an overarching process of experiencing feelings. The process of cognitively monitoring our emotional state changes the state we are in. And this is how we experience music as we immerse ourselves in the experience. We consider its effect on us, sometimes tacitly and sometimes explicitly as we listen and continue to involve ourselves in it.

### Robinson’s Ideas as They Pertain to This Study

Robinson’s ideas regarding music’s ability to combine qualities that could be at once contradictory were helpful for me in understanding the complexity in the music word combinations under study here. Her explanation of the emergence of an emotion and its relation to the process of music as it unfolds made sense to me as I considered Gloria’s experience. The cognitive monitoring and immersion into an emotional process as Robinson describes is something that can be heard in Gloria’s process as she sings, considers what she has sung, listens to what is being played around her, and then continues.

Robinson’s musical analysis and finding that the composer is capable of commenting on the persona who is expressing a psychological drama fit well into my emerging concept regarding what form some of my musical interventions

were taking. I was not only supporting Gloria's emotional expression, I was commenting on the expression. This will be illustrated in the chapters to follow.

### Nordoff-Robbins Musicological Theory and Clinical Practice as it Relates to This Study

Like Cooke, Nordoff and Robbins (1977) believe that music is essentially an emotional experience, explaining that "each (interval) has its own emotional quality. It doesn't need to be described. We're only concerned with the pure experience of it, the pure sound of it, the pure quality of it" (Robbins and Robbins, p.39). They do refer to Steiner's interval concepts in their teaching, which has some similarities to Cooke's ideas but goes beyond approaching the interval within the context of major and minor triads and scales. They had particular interest in ancient music that predated diatonic music such as Chinese pentatonic music, Church modes, musical scales and styles derived from the Middle East and Spain. In their view tones are conveyers of forces which they utilized with clinical intention.

### Non-Diatonic Music: Utilizing Tones with Clinical Intention

Since Nordoff viewed tonal forces beyond the scope of the traditional scales, he had a somewhat different perspective than Cooke regarding their qualities. For instance, the whole tone scale, based on the tritone, was viewed as a "neutral" scale, because the construction of the scale was based on the equal distance of a whole step between every note. This scale was utilized for its lack of diatonic pulls and tensions in clinical settings. Yet the whole tone also creates a

lack of bearing for the listener as there is no hierarchy of tone and therefore a lack of tonal pull does not allow for a clear direction for the tones to take. Whole tone music has been used to evoke a sense of losing one's bearings and for perceptions to be altered because of its dizzying effect on the listener. Nordoff found that the whole tone was particularly effective when playing rhythmically in sessions because the client was drawn to the rhythmic elements of the music rather than the melodic and harmonic pulls created by the tone tensions in traditional diatonic music. He valued the interval of the tritone in a clinical sense because of its very lack of balance. Cooke on the other hand, described the tritone as "pure and simple devilish and inimical forces" (p. 90).

Rather than describing the intervals as emotional experiences relying strongly on compositions based on the diatonic scale as Cooke does, Nordoff has utilized ideas based on a lecture given by Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy. The context of understanding the quality of intervals is based on tensions moving from an inward focus (the intervals with smaller distance between notes) to an experience related both to the inner self and the outside world (wider intervals eventually reaching an octave away from the starting point). In comparisons to Cooke's analysis, this interval description does not include the strong context of harmony that Cooke considers. In the Nordoff and Robbins approach the intervals stand on their own to a greater degree.

Nordoff himself was also influenced by Zuckerkandl (1956), who theorized that "musical tones are conveyors of forces. Hearing music means hearing an action of forces" (p.37). He looked at the forces of tones as they



moved through the diatonic scale. Zuckerkandl pointed out that the motion towards the tonic shifts at a point in the scale. It begins as a move away from the tonic, but after the fifth step, the motion becomes a motion towards the tonic, since the tonic is both the first and the last step of the scale.

### Music Used to Support and Challenge

The blends and subtle layers of meaning that both Cooke and Robinson ascribe to the unfolding musical process relates to Nordoff and Robbins belief that music created by the therapist could be both supportive and challenging at the same time. The therapist's music can invite and demand, lead and follow, because music is capable of communicating these qualities simultaneously. The therapist is not only looking to stimulate the client into activity, but to create music that the client can identify with and feel themselves reflected in. The qualities of the intervals and character of a particular scale or idiom emerges from the therapist's improvised music in relation to the personality characteristics, emotional state or mood of the client. For instance, Nordoff may have played a Middle Eastern scale at the piano because he believed the quality of the scale matched the temperament of the client. He might have matched the tempo of the child's beating with his left hand to support their playing, while playing in a faster tempo in his right hand to stimulate flexibility in the musical response of the client.

### Tones are Events

Robinson supports Nordoff's belief that "tones are events which all human beings are programmed to respond to affectively" (Robinson, p. 385). Both the

clinical approach that Nordoff and Robbins adopt and the philosophical inquiry that Robinson makes approach music with the idea that each tone is an event, and that taken together, these events create forces that play upon our psyche in a deep way. Zuckerkandl (1973) was an important influence for both Nordoff and Robinson as they developed their concepts of tones and their qualities. Robinson's entire premise is that emotion is deeply embedded within us, deeper than reason. Nordoff and Robbins feel that music goes to the very core of the being, and that is why it is such an effective medium to enable clients and unlock previously dormant potentials.

Nordoff (Robbins and Robbins, 1998) distinguishes among the various emotional qualities of a chord based on its construction. Root position chords are "strong, declaring, affirming (p. 1)". Because the position of the chord has the fundamental tone at its root, it is a stable, complete experience. Nordoff saw the quality of the root position chord as a noun, as opposed to chords in inversion. Inverted chords (3-5-1 instead of 1-3-5, for example), because they are not definitively grounded with their root tone in the bass, have a less settled quality, and he saw this quality as related to the idea of verbs. They create a sense of moving, doing, acting. They are neither complete nor finished but can spur on something more. Nordoff often used inversions to secure the feeling of momentum in the music which kept the client motivated to continue. He also did this with incomplete harmonic cadences, and overlapping phrases so that the ending of one phrase of the music would be the beginning of the next phrase.

### Tempo and Dynamics: What They Reveal

Like Cooke, Nordoff and Robbins examined elements of music like tempi and dynamics and explain that “expressive variations of tempo and dynamics are animating” (p. 157). Whereas Cooke and Robinson were describing the qualities of the music, Nordoff and Robbins were describing the qualities of the experience for a client who is participating in an improvised music making experience. They created a “tempo-dynamic schema” (Nordoff and Robbins, in press) to help the therapist understand the qualities of music and how they relate to a clients needs. For example, they list activation, buoyancy, joyfulness, gaiety, playfulness, happy excitement, and fervor, as qualities of a “normal musical experience” (p. 164). They noted that when a client played in one tempo or dynamic in a rigid fashion and did not vary, the fast tempo could be determined by the client’s pathology. They list nervousness, tenseness, hyperactivity, overexcitation, obsessiveness, unrestrained drive, resistiveness, and what they call “running away” as pathological determinants of fast tempos. Though Robinson was not examining music in the context of clinical improvisation, she did make a point that it is possible to hear a neurotic quality in music. For Nordoff and Robbins, hearing rigidity in a client’s music meant that there was a clinical direction for the therapist to take in bringing in changes to the music in terms of tempo and dynamics in order to help the client become less driven by their condition. The more a client could immerse in the qualities of the music, the more there was the possibility that the experience of playing music would shift from being determined by the pathology to the healthier musical sensitivities which were

perhaps previously lying dormant, or were being repressed by the client in some way.

The idea that by listening to a client's music one can understand the client's pathology or conflicts is often seen in qualitative music therapy research. Ole Bonde (2005), who surveyed the research studies in music therapy which focused on music, found that "theoretically, much qualitative research is often based on the axiom that a client's music (experience) reflects his or her personality and pathology or problem" (p. 503).

#### The Fusion of Words and Music: How the Meaning of Words and Music Combine for Maximum Therapeutic Benefit

In addition to utilizing improvisation, Nordoff and Robbins (1962, 1968) composed songs for the clinical situation which were later published. I will be referring to them and the excerpts are used with permission of the publisher. Many of these songs were originally improvised, often in a group setting, and then applied to work with individual clients when they judged that the extrinsic form of the song would be of intrinsic interest to the client.

The combination of musical qualities and lyrics were designed to maximize therapeutic effect. The direction of the melodies in relation to the words and the emphasis given, and the harmonic construction and how it supported or enhanced the lyric content were considered as well. Many of these songs were published and have been utilized by other music therapists.

There are many examples of this. For example the lyric "What's That?" (Nordoff and Robbins, 1968, p. 10) was combined with music that had a very

clear dominant to tonic relationship. The melody also moves to the tonic and it descends. So there is a quality of definitiveness, stability in the music even as the lyric asks a question. This was done to encourage the client to focus on and identify the object being asked about. Rather than create music that would have a questioning or unresolved quality with a lyric question, each phrase of the music with this lyric has a very complete progression which has ended on a root position chord.

Harmony is used for specific purpose. There are examples of songs which keep the cadence from resolution by using chords in inversion until the very last measure in order to hold the clients attention and focus. Dissonant tones often utilized within inverted chords create a stimulating quality in the music that also helps to awaken and focus the client.

Melodies were also created with clinical intention. “The Crying Song” (Nordoff and Robbins, 1968) was a song originally improvised with the intention of conveying emotional support and solace to a boy who was being teased. It encourages the boy to “just cry” (p. 11) when he feels like crying. Though the lyric focuses in large part on crying, the key of the song is not minor but F major, and as the therapist sings “just cry” the melody moves from a high C to a low C. This huge descending leap conveys a sense of moving from a question to an answer, and from an outward focus to an inward focus. The low C is harmonized by the tonic F major chord. The combination of the melodic direction and the chord creates a warm, embracing quality yet the melody tone is not the root of the

chord, as if conveying that if the act of crying needs to continue, go ahead, it will be accepted.

“Something Is Going To Happen” (Nordoff and Robbins, 1962) is another example of a melodic lyric combination where the choice of melody tone supports the content of the lyric. The lyrics ask the question “Something is going to happen. What will it be?” The song ends with the answer that “we will wait and see, what it will be” (p. 3). The song has a quality of anticipation as the question is not answered, and this encourages the client in the present moment to look for and focus on what will be happening. The melodic rhythm of “what will it be” repeats exactly, but the pitches rise, creating more tension. As the song ends, the question is both answered and unanswered, as the lyrics convey that what is to be done is to wait and see. This occurs with a harmonic cadence to the tonic. So there is in part a sense of completion. Significantly though, the melody does not end on the tonic, but on the fifth. This was a deliberate choice to keep the sense of focus and searching for what will happen next.

### Preparation for Reading the Method and Findings

The clinical approach and musicological theories of Nordoff and Robbins have been an integral part of my clinical approach and have been useful in my research process as well. My intention in sharing their ideas as well as Robinson, Cooke, and to a lesser extent Beardsley and Meyer, is to help the reader understand my research approach and the findings that are presented in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER V

### DEVELOPMENT OF A RESEARCH METHOD

There is little precedent for the study of the relationship between words and music in music therapy improvisation. As a result there was no pre-existing method that could be applied to this study. The method that I finally arrived at emerged gradually from my immersion in the data. In a way, the method was created, of necessity, as the study proceeded. The method used is simultaneously an outcome of the study. This is characteristic of qualitative research.

In order to describe and explain the way the archived material under study was examined, information from various sources will be shared and various relevant research perspectives introduced to the reader for consideration. This is because my approach was an eclectic one influenced by several sources. This is not uncommon when doing qualitative research. Aigen (1995) writes that:

...researchers tend not to follow one research paradigm completely, instead picking and choosing those aspects of different approaches that make sense for the needs of a given study. This pragmatic, flexible eclecticism is actually in the spirit of qualitative research approaches that argue that one's method should never take precedence over the content of a study, but rather be flexibly adaptable to the needs of a specific research milieu (p. 330).

In this chapter I will discuss research perspectives that informed the present study, such as naturalistic inquiry, musicological analysis, and the Nordoff-Robbins approach to music and music therapy. I include aspects of the Nordoff-Robbins approach here because built into the clinical approach is a method of analysis called indexing. Indexing is used as a clinical tool during the treatment process; I utilized this indexing method as a research tool. Considering indexing a form of research is not unprecedented (Aigen, 1993), and I will describe the process in more detail so that the reader can understand the relevance to the research method.

Nordoff and Robbins also have developed particular ideas regarding the forces of music and these ideas have been a major influence for me in my clinical practice. So I will include here aspects of my training and experience as a Nordoff-Robbins music therapist, including my work with Gloria. I will also share my personal relationship to music, as this is both an important component to understanding my use of music as a therapist and is a way of sharing my stance as a researcher. Sharing the researcher's stance is an important trustworthiness mechanism in the qualitative research approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### Naturalistic Inquiry

Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe five essential axioms characteristic of naturalistic inquiry.

1. The nature of reality is not single but multiple, not tangible but constructed, not fragmentable but holistic.



2. The relationship of the researcher to what is being researched is interactive and inseparable.
3. Rather than make generalizations, the naturalistic researcher recognizes the importance of time and context in order to create a working hypothesis.
4. It is not possible to make definitive statements about cause and effect, because all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping.
5. The researcher's values influence the findings of the inquiry.

Aigen (2005) describes 14 characteristics of naturalistic inquiry when operationalized by the researcher as presented by Lincoln and Guba:

1. Research is done in the natural setting.
2. The researcher is the human instrument in that the researcher's self is the main vehicle for gathering data and analyzing the data.
3. Tacit knowledge is valid and is used by the researcher to gain as complete an understanding of the subject under study as possible.
4. Qualitative methods are used in order to grasp complex realities and are effective tools for the researcher to reflect on his or her stance and how it affects the research.
5. Researchers purposively sample, choosing a particular phenomena to study as the phenomena may hold an answer to a particular interest or concern.
6. Researchers can use interpretive forms of data analysis in order to create working hypotheses for context specific settings rather than search for and claim universal truths.

7. The researcher generates theory from the ground up rather than entering into the research process with a predetermined theory.
8. The design of the research unfolds as the researcher interacts with the material under study.
9. The researcher seeks collaboration in coming to negotiated outcomes.
10. The case study research report can be effective in describing the multiple realities of the material under study.
11. The researcher makes context bound interpretations.
12. The researcher applies context bound interpretations tentatively rather than describing findings as general laws.
13. The scope of the study is determined during the research process.
14. The researcher shares his stance and process and develops methods of reflection in order to establish trustworthiness.

Naturalistic inquiry is a method of research that is ideally suited for this study for several reasons. Music is a notoriously complex phenomenon. Words in relation to music can have layers of meaning depending on the musical context, how they are sung, and how they are created. Examining both words and music together adds additional layers of complexity. Naturalistic Inquiry leaves room to examine the many complexities involved in a study of improvised music and words and their relationship to each other.

The material under study here was created in a moment to moment fashion. The participants were not only listening and responding to the music heard; they were also creating the music. This process is even more multifaceted

than understanding how music and words affect the listener. The listeners in this case were also the creators. Again, this adds a level of complexity that lends itself to being examined utilizing naturalistic research methods.

The context of this study is music therapy process. Many researchers studying various aspects of the music therapy process have utilized naturalistic inquiry as their method of study (Aigen 1997; Arnason 1998; Austin 2003; Brescia 2004; Fidelibus 2003; Gonzalez 1992; Jampel 2006; Keith, 2004; Loveszy 2005; Sorel, 2005).

The initial source of data for this study is the archived recordings that were improvised during a course of music therapy. It is true that naturalistic inquiry is a qualitative method of research usually applied to people. However Aigen (2005) does point out that “nonhuman sources of information” (p.358) including records such as the recordings of music therapy sessions, can be a source of data gathering in this approach. The recordings are artifacts. They are recordings of the improvised songs as they were created and came to be. I lived the reality that the artifacts document, thus I have experience upon which to draw.

### Purposive Sampling

The rationale for studying material from a specific course of therapy is based on the idea of purposive sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In purposive sampling, the researcher selects the person, people or material to study based on a particular reason. The rich quality of the sample makes it worthwhile for study and the unique factors of this therapy process make it particularly useful in generating data.

This study is my attempt to share the essential qualities that emerged from specific material from one course of therapy with the hope that it may be useful for other music therapists utilizing improvisation when a client sings words. I have chosen material from one course of therapy in order to present “clinical theories in the context of clinical work,” as this is “the primary way that others can determine the value and realm of application of these ideas” (Aigen, 2003, p. 22).

Every client who attends music therapy at the Nordoff-Robbins Center signs an agreement giving written permission for the sessions to be recorded and that these recordings would be included in the Center’s archives for future research purposes. When Gloria began therapy with me she readily agreed to these conditions.

I could have chosen archived material from any number of courses of therapy. There were several reasons why I chose to study the improvised songs created with Gloria. Gloria herself displayed unique qualities while participating in the therapy process. Though she was not a trained musician, she was unusually open to the musical experience. She listened to the music with an intensity that allowed her to be moved by it. Her expressive capacities emerged as she improvised tones and melodic phrases with words.

Also Gloria was a person who had experience as a client in verbal psychotherapy and recognized the value of exploring her feelings and gaining insight into her psychological issues, yet recognized the difference in the music-making process inherent in music therapy and the opportunities it held. Together

we improvised music that had both expressive intensity and psychological meaning for her. Often this improvised music developed into songs. The therapeutically powerful experience of creating these songs, the amount of songs that were created, their depth and breadth, and the meaning they held for Gloria were quite significant and unusual.

Another reason I chose to study this particular course of therapy was that the outcome was positive. Gloria reported that her life was more fulfilling, and she was more involved with people and projects related to music after creating these songs in music therapy. The effect of music on her life and the link to music therapy was clear. The songs were a vital part of this link. This is because Gloria, in a rare development for a course of individual music psychotherapy, learned the song improvisations and shared them publicly. She organized public gatherings during which she played excerpts from actual sessions and sang the songs live as well. She created projects to record the songs with musicians, sang the songs at conferences and workshops, and participated in a variety of public forums sharing her process in music therapy and her involvement in music. The songs became affirmations of the changes she was making and a way for her relationship to music to continue to flourish.

This was a case that brought all my resources to bear. Because Gloria was creating both music and words, and did this with a variety of contents and qualities of expression, I found myself challenged to listen for and respond to many events. Broadly speaking, I had to consider both the psychological content of her words and the musical direction of her melodies. I considered the

psychological implications of the quality of her music and the musical implications of her psychological processes. These tacit and explicit considerations led to my clinical response which manifested in a variety of improvised musical styles and forms.

I was also challenged by the emotional intensity of the words and music. This was a collaboration we were engaged in together. As a therapist musician employing improvisation, in order to engage in the clinical process I resonated emotionally with the dramatic musical and lyrical content that Gloria expressed. My emotional responses helped me to understand Gloria more fully and informed what I played at the piano. What I played at the piano helped Gloria to feel understood and supported as she continued her expression. I played music in ways I had not before, and realized connections between particular musical elements and emotional expression in a way I had not before. The psychological meaning of particular musical elements and events became increasingly explicit to me, in large part due to the interaction of music and words. These factors all contributed to the richness of this particular collaboration and why I chose it. It taught me a great deal as it occurred, and a retrospective analysis in order to make explicit tacit understandings has the potential to be useful to music therapists who utilize improvisation, and or incorporate the use of songs.

### Trustworthiness

Naturalistic inquiry includes mechanisms that are designed for establishing the trustworthiness of the findings. This has particular relevance because I was both researcher and a participant in the creation of the material

being studied. This dual role challenged me to identify areas of personal bias, needs, and assumptions I may have held as a clinician that might have impeded my ability to look at the material openly as a researcher. Trustworthiness mechanisms, such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and peer debriefing helped to uncover my preconceived perceptions formed as a clinician. They helped me to sort out what was my clinical theory and ideas related to working with words and music that I already held as I began the study and what I was actually finding in the data as a researcher. For instance, I had believed that the repeating of a melody tone was an indication that Gloria was stuck or distancing herself emotionally. What I found was that there could be several reasons why Gloria was singing one tone, and in fact the singing of one tone was at times a way for her to experience more emotion, to get more deeply into the experience.

Participating in a peer support group was an important part of my research process with regards to trustworthiness. Ely et al. (1997) emphasizes the importance of support groups to dialogue ideas, share strategies, and help each researcher who is participating develop a heightened awareness related to their method and findings. In the group researchers share their written work and support each other both intellectually and emotionally. During moments of difficulty which are inevitable during any research process the peer group can be an essential resource in keeping the process moving forward in a productive way.

My peer support group helped me to reflect on my process as a researcher. Sharing in the group allowed me to clarify my thoughts, recognize my blind spots,

organize my thinking, and gain insights regarding the direction of the research. For instance, at one point I was feeling overwhelmed with the enormous amount of data and categories that was emerging. After sharing the developing categories, group members helped me to realize that I was actually studying my method as a therapist while looking at the music and words. This was an important discovery and helped me to frame the research lens as I continued to look at the data.

There were times where my peers challenged my interpretations as researcher and helped me to ground them in the data. For instance, I listened together with a peer to a portion of the archived material who questioned my description of the quality of the music. I was using a description that coincided with Cooke (1959) regarding a melodic interval and its emotional quality, but I was missing the more subtle nuanced quality of the interval when considering how Gloria was singing it.

The peer group also helped me to reconsider my psychological interpretations in the music making process. For instance, there were times when I interpreted a direction of a melody that Gloria created as having particular psychological significance when it was pointed out it could have had more to do with her actual ability to construct melodies. The discussions helped me to consider alternative possibilities I might not have considered otherwise, and kept me from drawing conclusions prematurely.

Developing a method of listening and sustaining it was a trustworthiness mechanism as described by Lincoln & Guba (1985). They explained that “*Prolonged engagement* is the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain



purposes: learning the “culture,” testing for misinformation introduced by distortions either of the self or of the respondents, and building trust” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). Though I was not engaged with another person, I was engaged with the material and worked to trust my own perceptions and recognize my distortions. By persistently observing the phenomena from these various listening perspectives, I have attempted to gain a depth and breadth of analysis to understand what is important.

### Researcher’s Stance

Because the researcher’s self is the instrument used in collecting and analyzing data in naturalistic inquiry, these findings can not be separated from my own musical perceptions. Jarviluoma, Moisala and Vilko (2003) write that “the perceiver of music – including the researcher – has her or his own personal history of music. The perception of music is influenced by the listener’s individual relationship with the music” (p. 86). Therefore my relationship to music, my way of listening, my beliefs, my love of songs, and my own clinical history are all relevant and included as part of the researcher’s stance. Including the researcher’s stance as a part of the document is characteristic of naturalistic inquiry. This allows the reader to judge how the researcher’s context influences his or her perceptions and weigh this information when considering the findings.

### Researcher’s Stance: Personal Source of the Study

After giving a music therapy workshop and presentation to a group of mental health practitioners at a psychiatric hospital, I was asked a question from a

member of the audience. “Are you a therapist first, or a musician first?” This question struck me and has stayed with me as I continue to develop and articulate my music therapy approach.

Am I a therapist first, or a musician first? I have been improvising music since I was a young child. It is at core of who I am. It is not only part of my history and identity formation, it is an essential part of how I perceive the world around me, how I listen, how I organize my thoughts. The rhythm of how I formulate my ideas influences the sentences I write. Musical ideas in the form of tones and melodies become conscious for me in non-musical contexts. I hear the tones in the inflection of a speaking voice and create a musical context for them. Songs have been an important part of my relationship to music and my approach as a therapist. I learned to play music by ear, listening to songs my mother would play at the piano and improvising on the progression and melody of the song. As I listened to music and taught myself to play the piano, it was not particular groups or artists that would interest me, but catchy melodic phrases that would stay in my mind. When a note is played or sung I can hear a harmonic direction that can be taken from that melody. Hearing music is a primary faculty for me. Playing music with others has been a way to feel a sense of connection to them, and grow and develop my own relationship to music while doing so. Some of my most joyous experiences have been during moments of deep musical involvement. I enjoy facing challenges in music and discovering novel directions.

My relationship to therapy can also be traced back to my childhood. My family of origin had its share of dysfunctional dynamics. For a variety of reasons I

was called upon to be the mediator, the comforter, the problem solver. My role in the family was to take responsibility, oversee the challenges and try to solve the conflicts as they arose. Because of this I have developed characteristics helpful in being a therapist. I developed a hyper sensitivity to the tone of the interactions and the mood of the family members around me. I encouraged members of my family to understand their motivations and the effects of their actions on others. I tried to be present emotionally when support was needed and not provided by others.

My own involvement in psychotherapy helped to heal wounds created during childhood. I experienced firsthand the value of emotional attunement and psychological insight as a client. I participated in a therapeutic relationship and that relationship was an important part of the healing process.

I have been practicing music therapy for 25 years and have seen first hand and written about the powerful effects of improvising music with clients (Ritholz & Turry 1994; Turry 1998; Turry & Turry 1999; Turry 2002; Turry & Marcus 2003; Turry & Marcus, 2005). The ability to improvise utilizing melodic phrases and harmonic form with lyrics has been an important component of my clinical approach. My involvement in the professional music therapy community, including participation in peer supervision for many years, has allowed me to weigh the components of a therapeutic process, and the musical process of improvising, in a balanced fashion. I have been fortunate in being able to communicate and exchange ideas with a diverse community of experienced music

therapists with a broad range of experience regarding theories of psychotherapy and theories regarding music and the creative process.

### Personal Philosophy and Assumptions

Based on my experience, I recognize both from the perspective of therapist and of client, that relationship is important, that past conflicts can be relevant in understanding current thoughts, feelings and behaviors, and this includes musical relationships and behaviors. I am also sympathetic to the idea that applying psychological theories to the music making process can lend insight but also cannot explain the process in total. I believe it is important to focus on the client's music, to see what emerges, and to value the aesthetic dimension and power of the music. I believe that creating music does more than reveal psychological aspects of the individual. It also taps into universal forces of music and expression beyond the individual's psychology. In my therapy work I balance the compositional focus with the focus on the client's emerging issues and how they can be addressed in music.

One of the categories that emerged from the data of this study that helped to contribute to my awareness of my stance as a researcher was entitled 'Assumptions'. It stood to reason that the assumptions I had as a therapist I may still be holding as a researcher. Some of these assumptions are basic tenets of Nordoff-Robbins music therapy, yet it was important to acknowledge and question them during the research process.

As a researcher I asked myself if there were times where I was reading more into the relationship between music and words than was actually there

because of my own need to feel effective as a therapist. Was I making conclusions regarding the psychological meaning of the musical experience in order to confirm an already formed clinical theory? Was I reading too much significance into the relationship between the music and the words as they emerged? These questions helped me uncover my assumptions and review my method as forthrightly as possible. The trustworthiness mechanisms built into the naturalistic approach, such as prolonged engagement and peer debriefing all helped me in wrestling with these questions. Sharing my clinical philosophy is a mechanism to help the reader come to their own conclusions regarding these issues.

### The Researcher's Work

An interesting phenomenon that took place during the research was my resonating to certain material that reflected my own emotional state as a researcher. I found myself feeling drawn to and animated by words that described the client's struggle in finding a voice, in finding a place. This reflected my own insecurities in coming to terms with my challenge as a researcher. I had to reflect on how my emotional state as a researcher was playing upon my listening and analysis of the music-word relationship under discussion in the study. Just as Gloria met challenges that led to her struggle in finding her voice by singing, I was challenged to find my voice as a researcher. Certain words from the archival material found their way into my mind even when I was not actively engaged in the research; and this was an indication to me of my own process.

Although the research was exciting and engaging to me, there were times I felt burdened by it and wanted to escape it, to "cut the chains" as Gloria sang in

one particular excerpt. Several phrases from the audio excerpts stuck with me. The particular phrases describing Gloria's struggle to overcome a difficulty stayed in my mind, and I had the realization that this was due in part to my similar feelings regarding the challenge of writing of the dissertation.

I noticed that I remembered certain themes more than others, and considered that this was significant. It could have been that I liked the music that had psychological significance to me, that in some way I identified with the issue and the emotional quality of the music.

For example, as I started the research analysis with Gloria's lyric 'I have no voice', I wondered by choosing this particular lyric to start with if I also revealed my own state as I started the research. I wondered if I would 'have a voice' and find a way to share data in a way that makes sense. I wondered if I would find my voice to communicate the essences that emerge from looking at the rich material that lay before me.

Robinson (2005) points out that how listeners may respond emotionally depends on whether or not they identify with the psychological drama, or the persona established in the music. She explains "I may feel for him rather than with him. A piece of music may express nostalgia although the emotion it evokes in me is melancholy, a piece may express fear while evoking in me only anxiety" (p.358).

In retrospect this personal identification with the issues addressed in therapy can be useful in understanding sources of the empathy that took place between myself and Gloria, as I identified and resonated with her struggles and

created music that she found meaningful and powerful. It also indicates an understanding of her process that contributes to my findings as a researcher. There is a possibility that my ability to resonate in this area may create blind spots and overshadow other areas. This is a bias that I acknowledge. Did I pay too much attention to lyrics that had themes of struggle and conflict? Did my resonance with this material cloud my judgment and ultimately my description and analysis? Asking the reader to consider this is a way to prevent my potential blind spot from transferring to readers. There were many improvised songs that were upbeat and contained lyrics describing joyful imagery or feeling. These improvisations tended to be faster and the musical elements stabilized early on in terms of tempo and dynamics. There was less interplay between myself and Gloria in the creation of them. Therefore, although I considered them extremely valuable clinically, I did not think they would yield as much data as the songs I ultimately selected. The selection process will be described in more detail later in this chapter.

Discerning my emotional state as I listened to the excerpts helped me in trusting my data analysis. My emotional state would affect my listening. If I was feeling relaxed and generally accepting and supportive of the process, I found I could generate material. If I was anxious, concerned about deadlines or the quality of what I was doing, I could gloss over or miss important material without knowing it. Or, I would collect so much material that it would no longer seem helpful. The idea of considering my overall state, and how I was listening, was an important method of becoming more reliable as a researcher.

I attempted to enter into the research with fresh ears, informed by my experience as participant/therapist but not constrained by it. I was ready to be surprised by what I might discover. Listening in an open fashion led to a reexamination of music and emotions, and the relationship between music and words.

### Indexing as It Relates to the Research Process

The Nordoff-Robbins training establishes a method of listening and notating session recordings for therapists referred to as indexing. Indexing is a necessary component of the therapy method and takes place after the therapy session has occurred and before the next one occurs. The therapist carefully listens to a recording of the session, stopping to write down significant events. The writing consists of two major aspects: written descriptions of noteworthy clinical details that are catalogued in real time, and a transcription of the musical developments in the session for possible use in subsequent sessions. This is a methodical process that usually takes about twice as long as the actual session to complete.

Indexing is a way to develop perception of what is important in the music therapy sessions and to define subsequent directions in the therapy. Careful and close listening to discrete musical elements is undertaken with the idea that a client's musical responses reveal important aspects of his personality. The therapist listens to his or her own musical responses in order to judge their efficacy and establish a musical/clinical strategy. The therapist also listens to the relationship between his or her music and the client's music in order to



understand the musical relationship that has formed. Ansdell (1995) considers this to be the potentially therapeutic, shared auditory area, and calls it “the musical between” (p. 221). It is where “a creative sharing of musical thought” occurs (p. 221), and where the relationship develops between client and therapist. The client “hears himself being heard and responds to his being responded to” (p. 69). Verney (as cited in Turry 2001) explains that with intense focus during the process, indexing cultivates rigorous and precise listening skills in the therapist necessary for effective work in the Nordoff-Robbins Approach.

I have been indexing music therapy sessions for a significant period of time and brought my experience of this method of analysis to the research. Aigen (1993) makes the case that clinicians such as Nordoff and Robbins, who intensely scrutinized and analyzed session tapes to develop theory, are in fact doing research.

The purpose of collecting information during indexing when employing the Nordoff-Robbins treatment method is to maintain an awareness of the therapy process and to build on the events of each session. I brought this indexing method to the archived material with a different purpose. My listening was focused on the emerging music and words as I listened to the excerpts. I tried to understand what I did to help cultivate emerging lyrics and how I responded musically to lyrics. The research focus shifted my attention to include more of my own process and narrowed it on the specific topic area of words and music. I utilized the same research technique of indexing that I brought to bear as a clinician to my research study.

### Selection of Excerpts

During the course of therapy I had indicated in my clinical index notes the emerging improvised songs that were particularly noteworthy. I notated particular points in the session where an improvised song emerged and where I sensed it was significant for Gloria as we created it. Often, after having this experience she herself would acknowledge the emotional power and therapeutic benefit of the experience in the session itself. This was something I would note in the index sheets as well.

As I began the research I looked at my original index notes as a starting point in choosing excerpts for further study. I noticed a particular period during the course of therapy where a significant amount of improvised songs were created. Since I had to find a way to limit the enormous amount of potential excerpts to study, I decided to choose excerpts from that particular period, acknowledging that there were probably other excerpts that could have been useful to include in the pool to choose from. I also considered whether I remembered the music as I looked at the indexed notes. I then listened directly to the excerpt noted in the index sheets to decide whether to include it in the study.

The particular excerpts analyzed in this study were chosen for several reasons. Because Gloria articulated words that revealed her images, thoughts and feelings related to her psychological condition, her physical condition as well as her emotional state, there seemed to be an important opportunity to examine and understand the relationship between musical and psychological processes. I chose excerpts that held potential discoveries as they related to this musical-psychological relationship.

I was interested in excerpts that held both emotional intensity and structural integrity and innovation in terms of musical form as it emerged into a song. In the excerpts I chose, the process of the expression of the song seemed to be an experience of particular significance for Gloria. I had noted intense emotional expression in her singing. At times she cried as she sang, at other times she laughed heartily in the tempo of the music. At the same time, the form of the musical expression had a structure and content that was memorable and in which she expressed pride. When I listened to the excerpt, there was an emotional intensity related to Gloria's unfolding process that I responded to emotionally. I also found myself moved by the shape and form of the song as it emerged, its aesthetic qualities. This drew me deeper into the experience and I wanted to know more about it. There seemed to be both a powerful cathartic experience for Gloria, and a powerful aesthetic experience for both of us in creating the song. Because I was interested in musical and psychological processes and how they relate, excerpts explicating these qualities were chosen for further study.

I was also interested in excerpts that appeared to reveal a significant emotional or psychological shift for Gloria. It seemed to me there were times when the process of the developing improvisation moved Gloria through emotional states of intensity and conflict to a sense of resolution or completion and this clinical effect was worthy of further study. Her attitude as she immersed herself in her psychological issues shifted and appeared to change as the emerging music evolved. These seemed to be important turning points in the therapy. I was drawn to excerpts that contained words which were revealing of important issues

or internal conflicts of Gloria's, and the words depicted a shift in perspective. Gloria's use of metaphor and imagery in creating lyric form appeared to be psychologically significant and this was an aspect of the material I was interested in examining further.

I chose excerpts that I felt revealed an effective mutual relationship between Gloria and myself in terms of how the improvised song came to be. These were excerpts where there was a give and take between us, where Gloria's sounds were clearly responded to, where the music from the piano influenced the content and quality of the words she sang and the quality of her singing. The vocal melodies that emerged influenced the harmony from the piano; the way she sang these melodies influenced the way the harmonies were played.

I was influenced by an intuitive response I had in listening to the excerpt. If I was drawn to listen to it again, if I was "hooked", and tended to be attracted to the song as a musical form, I considered including it for further study. This idea of hook will now be explained in defining the term song.

### Defining the Use of the Term Song

Before continuing my description of the research process it will be helpful to define how I am using the term 'song' in order to understand the parameters of the material in the study.

Traditional definitions of songs might include art songs or recitatives that do not have a memorable melody or a repeating musical or lyrical structure. There were many times where Gloria sang words, but they lacked repetition and had no identifiable or memorable verbal phrase or melodic motive. I did not consider

these for study as ‘songs’ in this research. For the purposes of this study, a song is a musical form that includes at least in part words and/or a melodic theme that can be remembered after the form as a whole has been completed.

Gloria herself found particular satisfaction in creating melodies, and developed her ability to sing melodies which she could remember and repeat. At times these melodies might consist of only one tone, but the phrase structure and metrical and harmonic accompaniment that was provided with her note helped to formulate a song in totality. At other times her melodic contour would include ascending and descending tones that would create a wider tonal range. A combination of an established melodic rhythm with words that she repeated combined with harmonic accompaniment that established a hierarchy in terms of tonal center was enough to create an established song form. There were times this became even more clearly defined when the melodic rhythm used included the exact same pitches when the repeated words returned. As the form developed, an expectation would arise with regard to hearing an already established melodic idea and lyric. This coincides with the traditional definition of ABA song form, in that an idea is established, a variation occurs, and then the original idea returns. At other times, though a melody and lyric do not repeat in a different section of the form, they do repeat enough times as it is established to be remembered and therefore the overall structure is considered a song form.

In contemporary popular music, the term “hook” is utilized to describe a memorable phrase that can easily be recalled and helps to trigger the feeling or content of the song as a whole. The listener is “hooked,” drawn in and the musical

phrase clearly remembered and recalled in an easily accessible way. This did occur in many but not all of the archived improvised songs under study.

Sometimes the overall form had a shape that contained a clear beginning, middle and end, but no definitive “hook”. At other times, an improvisation might have continued, and in retrospect Gloria identified a section of the improvisation as a song and later learned and shared the song publicly after deciding what would be included and excluded from it.

There were several excerpts that contained changes of musical mood, structure and verbal content. They started off as music word explorations and a song form would emerge out of these explorations. Also within one improvisation, changes of mood structure and content occurred which led to a change of musical style. At these times it might be more accurate to say that more than one song occurred during the improvisation under study.

### Analysis

In this study, data analysis as described by Ely, et. al. (1991) was employed. This entailed analyzing the data by “lifting” the material (Ely, et. al., 1997) to finding overarching themes in order to sort out the data and create categories while recursively immersing oneself in the data. I have listened to the excerpts many times over a three year period, continuing to note specific excerpts that contained qualities related to the emerging categories and entering them in a researcher’s log.

After identifying forty eight excerpts for further study according to the criteria above, I listened to each of them once. While I was listening I noted particular

excerpts to revisit. This was based on the richness of the relationship between the music and lyric content as discussed in the description of the initial selection process above. I made audio copies of each. I included the moments before an improvised song emerged and ended the recording when I heard that the musical material was no longer a song, or if the music came to a natural end. At times a song returned later in the same session, and I recorded that as well.

At the same time I was selecting, I developed categories regarding the relationship between music and lyrics and entered them in my researcher's log. The nature of these categories influenced the subsequent focus and analysis. These categories evolved as I continued to listen. Here are the original 48 categories as they emerged:

**Table 1. Categories That Emerged During Recursive Listening**

<b>ELEMENTS OF MUSICAL COMPOSITION</b>
• Forming - how songs emerge
• Blues
• Swing feel
• Countermelodies
• Rhythm
• Pulse (vs. non pulse)
• Tempo (speed)
• Rests
• Register
• Harmony
• Inner voice movement
• Intervals
• Inversions
• Melody
• Bass lines
• Articulation
• Dynamics
<b>NON-VERBAL SOUNDS</b>
• Singing crying, crying singing
• Humming vowels/syllables
• Guttural noises
• Sighing
• Moaning
• Laughing

<b>LYRICS</b>
• Pronouns - words as they reflect perspective
• Themes of lyric content –(God, family)
• Trauma
• Metaphor
• Metatheme of Gloria's therapy in lyrics
<b>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LYRICS AND MUSIC</b>
• Absolute relationship - literal relationship between music and words
• Aesthetic vs. cathartic
• Multiple meanings
• Repetition – music and lyric element
• Surprises
• Metaphor
• Leading and following (mutuality) relationship
<b>THERAPIST'S PERSPECTIVES</b>
• Assumptions
• Excerpts chosen to listen to again
• Comments about the musical experience as it is being created
• Paradox - therapy theory
• Interventions/techniques - what is my music therapy method?
• Countertransference
• Transference
• Personal musical history of therapist and its potential significance
• Psychological theory
• Questions regarding why I did what I did
• Effects of therapy
• What do I believe vs. what I have found
• Vocal quality issues - how does the therapist listen?

Some categories consolidated with others, some differentiated from each other, and some fell by the wayside. For example, the categories melody, harmonic progression, harmony, intervals, inversions, bass lines, counter melodies, inner voice movement, blues, pulse, register, rests, rhythm, swing feel all consolidated to form the category “Elements of musical composition”. Countertransference, effects of therapy, transference and trauma were all categories that consolidated into a new category called “Therapist’s Perspectives.” Within the large category of “Elements of musical composition” more subcategories differentiated such as Lydian mode. Harmonic progression



differentiated so that the specific category alternating major and relative minor progressions with the same melody emerged. The category singing crying became two categories- singing crying, and crying singing, depending on which one began and was more dominant during the course of the excerpt. I continued to adjust the categories as I began to choose specific excerpts to listen to more frequently.

### Winnowing Excerpts

Based on the criteria discussed below I continued to pare down the number of excerpts to analyze while at the same time working on the categories. Certain excerpts stood out for me in terms of aesthetic quality and emotional intensity. Particular excerpts revealed a strong sense of mutuality between Gloria and myself as the improvised songs emerged. Though all the excerpts contributed data that was useful, I found myself gravitating to particular excerpts to listen to again. The end result was the identification of 15 excerpts for a more detailed analysis, and a system of categories that would be used for further analysis. I utilized the titles that Gloria had already assigned to the particular excerpts, as this was the easiest way to recall them.

### Recursive Listening

I listened to the 15 excerpts in chronological order. This was done for two reasons. One was to see how the excerpts related to the unfolding therapy process. The other was to look at the developmental process of the songs as they emerged through time.

These 15 excerpts were listened to repeatedly. Asking questions as I listened was an important way of generating material. Ole Bonde (2005) writes that “analysis is an act of re-creation, asking the music the right questions to make it reveal its secrets” (p. 505). This entailed not just asking about the structure of the music, but also what was being evoked in me as I listened. Robinson (2005) supports this approach to understanding music. She believes that we can realize the structure of music and what it expresses by reflecting on our emotional responses. Our satisfaction and connection to music comes from both our stimulation by it and our comprehension of it, as “there is a continual interaction between how we feel in listening to a piece of music and what we interpret it as expressing” (p. 357). The following questions became standard as I listened to the excerpts:

- What is happening to my body?
- How am I responding emotionally?
- What can I understand after reflecting on these questions?

I listened to the excerpt as a whole, to the voice of the client as she sang, as well as the notes she sang. I listened to the quality of her singing, the words and their meaning as she sang them, and how she supported her singing with her breath. I focused on the piano and each individual note or voice of the piano and how they were played. I focused on the bass, the notes in the midrange of the piano, the upper harmony, noting the register, listening for countermelodies. I

listened to the relationship between the emerging harmony and the vocal melody, the “musical between” the space between the client and the therapist. I listened to the relationship between the words sung and the tones used to sing them, the direction of the tones, the dynamics of the tones, and the relationship between the dynamics of the tones of the voice with the dynamics of the tones of the piano. All of these focuses helped to generate more data relating to the relationship between the music and the words. In fact, these listening actions I took as a researcher gave me insight into how I listened as a therapist, and how I listened became an important topic that generated findings.

As I continued to listen, I experimented with various descriptive methods. This led to the creation of a form of description and analysis that consisted mainly of words so that non-musicians could apprehend the musical interactions that are the essence of the study. I also utilized musical transcription during the collection of data, analyzing the music by transcribing it and then looking at the notation to see how the visual representation of the music-lyric relationship yielded information. I wrote comments on the transcriptions and circled what I discovered was significant in the notation. An example of this can be found in Appendix B. I have followed the notation while listening to the excerpts, recreating the event while both listening and visually tracking. I have included notation to help convey the essences of the findings.

I had underestimated the value of traditional musical notation. I was wary because I did not want to treat the music as a static fixed object but something that was created between people as an unfolding process, as Elliott (1995) has

emphasized. But the process of doing the transcription was helpful in examining the material, particularly because it enables one to combine listening while looking at the notation.

The process of writing melodic notation brought more explicit awareness to how much Gloria's voice slid into and around the precise pitches sounded by the piano. Many times I wrote the transcription choosing a note but realizing it was not a totally accurate representation of what Gloria had sung. This also brought to awareness that Gloria's pitch placement became more accurate during the latter period of the archived material under study. Writing harmonic notation with the melodic notation brought an awareness of the relationship between the direction of my bass tones and Gloria's melodic tones. This gave me insight into how tonal motion either in the bass or in the melody created a sense of motion and expansion, adding to the overall sense of momentum and tension and resolution in the music.

Doing transcription and notation helped me to realize the subtle differences between Gloria's relationship to the pulse and mine, and how between the two of us we shifted the pulse to create a flexible tempo. It made me aware of subtle changes in the harmonic accompaniment pattern and how these affected the emotional tone of the music as a whole. The notation helped me to realize the directions of the harmonic progression as they related to the melodic sequences that Gloria created.

Utilizing notation forced me to make choices regarding how to represent meter, measures and key signatures. Choosing a particular key revealed a

preference on my part for how I organized my thinking regarding the tones. For instance, during the modulation in “*There, There*”, I could have chosen to maintain a key with sharps during the section that emerges with a pulsed song. Yet I chose a key signature that emphasized the difference between the previous key by using flats. This was revealing of my perception that this was a significant and different section in the music as it unfolded.

Staying true to the essences of naturalistic inquiry, I approached listening to the material from different perspectives. The most visceral way of exploring the material as a researcher was by playing and singing it. This approach is consistent with the arts based research approach as described by Austin and Forinash (2005). As a researcher, I sat at the piano and immersed myself in the material in the following ways:

1. Improvising, playing and singing music based on a lyric and music of an excerpt under review
2. Playing along at the piano while listening to the excerpt on headphones
3. Sight reading the musical transcription while singing the words
4. Improvising while looking at words from several excerpts
5. Improvising to develop or confirm an idea related to the analysis
6. Playing the melody that was originally sung on the piano
7. Exploring alternative harmonic and melodic choices to what was actually sung and played
8. Changing the key to see if any new insights emerge

At times these approaches would take a matter of seconds before I had an insight or idea that I was compelled to write and enter into my researcher's log. For instance, as I sang the lyric "*Do I Dare Imagine?*" I immediately noticed that the word "*dare*" was sung on the highest point of the melodic phrase and this struck me as significant right away and I stopped to enter this. At other times I made a decision to stay in the actual musical exploration before reflecting on it and recording my impressions.

I found a difference between listening to the excerpt as a whole piece of music, and listening to it as an improvisation between therapist and client. When listening to it as a piece of music, I heard the relationship between voice and piano as inevitable. In other words, when I heard the melodic phrase, I was already placing it into the context of the next chord; there was an assumed relationship between the melody and harmony. Whereas listening to it as an improvisational dialogue between therapist and client focused my listening on how one participant responded to the other; what the client did in response to the therapist's music, and what the therapist did in response to the client's music and words. Ultimately both listening stances contributed to the analysis and the development of findings.

Listening to the piece as a whole was a way to take a musicological stance. When I wrote data from this perspective I described the participants as pianist and vocalist, trying to listen in an open way and shed the preconceptions I may have held as therapist. The ideas of Cooke (1959) and Robinson (2005) became helpful for me in explicating my tacit understandings about music. This

was a perspective that I added to my established listening approach of indexing as a clinician. It was a way to listen from both outside and inside the music I was hearing. Listening as a clinician helped me to focus on the moment to moment interaction, listening as a musicologist helped me to focus on the musical qualities and how they related to the words, and the qualities of the improvisation as a whole piece of music.

The idea of different perspectives and foci continued to develop. A listening technique I developed involved shifting my focus with each recursive listening.

#### Recursive Listening Stance

1. Listen to whole experience
2. Listen as if therapist
3. Listen as if client
4. To words
5. To music
6. Words to understand relationship to music
7. Music to understand relationship to words
8. Listen to formulate questions
9. Listen with a particular category in mind

These foci did not always happen sequentially but shifted depending on the excerpt and what became significant to me as the research unfolded. If a particular event called my attention from a particular perspective, I would listen again from that perspective to uncover more about it. Then I would consciously

shift to another focus in order to develop an understanding from another point of view.

### Trustworthiness Mechanisms

This section includes the ways I engaged the material for a prolonged period and made decisions in terms of choosing what excerpts to listen to.

#### Narrowing the Focus of the Listening

After I had applied this listening method approximately three times through the fifteen excerpts, I decided to begin to narrow down the number of excerpts I would continue to listen to. The amount of listening perspectives made the listening process unwieldy. I found myself drawn to those excerpts that continued to yield data, and noted the excerpts that stood out to me. I also noted the categories that enabled me to collect more data as a means of narrowing my focus.

One of the categories that I continued to collect large amounts of data from was Intervention. I realized that I was no longer listening in an open fashion, but was trying to understand my reasons for making the musical choices that I did. Rather than continuing to listen in an open fashion with no explicit agenda, I consciously asked three questions related to therapist method as I listened to the material:

1. How does the therapist listen?
2. What does the therapist listen for?
3. What does the therapist do?



These questions led to the formation of a single meta-category titled therapist technique.

If a particular excerpt clearly illustrated many interventions or had interventions that seemed particularly potent, it would indicate it was a possible selection for a more detailed analysis.

I suspected that doing a deliberate and detailed analysis of a smaller amount of excerpts would help me to organize the analysis and yield more data. In the spirit of naturalistic inquiry I also wanted to find a way to describe the process and present the findings in a more holistic way. I decided at this point to narrow the listening process by choosing four excerpts to describe and analyze in micro detail. I chose the four because they were particularly rich and held data related to many of the categories, particularly to the Intervention category. They had also become particularly familiar to me as I could recall them in my mind without listening and thus felt I could analyze them effectively because I knew them well. The detailed description and analysis includes musical details as they relate to therapist technique, and the psychological process revealed by the music and words as they came to be.

In order to measure whether my detailed musical descriptions were effective, I would recursively read over the description and asked myself the following questions:

- Can I hear it in my mind?
- Does it make an emotional impact when I contemplate the music?

- Can I improvise at the piano approximating the music based on the description?

If I was able to do this, then I was satisfied that I could leave the description as it was. If I wasn't able to do this, then I would try to add or alter what I had written. I continued to return to the audio taped excerpts to help develop the written description.

### Meta-categories

After creating the detailed descriptions and analyses of the four selected excerpts, I read over them, and considered them in terms of the categories already created. I reviewed the existing categories to see if they could be condensed, combined, or discarded. The data that I was collecting confirmed previously collected data. I was no longer creating new categories.

At this point I decided to create broad overarching categories and see if they could help me to organize the data. These meta-categories became headings that I utilized. They are not important findings in and of themselves, but function as analytical tools that emerged from the data in order to organize the findings.

The meta-categories include:

- Therapist Technique
- Elements of Music and how they relate to the lyrics
- Musical Responses to Psychological conflicts
- The Fusion of Words and Music

- Vocal Quality, Emotional Expression and Psychological Meaning

At this point the formulation of organizational systems was complete.

### Presentation of the Findings

There are two main presentations of the findings. A chapter is dedicated to each presentation. One is a narrative detailed description and analysis of four excerpts. This includes perspectives from my understanding as therapist, and my retrospective understanding based on my current research analysis. It includes an analysis on the relationship between the music and the words and of the method I utilized as the therapist in responding to the words and music of the client. I used different type face- italics and quotation marks – to indicate the lyrics. I came up with a system of presenting each excerpt twice, once to familiarize the reader with the specifics of the excerpt, and the second time for a much more detailed description and analysis.

The other presentation is an organizational system using categories, systematizing the understandings in a different presentational form.

There are other presentational devices within the body of this dissertation. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to find ways to engage the reader by using different types of narrative forms. The following examples have been successfully utilized in qualitative research reports and I found them useful in trying to convey the essences of the findings.

### Theme Statements

Ely et al. (1997) suggest that, “whether or not they are ultimately consolidated, whether they are finally presented in the form of theme statements at all, we do consider a thematic analysis to be a powerful aid in striving to see the essence of our data” (p.211). The depiction of the themes communicated by each participant of this current study listed in Chapter II is an example of theme statements drawn from the analysis.

### Pastiche

The beginning of this dissertation has a poetic form that includes a combination of actual lyrics from several excerpts, and description of music taken from the corresponding variety of excerpts. I made adjustments so that the depiction made sense as a single unfolding improvisation.

I added the lyric “and that makes me whole” to represent my understanding of Gloria’s experience based on my analysis of the data. One of the findings was that Gloria’s lyrics and vocal quality sounded as if she was singing from two or more different personae within the same excerpt, and by the end of the improvisation the qualities of her voice representing those two voices were heard in the quality of her voice as she shared a new perspective, singing lyrics from a different point of view that integrated the points of view of the previous personae.

Ely et al. (1997) suggests that this kind of presentation can be vital for the qualitative researcher, as “forms shape the subject matter to enrich meaning and understanding” (p. 59). My depiction of the client’s words and my music in this

poetic form combines the perspectives I took as a researcher – listening to the words, to the music, to how they interact. Ely describes this form as a “pastiche”. “Pastiche assumes that the pieces...that make up the whole communicate particular messages above and beyond the parts” (p. 97).

### Metaphor

The use of metaphor is a device used in qualitative research. Ely (1997, Ely et al) writes that “metaphor has the potential to structure experience and interpretation in ways that are productive for moving the research forward and for communicating our understandings with our readers” (p. 116). I have sprinkled the use of metaphor throughout the detailed analysis and description. They are embedded within the analysis to try and depict the quality of the music, and the events that unfold.

## CHAPTER VI

### FINDINGS OF MUSICAL ANALYSIS

This chapter contains detailed descriptions and analyses of four of the excerpts selected for further study from the archived material. The structure of each analysis is similar. Each narrative describing the excerpt will be presented twice. The first description and analysis will introduce the lyrics and the therapy process. This is done to familiarize the reader of content and the context. The second analysis will include the same lyrics but will include musical notation, moment to moment analysis including past and present perspectives regarding clinical intentions, the quality of Gloria's voice and details regarding the melodies she created, and the relationship between the emerging words and the emerging music.

Findings will be embedded in this analysis. It is important to note that many of the clinical intentions and understandings that I write about from my current perspective as researcher were not conscious for me during the time of the creation of this material. The clinical approach calls for the use of intuition, spontaneity and creative freedom in utilizing improvised music that supports and spurs on the clients development. Therefore some of what I did at the time was based on hunches, physical sensations, emotional reactions, which fed into my musical choices. My music was informed by my clinical understanding of Gloria's psychological state yet was not preplanned or calculated, though it was influenced by the clinical indexing process that took place each week. I did come

into each session with an idea about how music was affecting Gloria and the clinical issues that were emerging and could potentially be addressed. Yet, the clinical interventions that I made with the music were not planned activities. The research process has yielded much more data and my awareness and understanding has grown significantly in understanding what I was reacting to, what my intentions were, and how I was utilizing the music. Many of the findings embedded in descriptions found in this chapter emerged as tacit understandings I had as therapist that have become explicit as the research process has unfolded.

Each one of these excerpts offers an important and unique contribution to the findings. *“Tell The Truth”* is an excerpt that reveals the power of music in working to unlock repressed feelings. *“There, There”* illustrates how music can assist in the development of contrasting perspectives, and how specific musical elements are utilized in response to particular descriptive imagery of the lyrics. *“Do I Dare Imagine?”* contains findings related to how harmony can work to shift the psychological state of the singer. And *Woman Why are You Weeping?”* is a unique example illustrating the developmental steps of the evolution of the improvised song as it moves from Gloria making non-verbal sounds to non-verbal singing to singing tones to singing a melody to creating a song.

**[To listen to the following excerpts, go to [alanturky.com](http://alanturky.com)]**

#### Tell the Truth

The following archived material comes from a session very early during the course of therapy. Gloria was struggling to come to grips with the reality of her physical condition regarding her recent cancer diagnosis.

*No I don't want to go to the next phase*

*I don't want to suffer*

*I don't want to be sick*

*So that's It. I think treatment is making me sick*

Gloria never did begin chemotherapy or radiation treatment. She went to many oncologists and found one who was willing to wait before starting treatment. She later shared that she meant to sing that she believed that treatment would make her sick. But her words could also relate to her attitude towards the helping professionals and the emotional reaction she had to the care she was receiving at the time as well. She reported having strong negative reactions to the bedside manner of some of the health care professionals treating her and a general mistrust of doctors who in her view acted in an omnipotent fashion.

*Because I don't really believe that I am sick now*

When I heard these words as therapist I was concerned that Gloria might avoid treatment and silently noted that an important issue would be to help her deal with the reality of her condition. This informed my own creative process as I improvised music with Gloria. I responded to the lyric content describing her not believing the diagnosis by trying to make the music more emotional, more intense. The figure of speech “shaking things up” comes to mind. If she could start to feel emotion while singing about being sick, perhaps she could allow



herself to feel the feelings related to being sick, and this would help her in believing she was sick.

Musically this increase in intensity was attempted by creating alternating contrasts of texture, playing in a louder dynamic, and using dissonant tones to create tension. Though Gloria was describing a situation that she understandably had trouble coming to grips with, the here and now process of improvising was something that Gloria could experience and invest in. This potential to experience and express emotion in music was a contrast to her admitted resistance to feeling the emotions associated with truly accepting the reality of her situation. It was my hope that musical experience would provide her with another opportunity to revisit the feelings triggered by the diagnosis, while tapping into her creative strengths.

*Tell the truth, tell the truth, tell the truth*

I interpreted these words as revealing the part of Gloria that wanted to accept her situation and deal with her repressed feelings. Implicitly believing that this was an important idea, before I even knew why I was doing it, I repeated the melodic rhythm of Gloria's lyric. This seemed to spur her on.

*Tell the truth, tell the truth, tell the truth*

*Tell the truth, tell the truth, tell the truth....yes*

*What is it?*

*Tell the truth.*

*Stop this stuff.*

*What is it? What's the truth?*

*Tell the truth*

*Awgh*

Primal sounds that resembled vocal responses to physical blows and seemed to express the internal battle going on inside Gloria poured out of her at this point.

*Ugh! Ugh!*

At the end of this primal sounds section there was a change in Gloria's vocal quality. I sensed a quality of surrender in Gloria's voice. She paused while the music from the piano continued. Then she sang a melody while creating the following words.

*Oh I love to sing*

*And tell my story to you in a song.*

*Oh I love to sing*

*And tell you my story.*

This final section of the excerpt has a clear song form as harmonic and melodic direction unfold with the words that are sung. Gloria sings clearly formed melodic ideas from this point, and I create a pulse and harmonic progression that combines with her melody and words.

*They tell me I'm sick.*

*They tell me I'm sick.*

*They tell me I'm sick.*

*And so I proceed*

*To learn all I can.*

*I organize everything.*

*They tell me I'm sick.*

*They tell me I'm sick.*

*They tell me I'm sick.*

*I move ahead.*

*I make appointments.*

*I take notes.*

*I analyze everything.*

*They tell me I'm sick.*

*They tell me I'm sick.*

*They tell me I'm sick*

*And I have to learn to believe it.*

*They tell me I'm sick.*


As we ended this improvisation I was less concerned that Gloria would avoid treatment, though I recognized the need to help her deal with the emotional reality of her situation. The song ends with Gloria expressing her struggle to accept her diagnosis. The quest to accept the diagnosis will be ongoing, but the expression regarding the quest in this moment seemed to be quite satisfying for Gloria, as this was an excerpt she often shared with close friends and family when they asked how she was handling her cancer diagnosis.

#### Detailed Description and Analysis

Gloria is struggling to come to grips with the fact that she has recently been diagnosed with a serious form of cancer. She sings:

*"No, I don't want to go to the next phase. I don't want to suffer. I don't want to be sick. So that's it, I think treatment is making me sick. Because I don't really believe that I am sick now."*

She has been improvising out loud having a kind of dialogue with herself, but her dialogue is also with me. There is no verbal conversation between us as I am improvising at the piano, responding to her words by attempting to create music to assist her in her self-exploration and expression. Her statement was sung, with the words "*want*" and "*suffer*" emphasized with the highest tones of her melodic phrase:



The melody is step wise, with one exception – the ascending major third formed by Ab going to C - when Gloria sings the word “*want*”. Upon analysis, a relationship can be seen between the word “*want*”, describing a striving, and the ascending interval used to arrive at the word and sing it. As Cooke (1959) describes, the larger intervallic motion of the third reveals more effort in moving away from the tone. The striving quality in considering the word “*want*” and the larger ascending interval have qualities that work together and as Beardsley (1981) describes, fuse coherently.

As Gloria sings I harmonize her tones at the piano, moving chords from Ab major to a C minor in second inversion and then to an F minor ninth chord after she has ended her phrase. My notes relate to the tones she is singing and create a harmonic direction, but do not result in a cadence. I hold the harmony tones without motion as she sings her melodic phrase, and then as she pauses at the end of her sentence, I create tonal motion.

The final tone of the melody with the F minor harmony lends the music an unresolved quality. The lack of a strict pulse or definitive meter lends the music a quality of deliberation, and I play the harmony slowly in part with the intention of allowing Gloria to create words and melodies at her own pace. The tones from the piano also reflect the unresolved emotional drama of Gloria's lyric

content, as she describes resisting what may be a painful future. Gloria sings with a dramatic ascending minor melody:

4 F<sup>4</sup> C<sup>4</sup>

I don't want to suffer

She holds the word “*suffer*” on the last tone. I respond by picking up on her tonal direction, improvising an ascending C minor scale that moves rapidly to the highest register on the piano. Both of my hands play notes of the scale at the same time creating an intervallic tension of a ninth -minor and major ninths - as it moves up through the scale. The music slows slightly at the end, and these scale passages do not reach the C tonic, which creates a suspended quality in the music:

su- ffer

My musical response is an intuitive one based on many factors including: my developing understanding of Gloria and what her needs may be; my immediate reaction to her lyric content; the quality of her singing and the fact that her tonal direction has shifted from a descending direction to an ascending one; and my own relationship to the musical qualities we are both creating, tapping into past associations to music of a similar style and quality. My response is also a reflection of my underlying belief that entering into the flow of the emerging musical form will be of benefit to Gloria, so I want to both create forward momentum in the music and leave space for Gloria to participate in building the musical path we are taking.

The ascending piano tones after Gloria finishes singing “*I don’t want to suffer*” serve to intensify the overall quality of the music that is being created by therapist and client. They create a tonal context for Gloria respond to. They expand the tonal range of the music to sounds that go beyond where Gloria can sing. Listening in retrospect, there is a sense that the music serves to sweep up both participants, creating a musical pathway that is more than the sum of its individual parts.

As Robinson (2005) describes, these tones from the piano are also my commentary to Gloria’s melodic tones, emotional intensity, and lyric content. The piano tones create a sense of rising, and in combination with the rapid motion create a quality in the music of running or even escaping. It is my way of offering an experience to Gloria of hearing and actually feeling what it may be like to escape from the suffering. The rising melodic direction of Gloria’s vocalization

has triggered an intuitive response on my part, as I sense that Gloria would like to escape from the suffering, and my music manifests this escape. It is a musical way to attempt to convey empathy as a therapist. Though I want to help her face the challenge her predicament poses, I can understand her desire to avoid suffering, and by playing the ascending tones I am saying “I join you in your quest to escape”.

It could be argued that playing these ascending tones was my musical countertransference, my own emotional response manifested in music to Gloria’s struggle. From this perspective, my need to avoid feeling the emotional turmoil that Gloria was working to avoid, drove me to play tones that manifest running away. My musical countertransference was based in part on sensing Gloria’s state and partly based on my own instinctual reaction of not wanting to suffer. This is another perspective brought to bear upon the examination. In an earlier analysis (Turry 1998) I have written about how my musical countertransference reactions did not necessarily impede the therapy process; in fact at times they fueled the therapeutic process. In this case, it appeared to have the same effect. Gloria later commented that the music from the piano helped her to stay engaged and continue, rather than give up.

Upon further analysis, because the ascending piano tones have an intervallic relationship that creates tension, it brings awareness to the fact that there are two ascending melodic lines moving in parallel. These two melodic lines rising together can be heard as a metaphor, each line representing one of us. They suggest that Gloria and I will take a journey that may be painful. The journey may



induce suffering, but we will do it together; she will not go on this journey alone. The fact that neither of the melodic lines reaches the tonic creates a quality in the music that the journey has not been completed.

There is yet another perspective to this rising series of tones. The scale is minor, which brings a quality of sadness. As the tones of the minor scale rise they become thinner (each note played in the upper register of the piano strikes two strings rather than three in the lower registers). The piano music becomes softer as the tones rise. There is a quality in the music of moving, of fading away. This is a reminder of the grave nature of Gloria's illness, and that she is in danger of fading away. The fact that the tones ascend into the highest register of the piano relates to the idea of leaving this corporeal life and ascending to heaven, an ethereal quality as Cooke (1959) describes. There is an allusion to Gloria's grave situation even as the music offers an escape from it.

Bonny (2002) points out the religious or transcendent quality of rising pitches. Since Gloria is a religious person who seeks out God when looking for support and comfort, the ascending direction of tones bears further analysis. Gloria's "*I don't want to suffer*" melody makes a leap of an ascending perfect fifth and in response I play an ascending series of notes that go to the highest possible register of the piano. So this ascending run may not be an avoidance as much as a search for help from a higher power.

The fact that the same portion of music can be experienced as both comforting and challenging is an example of one of the most profound qualities of music. It can contain opposing polarities in a single moment, blends of emotion as

Robinson (2005) describes. Music conveyed both a sense of support and challenge for Gloria to experience.

Returning to the unfolding musical description, after “*I don’t want to suffer*” Gloria continues singing after the ascending piano notes reach their apex:

The image shows a musical score for a vocal phrase and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics "I don't want to be sick" are written below the staff. The melody starts on a whole note G4, followed by a half note F4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. A slur covers the last three notes (E4, D4, C4), which are then followed by a whole note C4. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass. The right hand plays a series of chords: a whole note C4, a half note B3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note G3. The left hand plays a series of chords: a whole note C3, a half note B2, a quarter note A2, and a quarter note G2. The piano part ends with a final chord of C3, B2, A2, G2.

In response to her vocal statement, “*I don’t want to be sick*”, which she sings using the tones of a C minor triad, I play a melody that uses many of the same notes that she sang, changing only the last note G, which actually is present in the bass tone I play at the end of the phrase. I harmonize the last tone of Gloria’s melody (“*sick*”) with tones that create parallel motion of perfect fifths. There is no major or minor third in this harmony and the sound is consistent with Organum music. This ancient style predates diatonic harmony as we know it, developing within the institution of the Church. This gives the overall music a kind of religious gravity with a grounded flavor.

In contrast to the previous ascending run, when this piano music comes to rest, it is in a much lower register, another factor that adds to the grounded quality

of the music. While ascending music was a metaphor which included running away, this lower register music is about being present. The final G minor chord does include a minor third. The bass tone of this chord is not the tonic of the implied key of C minor created by Gloria's melody, and thus creates a sense that the music, though solid with a harmony in a root position, is not finished. The fact that the music has slowed down before reaching this chord lessens the rhythmic momentum and adds to the overall gravity of the music.

The tones of the chord are held, and Gloria continues singing:



The lyric that Gloria sings at this point, “*so that's it!*” leads me to believe that she has come to a realization. She sings it as a statement with more of a conversational tone than an actual melody. In this music psychotherapy creative process there is a potential for Gloria to discover unconscious beliefs and attitudes as she reflects on what she is singing, feeling and hearing around her. This can happen within the music making process itself, as both Brown (1999) and Austin (2004) have reported.

Looking at the lyrics more literally, “*I think treatment is making me sick*” yields data for further analysis. Gloria has not begun medical treatment, so saying she thought treatment would be making her sick is not accurate. This error may reveal her difficulty in facing her fears about having cancer. At this point it may have been easier for her to assign her worry to the treatment, which she could

decide to follow or not, rather than the cancer, which could begin to get worse at any time without her having any sense of control. Also, it might have been easier for her to focus her fear on the chemotherapy or radiation, something outside of herself, rather than the cancer, which was inside her.

In retrospect, I've discovered I often employ the following combination of musical elements to give Gloria time to reflect on what she has just sung: play a melody at the piano that repeats what Gloria has just sung; create a harmony that holds tension and does not resolve; and slow down the overall tempo of the music.

As Gloria makes this statement, "*so that's it! I think treatment is making me sick*", she is singing one tone but there is no melodic motion. This bears further analysis, because Gloria often sings on a single pitch. This can indicate that she is placing additional focus on her words and considering what she is saying. It can also indicate a feeling of being stuck emotionally in relation to the content. Repeating a single tone can often bring to the music a quality of relentlessness which is what Gloria often describes when she feels stuck in a particular emotion or with a particular issue. At other times singing one tone can be an indication of sadness or resignation. It may be an indication of being cut off from emotion, depicting a lack of energy. This is an example of what Cooke (1959) describes as monotonous deadness. Gloria may be gaining intellectual insight but at the same time be unable to emotionally internalize this understanding. She may need the safety of staying on the single tone rather than venturing outward by moving her melody tones. Or it could be that the singing of

one tone allowed her to focus on feeling emotion rather than on the formation of a melodic idea. She may be getting more deeply into her process by locking in on one tone rather than trying to sing a melody that has tonal motion.

As her therapist, at the time of the creation I am not sure what the specific significance of singing one tone means for Gloria at this point in the session. But I do have an intuitive response based on the content of her lyric and the fact that she is singing a single tone. There is incongruence between the turmoil described in the lyric and the lack of motion and vocal energy in the melody. This triggers a musical countertransference reaction here. If I put myself in her place (finding out that something that was supposed to be helping me was making me sick) I would have a strong visceral reaction. The way that Gloria has sung this lyric triggers a musical response in me. I start to play a melodic fragment in the upper register with a sharper articulation, infusing the music with energy:

11

3

3

think treat-ment is making me sick

These tones come as a surprise, reflecting the “aha” emotional quality of Gloria’s discovery in her lyric statement. This is another example of how my emotional response to Gloria feeds into the improvisational process as I shape the

music in a moment to moment fashion. My emotional reaction is processed through my musical response, translated to my hands which shape tones in the context of the ongoing musical form. This musical form then becomes part of what I hear and respond to in addition to the words and music that Gloria sings.

Gloria continues singing:

13

be-cause I don't really believe that I am sick now

5:4

The pattern that I play in response continues after she stops, ascending and descending, creating a swirling quality:

15

3 3 3 3



Upon analysis it sounds as if I am trying to create a spell, or break Gloria out of her spell. I interpret her last two lines to be communicating ‘I am not really sick so there is no need for treatment’. Gloria’s actual lyric, “*I don’t really believe that I am sick now*”, seems to be revealing what the single tone she sang hinted at, a state of denial, a clue that Gloria’s expression is lacking the emotional content that her situation would seem to warrant. It is an indication that her single tone may be a manifestation of her lack of acceptance, at least on an emotional level, that she is sick. Looking at the course of therapy in retrospect and Gloria’s own description of how the music helped her to feel repressed feelings, gives this hypothesis added credibility.

The music in this section had a suspended quality. The bass melody begins with a Bb. This is the same single tone that Gloria just finished as she sang “*because I don’t really believe I am sick now.*” This melody at the piano has the same rhythmic cadence (including a triplet pattern), played in the same register that Gloria sang, at the same tempo and lasts almost exactly as long as her vocal line. But at the end of the phrase, instead of continuing on the one tone, I create

descending melodic motion. In retrospect, this is a way of literally matching and then attempting to enhance Gloria's musical contribution, modeling melodic direction and furnishing an experience of what it would be like to move off the single tone. It is an attempt to change momentum both in the musical process and in Gloria's intra-psychic process. By playing the melody that Gloria just sang, Gloria can hear it and reflect on what she just sang and how it felt to sing it. The combination of the piano melody repeating in the lower register, and the continuing tonal pattern in the upper register which does not resolve, creates the sense that change is inevitable and imminent. The bass note G also lends the music a sense of stability, since the music in the treble also contains a G at its highest point. The two G's, one low and one high, create a containing quality. The space between the bass and the treble gives the music a balanced texture between the low and high register. So there is a blend of qualities in the music: unresolved questioning within the confines of a stable balanced relationship. The music enhancing Gloria's single note melody is a commentary, as Robinson (2005) would describe it. It says to Gloria, "I hear you. I know we are facing a crisis. I will hold you and face this with you. Would you like to try this? What is next?"

Gloria responds to my G by beginning her phrase with the same tone:





Gloria appears to respond directly to the quality of the musical/emotional experience by spontaneously expressing her desire to be honest about how this crisis is affecting her emotionally. When she first sings this statement, she slides her voice and holds the sound so that she is singing on a G, goes slightly flat and then rises up to the G. This G pitch is significantly higher than her previous Bb tone and holds more tension because of this. The pitch she is now singing is, in fact, the same note that seconds before I had begun to play on the piano and repeat. The fact that Gloria slides up to the repeated piano tone seems to indicate that Gloria is taking in the piano music even as she continues to generate tones herself.

While Gloria slides into, wavers below pitch and then comes back to the G as she sings "*Tell the Truth*" I add an accented Ab note and then F# note, and repeat these notes at a short duration while continuing to play the G. The Ab and F# surround the G creating half steps. Upon analysis these notes can be seen as accentuating the unstable quality that was created by the sliding pitch Gloria sang.

Gloria holds each tone as sings. Her longer tones sliding into and out of G and then back in, combined with the minor seconds from the piano that are being held with the sustain pedal, lend the music a haunting, almost ghostly quality. Her wavering melodic motion as she sings "*Tell the Truth*" - moving down slightly in the middle of the statement and then rising back up in pitch - may reflect her tentativeness and reluctance in trying to do what she is commanding herself to do: express herself fully and truly about her situation and its implications.

There is a strong contrast between the long held vocal tones and the shorter accented piano tones. Upon analysis I heard the piano music's shorter and more rapid tones create the effect of prodding or pushing against the longer tones of the vocal melody. Because the pitches are high and moving below and above the primary vocal tone that Gloria is singing the overall music has a hovering or flying quality. One image that came to me as I researched this excerpt and listened to this particular section was of a buzzing bee rapidly flapping its wings. My intention to support Gloria's quest to tell the truth by helping her to break through the emotional wall she has constructed manifests as a hovering, prodding insect.

After this musical experience, perhaps partly in response to it, Gloria begins to sing, "*Tell the Truth*" with a sense of urgency. She changes her melodic rhythm from longer even beats to a rapid three beat phrase:

25

The musical score shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Allegretto'. The vocal line consists of three measures, each containing the words 'Tell The Truth'. The piano accompaniment consists of three measures, each containing a rapid three-beat phrase. The first measure of the piano accompaniment is marked with a '25' above the staff. The piano accompaniment is marked with a '25' above the staff.

Her volume intensifies; she almost shouts as she sings. This adds a sense of insistence to her musical expression. She then moves back to the slower

melodic rhythm which adds even more emphasis. In response I play a loud bass note D with a strong attack:



The image I have as a researcher listening to this loud piano bass note is of a hammer hitting something hard - maybe a kind of latch used on mouse traps - which then springs open and releases whatever contents was inside.

In response, Gloria sings her rapid three beat phrase and continues to repeat it. As Gloria expresses more intensely, the music builds in intensity. I pick up on the rapid melodic rhythm and repeat it with my right hand in a high register on the tone below the tonic, often moving it to the tonic – a way of urging Gloria to tell the truth - on the last beat of each phrase:

27

Tell The Truth Tell The Truth Tell The Truth Tell The Truth

The tones I use in my left hand form Organum harmony built on a natural minor scale and move in a series of three notes in the same rhythmic relationship but much slower. Repeating Gloria's melodic rhythm so directly helps to amplify the message even further, even though no words are heard:

The piano music continues and the quality of Gloria's expression becomes more primal. It is more emotional, and less musically formed including talking, shouting, moaning, groaning, shrieking, spitting, screaming, and eventually crying, and pleading. Though many of these sounds are not overtly musical, there are subtle indications that Gloria is responding to the music. At times she begins her sounds at the beginning of a measure created by the music from the piano. At

times her shrieks contain pitches related to the piano music. I continue the three beat bass pattern that repeats the '*Tell the Truth*' rhythm:



Gloria's sounds contribute to an overall sense that the message embedded in the repeated melodic rhythm at the piano ('*Tell the Truth*') is something she is being battered by and ultimately surrendering to.

When Gloria begins to make her crying sounds I stop the melodic rhythm, stop playing tones in the bass and continue an evenly repeated tone. The tone is the same G that upon reflection I now realize was such a prominent tone during the '*Tell the Truth*' section. Her more primal emotional expression at this point in the improvisation triggers an emotional reaction for me. Although as a therapist I recognize that expressing painful feelings is an important part of the healing process I am concerned for her and do not want to exacerbate her painful feelings. I even add a tone to change the music very briefly to major, in an attempt to soothe and comfort Gloria, but when she makes a spitting sound I realize her expression of conflict and turmoil is not completed. Upon analysis I recognize that I reacted as if the spitting was a literal rejection of the major tonal quality and shift out of the major key. My clinical stance is to play music that attempts to tune in to and manifest the quality of her emotional state. This is ultimately more supportive and satisfying for her than trying to move her away from a difficult struggle with more soothing or uplifting music. My change to major was in

response to my own emotional defenses, rather than Gloria's needs. I abort the major harmony and bring in an Ab a ninth higher than the G in the bass, creating a dissonant interval.

Gloria starts to grunt, as if needing to physically expel something held deeply within her. As a therapist I have faith that listening to Gloria's vocalization as potential musical expression rather than a solely cathartic outburst can create opportunities for engaging her creativity. Creating a musical form can provide her with aesthetic balance, perspective, as she reflects on her expression. I respond with music from the piano that is rhythmic and responds to the length and dynamic of this primal expression with dissonant clusters to match its intensity.

When her expression becomes more intense, I play tones in a higher register. This is a different register than the one she is making sounds in and thus can be heard more easily. I continue to create a pulse so that there is an overall tempo which at times quickens to reflect the intensity of her sounds. The piano music's dissonant intervals and repeated tones contain qualities – turmoil, tension – that can be heard in Gloria's sounds. Sustained tones create harmonic relationships which imply melodic possibilities for Gloria to take when she continues vocalizing.

Gloria changes her sound by moaning softly with a sustained breath. In response to this moan I change the texture at the piano, making the music less dense and slowing down. There are still tones of tension in the upper register. There is a quality of unrest in the music at this point as the melody from the piano moves from one dissonant tone to another.

Gloria pauses briefly. The harmony of the piano music during this pause continues to contain dissonances. But the change in texture and the pause signal a shift in the overall music:



My image as a researcher in describing this music from the piano is of a parachute slowly unfolding, or a net opening, ready to catch a melody which may emerge. Often, after a tumultuous emotional expression during an improvisation, a shift occurs in the way that Gloria expresses herself. Gloria's breathing and moan suggests the battle has been fought, and now after such a tremendous primal release of energy there is another way to tell the truth. She has a more relaxed singing quality after the intense release of emotional energy.

Gloria takes a breath and makes a short soft tonal sound. This tone matches the G tone at the piano which I then double in a lower register:



Gloria begins to sing a slow melody, which includes one of the dissonant tones at the piano so that instead of a traditional diatonic melody, she sings tones that are significant tones in the Lydian mode, a Church mode which evolved before traditional diatonic scales:



The melody she sings has a major third, but also the raised fourth which is an identifying tone of the Lydian mode. The tonic tone and the raised tone were present in the music I had been playing previously, but upon analysis I realize that once I hear the combination of the major third and the unusual raised fourth tone in Gloria's melody I establish more definitively tones in the harmony that are in the Lydian mode. It was Gloria who introduced the major third to help solidify this mode. This mode, because of the raised fourth step, can add a sense of imminence to the emotional content of the music. It is a mode that has emerged many times during the course of this therapy while imagery has occurred in the



lyrics. The emergence of this mode comes out of a collaborative musical synergy and the actual quality the mode contains fuses coherently with the emotional sense of anticipation we both are feeling in the moment.

Gloria has used the C#, the raised fourth in relation to the first step of G, four times in this melodic phrase. This adds some ambiguity to the musical quality. The major third that she uses is a significant change from the minor melodies we have heard previously. And her lyric content and formed melody is a striking change from the primal sounds she had been making just seconds earlier. This is an indication that Gloria has shifted her creative expression. Rather than continuing to vocalize with primal sounds, she puts her present expression within a context of sharing a story and supports her words with tones. Gloria often shifted perspectives in terms of who she was singing to as a way of continuing her flow in the process. Here she shifts from singing “*tell the truth*” to herself to telling her story to someone or some group outside of herself.

Often during moments of abject hopelessness, Gloria would immerse herself into the music around her and create melodies. She took a sense of pride and satisfaction in creating them. She described them as giving her a sense of freedom and lessening the critical judges that often impeded her from trusting and supporting her expression. Gloria continues to sing and the range of the melody expands:



This melodic phrase accentuates the musical ambiguity. It starts with a B and contains the first six steps of the B minor scale. As it ascends and comes to a close the melody notes surround the F#, rising above it before ending on it. These are all tones that could continue to be placed within the context of the Lydian mode. But starting on B and ending on F# also suggests a different possibility. Gloria's first iteration of the phrase was a major melody, a manifestation and reinforcement of the shift in her perspective. Now by using the same tones, but starting her phrase on B and ending on F#, she has created the structural possibility for the melody to be harmonized in minor. Upon analysis I conclude that the combination of hearing these tones, hearing a new musical expression, and sensing the need for a response to Gloria's new musical expression led me to move to the diatonic harmony of B minor and hold the tones of the chord as Gloria holds the tone F# on the word "*story*".

Listening to the music as a whole, going to this definitive diatonic harmony of B minor rather than staying in the more ambiguous Lydian mode creates a sense of arrival in the music. Since I chose to harmonize the chord as a minor chord it supported the idea that now we will hear a story, a story that has a quality of sadness in it.

Harmonizing the same melody with a different harmony can create a different musical emotional landscape for the client. In this case it suggested a new perspective for Gloria to take. All the tones used in both the first and second melody could be harmonized to create the G Lydian mode or B natural minor. In retrospect, looking at it solely on a structural basis, because I had been playing

harmony with G as a root, and because Gloria had started her first melody with a G, I took the G as the root and established the Lydian mode. But in the second melodic phrase, because Gloria has established a new melody, all with tones of the established Lydian mode but in a new order, a new harmonic choice is suggested structurally.

Hearing the anguish in Gloria's tumultuous expression to "*tell the truth*" and knowing the context of her challenges influences my shift in harmony at the piano as I move to a B minor chord. There is a transition taking place, based on Gloria's shifting expression. Playing in a new tonal center emphasizes the new section for Gloria to sing her story. Yes, I still choose to play in a minor mode as in much of the earlier music, but now it is a new key, coming from a transition to a clear cadence. This new key provides a new path to tell her story.

The musical actions that I make are for the most part based not on global clinical considerations and broad musical form, but on moment to moment responses to Gloria's expression and an immersion in the emerging musical form as we create it. The current analysis reads as if the musical events were logically thought out and inevitable. That is not the case. Closer to what was conscious for me at the time is the following list of listening questions:

Is this the right music for your story to begin? What tone?  
 Where is the melody headed? This harmony?  
 How did you sing that? What does it imply harmonically?  
 Stylistically?  
 Where can I go harmonically that leaves a choice for you but is  
 predictable enough?  
 Play on every beat? How much pedal? Do we need more  
 dissonance? Create tempo here?

The piano music continues, sounding like an introduction to a new section.

Upon analysis I discovered that during moments of impasse during sessions I sometimes created music that sounded like an introduction to a yet to be formed song in order to orchestrate transitions. Usually the music would include some aspect of the music we were transitioning from, such as a rhythmic pattern that was significant.

An ascending melodic line reaches its apex and then the piano music comes to a pause in a very high register on a simple three note G major chord which is held:



One of the findings of the study was that I often created ascending melodic lines to create tension and then paused on a chord away from the tonic or the implied tonic. This was done to encourage reflection and to spur continued expression from Gloria.

At this point a new musical idea that leads to a new section is heard as Gloria sings a melody with the words:

52 Gmaj Emin D/C F#

They tell me I'm sick they tell me I'm sick They tell me I'm sick

As Gloria sings there is no harmonic motion, just the fading tones of the previous chord and the motion of her melody as she sings it. The lack of motion in the harmony brings the melody to the forefront. The lowest tone of the melody is a B and it's highest an F#. These are tones that outline a B chord, the dominant harmony of the final tone of the melody, the E. These structural factors plus the lyric content influence the creation of the chord immediately following the melody, an E minor chord in root position. There is no musical ambiguity at this point. Gloria arrived at the tonic key first. Her E note was a primary factor in leading me to E minor. The fundamental tone of the chord is the same note as the one that Gloria is singing. The chord, unlike much of the previous harmony, is now in root position, with Gloria singing the tonic of the key. This gives the music a sense of declaration, of solidity, even as the minor tonality maintains an overall sadness. The placement of the chord, coming a brief moment after the vocal statement, creates a sense of call and response between us. The melody makes a statement and the harmony responds. There is a quality of affirmation in this harmonic response. It is as if the chord, with its quality and timing is

responding to the lyric, making a musical commentary (as Robinson (2005) describes). It states, “Yes. You need to consider that you are sick.”

There is no motion from the piano as the chord tones are all played at the same time and are held. This gives Gloria the opportunity of focusing on her own creative expression as she continues singing. The relationship between the singing and the piano remains the same, as the melody is the only motion that occurs, and then another harmony follows with the simultaneous tones CGDF#, incorporating the final tone of Gloria’s melody. This was a harmony that I did not calculate. I yielded to the reaction of my hands as I responded to Gloria’s unfolding melody. The held tones of the harmony without motion create space and upon analysis, this is a way that I try to emphasize the lyric because of its apparent significance.

Repeating these musical elements – a clear melody while only a single chord is played and held at the piano - is a significant contrast from the music heard in the previous sections. This second chord adds even more focus to the melody that Gloria sings. Her melody does change the second time she sings “*They tell me I’m sick.*”



It has a larger intervallic leap, stretching the range of the melody. The melodic sequence has higher pitches and ends on a higher pitch, creating more

tension than the first melody. This higher pitch is an F#, and combined with the fact that the chord has a C in the bass, it creates a tritone relationship between the fundamental bass tone of the chord and the melody note. All of this gives the music a subtly different quality. Whereas the first melodic phrase had a tonic root position triad with a melody sung on the root, creating a definitive quality, the tritone relationship can be heard as lending an unresolved, searching quality to the music. This second C chord also does not have a third in it, adding a sense of suspension to the music. The verbal discourse is repeated exactly, yet words and music combine to create a different quality.

The repetition of the words implies that something was not finalized by making the first statement; it needed to be repeated. This new fusion of words and music creates a quality in the music of unresolved tension. The highest tone of the melody is sung with the word “*me*,” creating an emphasis on that word. This might indicate Gloria’s attempt to make an effort to try and comprehend, try to integrate the idea that she is sick. Gloria’s repetition of the lyric is also an indication of this. Gloria often repeated lyrics, sometimes motivated by a desire to create a phrase structure and musical form while at other times because it appeared she was not sure what to sing next. This time it could be a way of trying to consider the meaning or ramification of her lyric. The fact that she uses the word “*They*” again, indicates Gloria’s lack of acceptance. She may be using that particular pronoun to distance herself from the message. She is not yet singing ‘I am sick’, perhaps because she is actively rejecting the idea.


The repetition of the same lyric created a clinical opportunity for me to create music with a different musical element, such as a change of harmony, register, or articulation for Gloria to experience the meaning of the lyric in a different way.

In this instance, the held harmony and repetition of the lyric left only the melody as the possible development in the musical form. The new melody that Gloria is singing here is not triggered by a change in the harmony; it happens out of her own initiative as the harmony did not move, and could be a manifestation, evidence of the new perspective she may be taking as she sings.

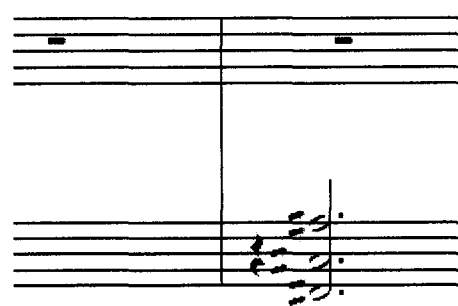
At the point where Gloria ends her melody note on F#, I play the CGDF# chord to create the tritone relationship, but slightly softer. This chord could lead us in several harmonic directions. It could resolve the suspension created by DF# and go to C major. It could move the two bass notes down to create a B minor chord. It could move the two bass notes up to create a D major chord. Since the progression moved by thirds in the bass, from E to C, it could move down another third to A minor. It could also move to a B dominant 7, since E minor is such a strong harmonic presence in this sequence and B is the dominant of E minor. Gloria again repeats the lyric, and after she finishes her single note F# melody I play an F# chord:



F#



They tell me I'm sick



The melody is the same note as the root of the chord, but because of the unfolding harmonic progression, and the fact that the F# chord is major, this current harmony actually sounds unexpected, a structural surprise that plays with our expectation to evoke an emotional response as Meyer (1956) describes it. Yet it is also a stable musical moment as the chord is in root position and Gloria is singing the root. So the stability and surprise together in the harmony create a blend of qualities as Robinson (2005) describes. We are solidly in a new-if unexpected- place. Like the first E minor chord in root position, this F# chord creates a musical commentary as Robinson (2005) describes, affirming the fact that Gloria is sick, but because it is major, also suggests it might not be an entirely unhappy place. There is some quality of ambiguity with this word/music fusion. The F# chord being an unexpected harmony could also be heard as fusing with the lyric content and corroborates the fact that Gloria's sickness is not something she expected.

There are more factors that are part of the equation in understanding the blend of qualities in this musical moment. There is also a quality of solemnity and loneliness in the music based on the way Gloria is singing the melody, the meaning of the lyric, and the softer dynamic. Contributing to this quality is the structure of the melody, which has changed to a repeated single tone that Gloria sings as she repeats “*they tell me I’m sick*” for the third time. As Gloria holds the final tone of this phrase, her pitch is actually slightly sharp. An assumption I held as therapist listening to Gloria’s tones was that her intonation could be an indication of her emotional state with regards to her lyric content. In this case, the slightly sharp pitch could indicate the conflict that Gloria is experiencing as she tries to take in emotionally the idea that she is seriously ill.

The melody has no motion, no direction and is sung with a slightly sharp intonation. The pitch of the single tone is relatively high and Gloria sings it with support and sustains the last tone. There is tension in the tone; the melody has dynamic force even though it does not move. The lyric and melodic repetition of Gloria’s singing may be an indication of her struggle in trying to comprehend the meaning of what she is singing.

The repeated tone could also relate to Gloria’s process in considering the implications of the lyric. The first time she conveys what “*they*” have told her, her melody moves. The second time it moves with an even wider tonal range, as if she is more urgent to hear and take in what she is saying. The third (and what ends up to be the last) time she sings the lyric in this section she sings it on the single tone, as if she is struggling to take in the message and is only now realizing

the ramifications. This is not a conclusion but a tentative hypothesis based on the construction of her melody and the vocal quality she uses as she sings it. Singing the same tone may reveal Gloria's dawning realization that no matter what she tries to do, the situation is not going to change.

Right after I play the F# major chord and hold it, I repeat an F# note, softly, creating a pulse at a slow tempo, encouraging Gloria to proceed, and helping her to hone in on the tone she is singing:

3

They tell me I'm sick

This is a change from the held chords that had no pulse. There is a sense of forward momentum coming from the repeated tone. I change to an E minor ninth chord, continuing to incorporate the repeated F# tone:

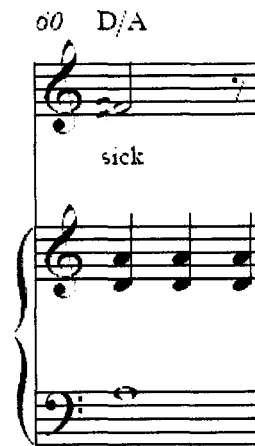
57  $\text{♩} = 60$   
 Emin<sup>+</sup> Emin<sup>o</sup>

and so I proceed to

This is the beginning of a harmonic progression that contains descending inner voice motion as Gloria continues to sing. The music has the element of repetition with the repeated F# and the held E tone in the bass, like the words, and also provides a sense of motion by changing the harmony by the descending inner voice line. As the progression continues in a stable tempo with the change in harmony, Gloria is able to ‘proceed’:

57 Emin<sup>+</sup> Emin<sup>o</sup> 3 Amin<sup>+</sup> 3 Bacc 3

and so I proceed to learn all I can I organize ex-ery thing they tell me I'm



A review may reveal what is perhaps a subtle yet significant interconnection between the music and words. My musical intervention to play the repeated F# note in tempo, intended in part to encourage Gloria to continue is followed by Gloria singing “*and so I proceed.*” There appears to be a confluence of events: Gloria describing her actions to go forward in dealing with news of her diagnosis, and her actual experience of going forward by allowing an improvised song form to continue to emerge and develop. It may be that the music from the piano helped her to proceed.

In contrast to a portion of the earlier music that functioned to support the desire to escape, this section has qualities more likely to lead Gloria to face the possible results of her diagnosis, her mortality, head on. The slow repeated tones lends the music a sadness as it has similar qualities to music used for funeral marches as Cooke (1959) describes: slow, even, deliberate repeated tones in a minor key. Yet there is also a quality of Gloria’s strong singing that gives me the sense that this is what she wants to sing, this is what she needs to sing, to “*tell the truth*”. She describes taking an analytical approach in dealing with her crisis, but now it appears that she is seeking a change in her emotional stance regarding her

illness. Her immersion in the improvisation process is an indication of her hope that music can be a way of doing this; she can move forward.

Upon reflection, it could also be true that my belief that my music could have this kind of influence on Gloria's process - that I would like her to continue in the music and she then sings about proceeding - is a countertransference reaction. I am ascribing the ability to control and guide Gloria through a process that may be painful and difficult with music, and by using specific kinds of music I can help her go in certain directions. The fact is that neither of us can control what may happen in terms of the evolution of her disease. Just as Gloria tries to control her situation by 'analyzing everything,' I may be overanalyzing. I may be assigning an ability to control future events with music and her ongoing process that may not be there. I may be picking up on Gloria's need to experience a sense of control in response to a situation that could trigger feelings of being out of control.

It could also be that my desire as a researcher to find significance in the interconnections between music and words has affected my perception and has distorted my reasoning as I analyze. I have employed trustworthiness mechanisms, including listening to the excerpts with peers to gain other perspectives on the material, in order to ensure that this is not the case.

Returning to the description, Gloria's vocal line continues:

60 D/A C/E Am/E F# Emin° Emin° Emin°

sick they tell me I'm sick they tell me I'm sick.

After the harmony cadences on F# again the familiar E minor chord with the same inner voice descending line follows as it did earlier. The call and response reverses as the chord starts the measure and then Gloria continues with her melody:

64 Emin° Emin° Emin° Bmin/E Bmin Gmaj A

I move a-head I make a-poinments I take notes

68 F<sup>♯</sup>min G Bmin Gmaj<sup>7</sup>

I an-a-lyze ev-ery-thing they tell me I'm sick they tell me I'm sick

70 Gmaj<sup>7</sup> A/E F<sup>♯</sup>min

they tell me I'm sick they tell me I'm sick and I have to learn to be -

As the section and the song form come to an end, I play a G major seventh chord as Gloria sings one final melody with the words:

73 Gmaj<sup>7</sup> Gmaj<sup>7</sup>♯11

lieve it. They tell me I'm sick.



Gloria's final melody clearly indicates B as the tonal center, but my G major chord creates the sense that though this song may be ending, the issue at hand can be explored further. The C# is a reminder of the Lydian mode and also adds to the sense that there is something more to come.

### Concluding Thoughts on Tell the Truth

It is certainly feasible that Gloria could have proceeded to sing without even hearing my music. She may just have decided that she was going to keep singing. There are strong indications that once she did sing her expression was influenced by the music I was playing and my music was influenced by her expression.

In "*Tell the Truth*" there were several times when I repeated a melodic rhythm or a portion of her melodic rhythm to enhance the musical form and convey in a general sense that I had heard what she had sung. I picked up on a particular portion of her lyric content to reiterate what she was saying or asking herself. Countermelodies were also used to create tension, provoking or stimulating a response from Gloria. During the singing of the forte "*Tell the Truth*" section, my countermelodies often contained tones a half step away from Gloria's and this created a sense of juxtaposition between us. I also played melodies softly at the same time that Gloria sang, creating a sense of companionship and closeness between us as we created melodies together. During the times that Gloria did not sing, countermelodies functioned to keep the forward momentum going while holding some quality of the last melody and lyric that she sang.

The tone G, prominent in the first section of the song and then during Gloria's more cathartic expression, was an anchor tone and provided stability for me. The G was a returning significant tone that allowed for other musical ideas to spring from. This relates to Lee's (2003) idea of a melodic cell and how it functions during an improvisation.

### There, There

This excerpt contains examples of the many attitudinal and emotional shifts that can take place within the stream of an improvisation. Gloria sings of how she can take a superficial stance towards the world, and how this is a kind of protective shield, a "bubble" that hides her authentic feelings. She sings of the pain she is in, and then sounds angry as she blames herself for the condition she is in.

Much of Gloria's frustration is expressed here not by singing but by speaking the words. She has a conversation with herself, taking on an impatient tone as she criticizes herself for having the same complaints again and again, using the pronoun 'I' in describing her pain and 'you' in expressing her frustration in dealing with the same issues again and again. There is also a dialogue taking place between us. This is because Gloria uses quite descriptive imagery and as she pauses I play particular musical elements in response to the words. She in turn responds to my music and continues her lyric creation.

In general the music from the piano supports her shifting attitudes, playing repetitive music as she sings of her repeated complaints, and also animates her expression by adding sharply attacked single notes that are dissonant and trigger

Gloria to sing with more energy, at a louder dynamic and higher pitch. This seems to shift Gloria's expression from a more cognitive experience to a more emotional one. The music helps to sustain this difficult emotional state. Then in a mutual fashion the music slows and becomes tender as Gloria shifts her attitude from disgust and anger to tender and sad. She takes on the position of God in her lyrics, singing comforting words of nurturance. Gloria cries as she sings. The excerpt ends as Gloria sings about God, and the music shifts to a Gospel style.

*Another thrill*

*I hide so you can't see me (Gloria snaps her fingers)*

*And I go for another thrill*

*I hide*

*so you can't see me*

In a swing style, Gloria sings happily about her self defeating behaviors. When she celebrates her shortcomings in this way, the swing style often helps her to become unstuck and more creative in the sessions. Rather than complain about the fact that she was driven to hiding from the world, here she brings out the sense of satisfaction that she derives from hiding with the quality of her vocal expression. There was a slight sense of irony in her attitude at this point. We both were aware that hiding was not something to reinforce. Yet in this instance the paradoxical experience of fusing happy music with this problem fueled her to explore it more deeply.

*I hide*

*so you can't see me*

*I hide*

*so you can't*

*so you can't*

*see me*

The music changes here and Gloria's story unfolds as she creates imagery describing her desire to move past the isolated stance she often takes in relating to the world, and what lies inside her when she removes her outer "bubble".

*I step*

*out of the bubble*

*I'm a mess*

*I've been cut and slashed*

*I'm bleeding*

*I'm throwing up*

As the imagery becomes more graphic and violent, Gloria's voice becomes more detached. She begins by talking rather than singing.

*My knees are weak*

*My ankles can't hold me up very well*

*Everything's fine*

Gloria often commented critically about her ability to relate to others as if everything was “fine” when in fact she was experiencing emotional pain. She also knew there were times when she could keep the fact that she was in emotional pain from her own consciousness as she went about functioning in her daily life. Now she has a dialogue between her “I” and her “you”.

*Everything's fine*

*But I'm bleeding*

*You did it to yourself*

*You did it to yourself, who the fuck cares?*

Gloria often battled with her intense self criticism and judgment of herself. Two perspectives have clearly emerged. One persona is describing the pain and asking for help, and the other impatient, holding back and judging.

*I'm bleeding,*

*I can't walk,*

*I'm bleeding*

*I can't walk*

*What's the use of helping you?*

*There's no use in helping you*

*There's no use to help you because*

*You're just going to do the same thing again*

*Why should I help you any more?*

*You keep coming in this room all bloody*

*Oh you keep coming in this room all bloody*

Gloria often worried that she came to music therapy and described the same issues over and over. It was difficult for her to find a way to accept and be patient with her exploration of issues that did not easily resolve. She was also worried that I would become tired of hearing the same issues. It may have been that her words represented her fears of what she projected I might have felt as she kept “*coming in this room all bloody*”. By taking all of her expressions seriously and supporting them musically I attempted to help her to dissipate her worry that I would eventually tire of hearing about her painful issues.

*I'm supposed to wash you up and put bandages and ointments on you*

*Comb your hair, wash your face*

*Give you a place to sleep,*

*Comfort you,*

*Talk to you*

*Listen to you*

*Play music for you*

The quality of expression and the music start to shift here to a more gentle tone.

*Cuddle you and say "there, there my dear"*

*"There, there my dear it's going to be ok"*

*"There, there my dear it's going to be ok"*

At this point a song form with a predictable meter and pulse has been established. Gloria is singing now in a tender way.

*Oh my dear*

*oh my dear*

*Rest with me it will be ok*

*Oh my dear it'll be ok*

*I'll wash your face*

*I'll dry your tears*

*I will bind up your wounds*

*I'll wash your face*

There is a quality of nurturance in Gloria's voice at this point as she sings with reference to the Bible and God's perspective.

*I'll clean you off,*

*I'll bind up your wounds*

*I'll comb your hair*

*Rest my dear*

*Rest my dear*

*The broken pieces have*

*Such sharp edges*

*They've cut you my dear*

*Oh rest my dear*

*Oh rest*

*Oh rest*

*Oh rest my dear one*

*Oh rest*

*I'll wash your face*

*I'll bind up your wounds*

*I'll comb your hair*

*Oh rest, rest in my arms*

*I know what you've been through*

*I know what you've been through*

*Oh rest, oh rest, oh rest my child*



*God doesn't leave us, God doesn't leave us*

Another shift in perspective occurs and now Gloria sings about God, reflecting on the words she has just sung from God's perspective. The music shifts to a soft gospel feel.

*God doesn't leave us no matter what I do*

*God doesn't leave me, God doesn't leave me, God doesn't leave me*

The intensity and contrasting qualities of emotion contained in an improvisation that lasted over nine minutes combined to create a powerful experience for Gloria. At times the experience was physically exhausting for both participants. There was also a sense of relief and physical release. The pacing within the session was an important factor in modulating the emotional intensity.

When the issues she was wrestling with were daunting, Gloria's ability to express from different perspectives was the key to enable her to continue her process.

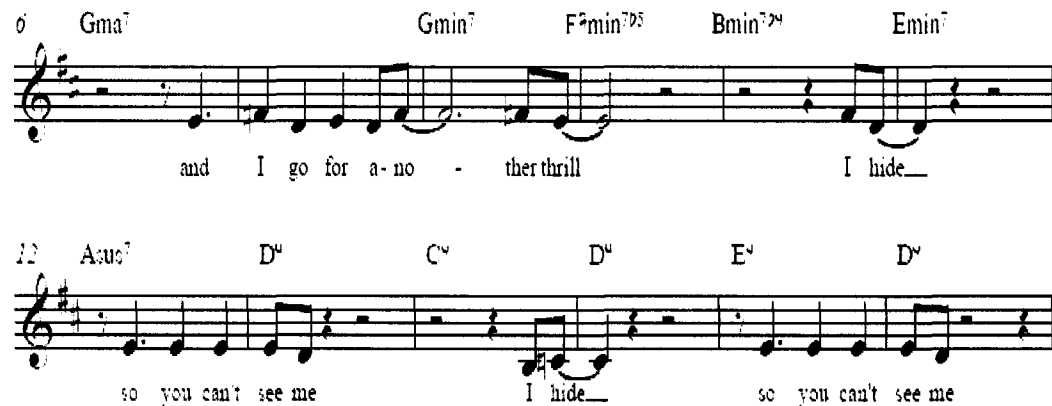
### Detailed Description and Analysis

Since much of the improvisation in "*There, There*" contains dramatic imagery, and the form of the interaction between us is call and response, this example led to the emergence and consideration of specific ideas regarding how the words Gloria chose and the quality of how she expressed them influenced the music that I played. The example begins with Gloria snapping her fingers as she

sings. The music has a jazzy swing feel here and Gloria sounds happy, as if she takes pride in her ability to hide:



Knowing her issue regarding her conflict about hiding emotionally, about not being noticed but wanting to be noticed, contributes to my consideration of her lyrics and the significance of them for Gloria. The fact that Gloria's pitch is not entirely accurate and her vocal quality is a little wobbly is also information that I note. The swing feel has often bolstered Gloria in the past and connects her to her body as she sings:



Even as the jaunty swing feel continues, dominant ninth chords move in parallel motion containing a minor seventh interval that contributes to a more dissonant sound. This functions as a subtle form of questioning to Gloria regarding her attitude about what she is singing. The chords happen after each short phrase that she sings, creating a subtle call and response form between her melody statement and an answering harmonic statement. This foreshadows much

of the form between her melody and my harmony throughout this improvisation.

As I play a walking bass Gloria sings a melismatic phrase on the word “*can’t*,” a kind of bluesy sound that she sings with a sense of satisfaction:

18 C<sup>u</sup> D<sup>u</sup> E<sup>u</sup> G<sup>u</sup>

I hide so you ca - n't see you

24 Gmin<sup>7</sup>

can't see me

There is some dissonance in the harmony and in combination with the bass this creates a momentary minor chord where there had previously been a major chord in the progression. There is also a subtle clash between her melody tone D and the E which is at the top of the harmony. The bass plays some tones out of the key, hinting at breaking out of the form. This is an example of a blend of emotions in the music as Robinson (2005) describes. The music is both predominantly happy and subtly questioning.

Gloria starts to sing slightly softer and holds her last tone even longer, changing the phrase structure of the melody. I respond by playing fewer notes, and the overall effect is that the music begins to lose some of its rhythmic drive. Gloria leaves space in her melody after this last note and I slow down and then completely stop the walking bass. Gloria sings this last “*see me*” with a gentle, vulnerable vocal quality. Keeping the same key of D major, I switch the style of the music and the emotional mood here.

I play a melodic fragment A and then F# that breaks the swing feel, holding both tones. The tempo slows and I play the D chord in second inversion in an open voicing, giving the chord a less stable quality. I then move the A up a half step from the fifth to Bb. I play the same movement an octave lower:

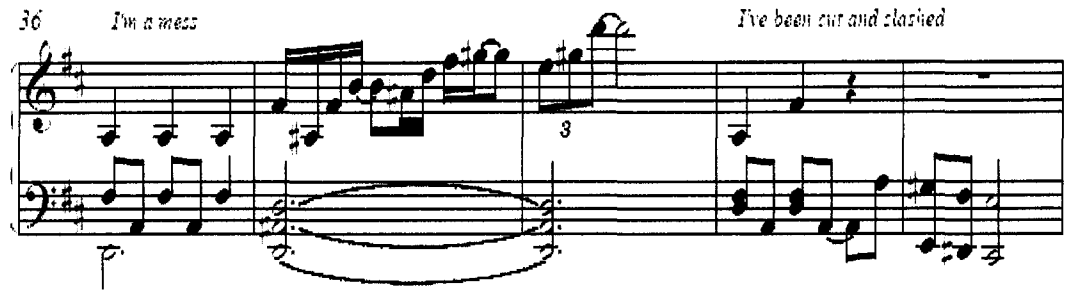


This half step motion upward is clearly heard, and then Gloria utters:



I continue the harmonic motion of a half step rising to represent the idea of stepping. The tone is a dissonance, and not in the key of D major. It is a step out of D major, mirroring a step out of the bubble.

Tones that are dissonant are added to the harmony off the beat, creating a messy sound:



In response to the lyric “cut and slashed,” I move from the major triad to dissonant intervals moving down on the keyboard. The downward direction relates to the idea that being cut and slashed would trigger falling. The fact that Gloria’s voice also gets softer and falls in dynamic, also contributes to the descending direction of the tones at the piano. The form of our musical interaction is call and response, as Gloria creates a lyric, and I respond, while sustaining tones from the piano between the interactions:



The contrast between the dramatic lyric and the hollow, almost numb tone that Gloria uses to say the word “*bleeding*” more than sing it, triggers a musical countertransference in me. Rather than mirror the hollow tone, I respond to the painful verbal image her words evoke, playing forcefully with clusters in a higher register of the piano:



It is if I am saying “this is a terrible thing, the fact that you have been cut and slashed and now you are bleeding.” This is an example of a musical commentary as Robinson (2005) describes, the music commenting on the persona presented by the voice.

My music continues to convey turmoil, yet Gloria speaks the words rather than sings them with a kind of hollow detachment, with a hint of disdain:

• (Spoken) I'm bleeding	I'm throwing up	My	knees are weak
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In response to the lyric about her knees and ankles lacking support, I move to the low register, the supporting component of the piano, and play dissonant tones and intervals. The fact that the bass is moving and has dissonant tones creates a quality of instability, and this relates to the lyric describing her unstable ankles. The last harmonies that I play in the pause contain the tritone interval, amplifying the sense of instability:



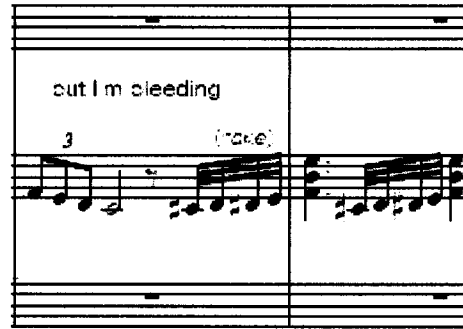
Gloria sings “everything’s fine”, in a high register with notes somewhat related to the harmony I have just played. In response I play the melodic rhythm of everything’s fine, using Gloria’s last pitch as the first pitch of my phrase, and end with an ascending interval of a tritone, which gives the melody a quality of not being fine, of being strange, of being unstable. It is also noticeable because it goes up. My melody has highlighted and magnified the incongruity between the words that Gloria has sung and her vocal and musical expression. Gloria hears this melody from the piano and immediately picks up on the strange melody with the tritone:



Again I take the melody and echo it, moving it to different tonalities so that there is a questioning quality in the musical commentary. It is as if the music is saying, “everything is not fine; something is wrong, and we are not sure what is

happening”. This is reflected in my lack of a clear tonal center and the emphasis on the tritone.

At this point Gloria speaks. In response to Gloria bringing back the bleeding lyric, I bring back the dissonant clusters from the first time she used the words:



The repeating musical response to the repeating lyric statement gives the music a form. It also emphasizes the musical aspect as a contrast to the fact that Gloria has again gone back to saying rather than singing the lyric. The first time I created this cluster it was a spontaneous, unpremeditated reaction. This time it is somewhat more controlled, as I am returning to it with intention. The music continues:



you do it to yourself

Now Gloria uses the word “you”, responding to the character that was bleeding. This character has little empathy for the bleeding character:

you did it to yourself  
who the fuck cares?

It is striking that Gloria curses, as it is extremely rare for her. I sense the intensity of her turmoil. I continue the dissonant thematic music first used when Gloria first mentioned her bleeding. At the end of the phrase I play a D in the bass, the key that the entire improvisation began with:

15 16 17

I'm bleed-ing

I start to play a bass line, creating a slight sense of pulse, without establishing a definitive tempo:

18 19 20

I can't walk

slow groove

The lyric "*I can't walk*" triggers my response to abort the establishment of a pulse. Music with a pulse would not support the idea of not being able to walk. Instead I hold a minor chord with dissonance as Gloria continues to sing on the one tone D, wavering slightly below pitch as she sings:

ad lib

I'm bleeding I can't walk

ad lib

Gloria's melody stays on the one pitch D as she sings "*I can't walk.*" I sense that the lack of direction described in her lyric is reflected in the lack of a melodic direction. On the word "*walk*" Gloria's pitch is slightly below the D. In response I play a C# in the middle register of the piano and the grounding D tone in the bass. I then move this D-C# major seventh interval up a third to an F#-F:

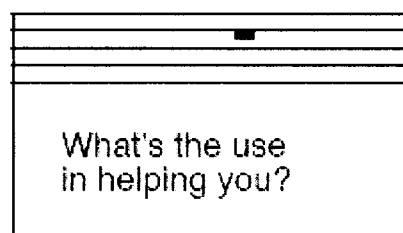
ad lib

p mf p

20 (still sustaining chord)

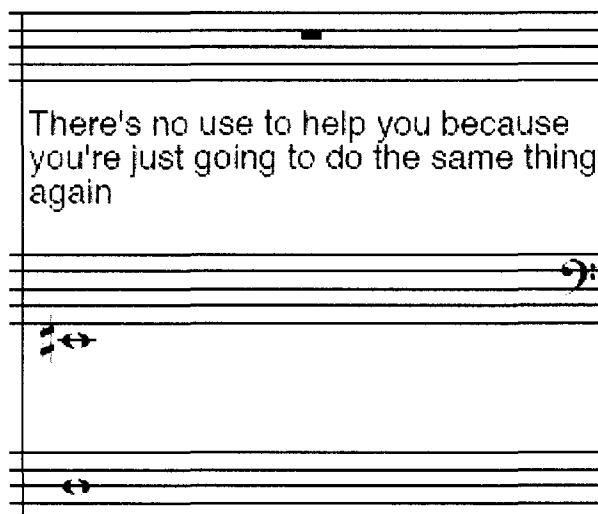
The overall musical quality is that there is something unresolved, something painful, something unable to be completed. Upon analysis, these two

tones that form the dissonant interval are a manifestation of the conflict between the two personae that Gloria has manifested in singing the lyric: the voice that is bleeding, and the voice that is frustrated and contemptuous of the bleeding voice. The two perspectives clash, just as the two tones clash. There is very little musical change suggested here. Gloria continues to speak the words and the dissonant major seventh interval is sustained:



Now I play the dissonant interval and move it up again, as if mirroring the ongoing and intensifying frustration that Gloria has singing from the persona of the potential helper:

There is a pause here as Gloria emphasizes the reason for not helping. She then continues:



The statement -- again spoken and not sung -- of frustration with her repeated self- injurious behavior, triggers a musical response for me. I begin an ostinato pattern, manifesting the repetition in the lyric. Upon analysis this is a way for me as therapist to “join the resistance”, a psychotherapy concept that was congruent with my clinical ideas but not conscious for me in the moment. There is strong pulse in the music here as the harmony moves from a consonant to a dissonant chord:

A musical score for a piano accompaniment. The score is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is marked "slow swing groove" and the time signature is 4/4. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score includes the following lyrics: "Why should I help you anymore?" and "you keep...". The music is written in a simple, rhythmic style, with a strong pulse. The harmony moves from a consonant chord (G Ma7) to a dissonant chord (C7/F). The score is marked with a tempo of 100 and a "soft, warm" dynamic.

27

Gloria continues to speak these words rather than sing them. The dynamic of the music from the piano is building. While Gloria starts her spoken phrase, as

she forms the word “*keep*”, I add a loud, sharply articulated single tone that is dissonant to the continuing harmony and hold it while the harmony continues to be driven by the same accompaniment pattern:

The image shows a musical score snippet with three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains the lyrics "com-in' in this room". The middle staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef, starting with a whole note chord marked "sub, f". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef, showing two chords: G7 and C7/F. The G7 chord is marked with a "2" above it, indicating a second inversion. The C7/F chord is also marked with a "2" above it, indicating a second inversion. The accompaniment pattern consists of a steady eighth-note rhythm.

The note is a Bb, and because I play it an octave higher and slightly before the G7 chord it stands out against it. Gloria reacts to the note by raising her voice to a higher register and beginning to sing rather than speak. It was not my conscious intention to trigger this, but Gloria seems to sing with more energy. Upon analysis, it is as if the note jars her back into the act of singing. Perhaps the intensity of my reaction gave her permission to give fuller voice to her own feelings, breaking through an unbroken “sound barrier”, to feel and express anger, to embrace and embody more fully the critical persona. I repeat the tone several

times, reinforcing a jarring quality in the music:

A musical score snippet featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is on a single staff with lyrics: "all blood-y oh you keep". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The upper piano staff has a treble clef and contains a series of chords and single notes. The lower piano staff has a bass clef and contains a more active melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The key signature has one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 4/4.

I play a C#, another dissonant tone as the harmonic accompaniment pattern continues. This C# played with the G major tonality emphasizes the tritone, a subtle reminder of the “everything’s fine” tritone heard earlier. It is clear that everything is not resolved, and the tritone embodies this which is heard by Gloria as she sings the C#:

A musical score snippet featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is on a single staff with lyrics: "comin' in this room all blood - y! (Spoken) I'm supp-". The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The upper piano staff has a treble clef and contains a series of chords and single notes. The lower piano staff has a bass clef and contains a more active melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The key signature has one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 4/4.

Not only is there a tritone relationship between the bass note G and the melody note of C#, but there are other intervals – F/B, E/Bb – that are also creating the sound as well. As Gloria continues to sing with some disdain about

how she is “*supposed*” to have compassion for the persona who is victimized, the music from the piano starts to change:

posed to wash you up. put bandages and ointments on you

(crescendo) accelerando

39

The harmony continues to be dissonant but is softer. Because the previous syncopated harmonic accompaniment pattern has stopped there is a sense that something new can develop. In place of the previous harmonic pattern is a kind of tumbling descending harmonic motion with dissonant intervals moving in parallel motion, and since there is no tonal clarity, it is not clear where the harmony is headed. Gloria continues to sing in a kind of detached disdain, as if the critical voice does not believe it's worth trying to support the character that is in pain, all bloodied:

comb your hair wash your face

43

The words describe acts of compassion, but the tone of the singing reveals a lack of compassion. I reflect this ongoing conflict continuing to play mainly



dissonant harmonies, but a quick consonant C major chord is heard. This is a different tonality and hints of relating to the actual nurturing content of the words. It lasts very briefly and the dissonant chords continue:



The harmony at the piano is moving to a higher register as Gloria continues to sing:

A musical score snippet showing a vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The top staff is empty. The bottom staff has a vocal melody with lyrics: "Give you a place to sleep .. comfort you". The piano accompaniment is in the bass staff, featuring a repeating F# tone in the middle register.

The harmony continues to contain dissonances but with a more gentle lyricism in how they are phrased. An F# tone in the middle register of the piano is repeated and thus serves as a bass tone. The tones above it do not relate in a consonant way, but the fact that this F# tone repeats gives the music a little more anchor, a little more stability. Something is about to happen but it is not clear

what. Gloria pauses briefly and so do I. Something is starting to shift, both in the piano and in Gloria's vocal persona. The F# bass tone in the middle register now moves up and down a half step, as if manifesting the shift that is occurring and will continue to occur in the way that Gloria is using her voice:



There is a little more of a pause before Gloria utters "*talk to you*", and in response I pause and hold the harmony notes before continuing to play. As Gloria states "*listen to you*", I move the harmony notes to a higher place on the piano. This adds a sense of building tension in the music. Then I play an ascending run that both responds to the growing tension and adds to it. After Gloria gently and softly states "*play music for you*" the bass moves up, and while still below the other harmony tones from the piano, begins a melodic line that is chromatic, adding a searching quality to the music. The music has contradictory qualities - tumbling yet ascending, floating upward, lightly, heading for an unforeseen destination. The image I have is of a tumble weed being blown gently. Gloria continues and on the word "*cuddle*," she takes a tone played at the piano to this moment, a Db, and begins to sing the entire phrase:

Cuddle you and say There there my dear

The quality of Gloria's voice changes here, as she sings with a more sustained tone and a quieter dynamic. She has entered into the emotional quality of the lyric content, singing "cuddle" and conveying a quality of gentleness needed in order to actually cuddle. The rhythm of her singing at the end of the phrase implies a triple meter. In response I play even more gently in the higher register, and hearing her Db, I prepare to harmonize it. After she sings "There, There my dear" I play an Eb minor chord as she repeats the words and melody and create a phrase. An accompaniment pattern emerges just as Gloria starts to sing :

Flowing ♩ = 100 *gently, delicate*

37 E<sup>b</sup>min<sup>7</sup> 3 B<sup>b</sup>min

There there my dear... it's go-ing to be o - kay

*Ped. sim...*

Now the music has a clear pulse and meter, with gentle countermelodies occurring from the piano in the high register. At this point the shift that has been anticipated for some time actually occurs. The piano music and lyrics now go forward jointly as the pulse and harmonic path can be anticipated by both of us. Gloria's voice sounds tender and fragile. She sustains her melody tones on the last word of the phrase, and sounds as if she may be about to cry. On the last tone of her phrase, the harmony moves from Eb minor to Bb minor, so that she is singing the minor third of what is now the new tonic. The music from the piano has qualities of sadness and warmth - blends of emotion as Robinson (2005) describes - with the countermelodies actively conveying gentle support and compassion as a commentary, as Robinson (2005) also describes. Gloria is reassured by her words even as she wonders if their promise will be borne out.

The same phrase structure repeats, and Gloria enters into the music with a little more support in her voice, anticipating the return of the chord that starts the phrase again. The harmony provides predictability and stability. A gentle countermelody continues in the high register of the piano, as Gloria continues to sing now in a soft, sad voice, continuing to sing on the Db. A clear song form has emerged at this point:

65 E-flat m7 B-flat

there there my dear it's go-ing to be o - kay

After two repetitions of the same lyric and harmony, both Gloria and I change the form of the music while keeping the same pulse. She moves to a higher tone while I move to a different chord. The form of the music is propelling both of us at this point, even while the arpeggiated accompaniment rhythm at the piano stops:

71 C major

oh my dear oh my

The forward motion is provided by the anticipation of the melodic rhythm. This adds a sense of mutuality to the music in that the creation of the pulse is shared between us rather than being provided solely by the piano. I stop the pulse, and play close to the melodic rhythm that Gloria sings. I play a very

soft tone that adds a dissonance to each of the chords, giving the music a sense that things are still not quite ok. But there is a gentleness created by the soft attack and articulation in the music that also lends it a comforting quality. My commentary from the piano is a gentle way of asking Gloria “Are you sure it will be ok?” The music continues:

77                      Amaj<sup>9</sup>      Gmaj<sup>7</sup>      Amaj<sup>9</sup>      Gmaj<sup>7</sup>      B<sup>b</sup>min<sup>9</sup>

dear              rest with me      it will      be      o      -      kay

On the word “ok” Gloria’s intonation begins to rise above the pitch and falters. The piano has both minor arpeggiation that have a pretty sound along with dissonant tones. The music blends the emotional qualities of pain and comfort:

83

oh my dear              it'll be      o -

90 B<sup>♭</sup>min<sup>7</sup>11♭5

Now the pulse of the music is being driven by the harmonic rhythm, as chords are changing after every three beats and there is a clear tonal direction, while Gloria's melody leaps up an ascending perfect fifth interval and she sings the higher tone through the measure:

E<sup>♭</sup>min G<sup>♯</sup>

This is a wider interval and higher tone than she has been singing previously. The accompaniment pattern is a series of rising arpeggios. The high melodic tone that Gloria is singing, plus the form of the accompaniment pattern, combine in a synchronous way, lending the music a flowing quality, as if flying. The chords of

the progression – Eb minor, Gb major, Ab major - include several major chords, giving the music a more optimistic quality. This form persists as Gloria continues:

96      Eb      Gb      Ab      Eb min      Gb      Ab

face I'll dry your tears

101      Eb      Gb      Ab      Eb min      Gb      Ab

will bind up your wounds

The music gets softer and a little slower here, less rhythmically driven as the arpeggiation stops. Gloria is able to support herself as she continues at a louder dynamic, confidently singing with a sense of the form of the song as it goes forward:



$B^b\text{min}^+$  *very delicate*  $A^b\text{min}^7$

I'll wash your face

92  $D^b\text{sus}$   $G^b\text{maj}^7$   $G^b\text{maj}^9$   $C\text{min}^{\text{tr}}^b$   $F^{\text{tr}}$

I'll clean you off I'll bind up your wounds

99  $B^{\text{tr}}$   $B^{\text{tr}}$   $E^{\text{tr}}\text{sus}$   $E^{\text{tr}}$   $A^{\text{tr}}\text{sus}$   $A^{\text{tr}}$

I'll comb your hair

There is a strong sense of mutuality in the music here as Gloria and I both arrive at the same tonality after a series of chords and melody notes that created the possibility of moving in a different tonal direction. The pulse is not emphatic yet the entrance to the phrase happens simultaneously between us. The form of the song influenced the arrival at the familiar Eb minor tonality:

E<sup>b</sup>min B<sup>2</sup>min

Rest my

128 E<sup>b</sup>min B<sup>b</sup>min E<sup>b</sup>min G<sup>3</sup> A<sup>3</sup> F<sup>2</sup>

dear Rest my dear The

There is a gentle, lilting quality to the music as countermelodies fill in the space between the sustained tones of the melody.

As Gloria sings “*broken pieces*” the melody of the lyric goes up, while the bass in the harmony goes down. At the end of the phrase the word “have” is sung with the highest note, while a surprising consonant harmony is reached. This gives the music a quality of expansion and reinforces the sense of mutuality between us:

134      B<sup>7</sup>      D<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>/A<sup>b</sup>      G<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>      D<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>/F      E<sup>o</sup>

brok - en pie - ces have \_\_\_\_\_ such sharp

There is a strong contrast between the vocal references to “*sharp edges*” and “*cut*”, and the smooth flowing consonance of the piano music:

140      E<sup>b</sup>min<sup>7</sup>      B<sup>b</sup>min      E<sup>b</sup>min      B<sup>b</sup>min      E<sup>b</sup>min

ed - ges\_ They've cut you \_\_\_\_\_ my dear\_ Oh\_

This music is assisting the healing voice in tending to the wounds of the injured persona. Gloria continues to sing as we both slow down. In response to the word rest, I stop the flowing accompaniment pattern and hold the tones of the harmony, playing the melodic rhythm as Gloria sings it:

146 B<sup>b</sup>min Fmin G<sup>b</sup>maj

— rest my dear — Oh rest Oh rest oh rest

This creates the effect of reinforcing the sentiment of resting. Then a dominant B7 chord from the piano is slowly arpeggiated from low to high. The chord has an added flattened fifth so that a significant part of the chord is actually constructed with two tritones. Elements of the whole tone scale are heard in the high register. This lends a quality of mystery to the music, as if something new is going to happen. Something does happen as Gloria begins to sing a new lyric:

153 B<sup>b</sup>min B<sup>b</sup>min

my de-ar cue oh rest — I'll wash your

rubato rubato

A strong shift in the music as a rubato occurs in both the voice and the piano. On the word “wounds” a sustained counter melody acts in a metaphoric sense to heal the wounds. Gloria’s vocal quality is more gentle and relaxed here:

160 E<sup>b</sup>min B<sup>b</sup>min E<sup>b</sup>min G<sup>b</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>

face I'll bind up your wounds I'll comb

164 Cmin<sup>7b9</sup> D<sup>b</sup> F

your hair\_ Oh rest rest in my arms I

167 G<sup>b</sup>ma<sup>7</sup> E<sup>b</sup>min<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>min<sup>7</sup>/F

know what you've been through I know what you've been

The tempo of the music continues to be very slow. Gloria's voice quivers as she sings, indicating she is feeling strong emotion here:

170 E<sup>b</sup>min B<sup>b</sup>min D<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup>min G<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>/A<sup>b</sup>

As Gloria sustains the last note on the word “child”, I introduce a gentle counter melody in the high register. It includes thirds above a harmonic progression (also in a high register) starting in minor, moving to major and then ending in minor chords:

174 F<sup>7</sup>/A B<sup>b</sup>min D<sup>b</sup>/A<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup>

Upon analysis, this is another instance of a moving interval reflecting an intrapersonal relationship. Earlier, the dissonant interval moving in parallel represented personae locked in ongoing conflict. Here, the gentle and consoling quality of the moving thirds represents the relationship between the healing voice persona and the wounded sufferer. The high register of the piano melody adds an ethereal quality to the music, hinting at a connection to Gloria’s words being sung

from God's perspective. Gloria does begin to sing about God, and the music shifts to a gospel style:

178  $E^b\text{min}^7$   $D^7/A$   $A^7$   $A^\circ$   $F^7\text{bu}$

God does - n't leave us God does - n't leave us

As Gloria sings about God rather than from her perspective speaking through Gods voice, I shift the style of music to Gospel. The tempo is flexible, and the meter is shifting, but the low bass tone and chord progression with a sense of triplet sub-division lends the music this quality. The “us” she sings about could be understood as the two voices that have been in conflict with each other, but now join together to sing about God:

181  $B^b\text{min}$   $E^b7$   $D^7/A$

God does - n't leave us no mat-ter what I do God

S... S... S...

184 D<sup>7</sup>/A<sup>2</sup> F<sup>7</sup>/A F<sup>7</sup>/A

does-n't leave me God does-n't leave me

166 B<sup>♭</sup>min A<sup>♭</sup>min

God does - n't leave me

### Concluding Thoughts on There, There

As the excerpt ends Gloria sings using the word “*me*”. This is a significant indication of a shift in her psychological state. After singing from different parts of her personality and then singing about God not leaving “*us*”, she is singing as one integrated person now, rather than taking the position of one or the other personae. The experience of dramatically engaging her different sub personalities



helped her to bring those polarities within herself together so she could feel more whole.

### Do I Dare Imagine?

This excerpt comes from a session right after Gloria's first public sharing of music from the music therapy sessions to an audience of close friends and family. During preparation for the concert she acquired a piano and was beginning to try to play it, improvising while she was alone at her apartment. In the music therapy session this excerpt is taken from she is reflecting on one of first experiences in her apartment trying out the piano, and more broadly reflecting on her new found relationship to music. She is singing while I am at the piano:

*Playing the piano wondering what my mother is thinking.*

*Playing the piano wondering what she is thinking.*

Gloria's mother has been dead for many years. Gloria reports that the two had a tumultuous relationship and fought often. One point of contention was practicing the piano. Gloria refused to do so as a child, but now as a result of her new relationship to music she bought a piano. As the therapist, I recognized from her singing that Gloria is simultaneously taking a risk and creating an opportunity to work on her relationship to her mother. As her therapist I wonder if there is a way of lessening the intensity of the conflicted feelings about her mother in the present, despite all their conflict in the past? Perhaps she can shift her internalized

representation of her mother to one that is more nurturing and supportive. This could be a key in helping Gloria to feel less critical of herself.

*Is she angry with me, angry because I didn't try?*

*Is she angry with me, angry because I didn't try?*

*Playing the piano, fooling around.*

*Hanging out with the piano.*

*I'm not disciplined, but I do hang out with the piano*

*amazing*

*What is my mother thinking?*

*Is it possible to think that she*

*Might be rejoicing for me?*

*Might she be rejoicing for me?*

*Might she be rejoicing for me?*

*Might she rejoice?*

*That the depression has lifted that music is in my life.*

*Is it possible she might be rejoicing for me?*

*Or do I always have to see her.....criticizing*

*Angry....criticizing.... angry....*

*Never satisfied...criticizing... angry*

*Never satisfied never satisfied*

*Would she be rejoicing for me?*

*Dino was rejoicing for me, impressed and amazed*

*What is my mother thinking?*

*Could she be possibly be rejoicing for me*  
*Relieved to see me coming out of the depression.*  
*What could she be thinking?*  
*Do I dare imagine that she would rejoice for me?*  
*Do I dare imagine that she would rejoice for me?*  
*Do I dare? Do I dare?*

Upon analysis, the repetitions in the lyric facilitate both the creative and the therapeutic process. They make it easier to create the song form by establishing a predictable metrical structure. They also allow Gloria to consider the content of the lyric and the feelings it brings up. When the lyric is a question, the repetition allows time for Gloria to consider the answer.

*Do I dare imagine...oh.....oh...oh....oh*  
*Do I dare imagine?*  
*That she would be*  
*Full of joy to see*  
*To see*  
*Me smile and sing and play the piano*  
*Would she just be angry and say she didn't listen to me*  
*She didn't listen to me so now she has to do it on her own she didn't listen to me*  
*Would she be resentful?*  
*Resentful of my success*  
*Keep pointing out my failures*

*Pointing out how long it's taken*  
*How much darkness I went through*  
*Would she ridicule me?*  
*All that darkness*  
*Would she say you didn't have to do all that.*  
*You chose that, you were a fool. You were a fool.*  
*Would she ridicule me?*  
*Put me down?*  
*Or would she rejoice?*  
*That I've found my life at last.*  
*I've found my life at last.*  
*I've found my life at last.*  
*I've found my life at last.*  
*Oh oh oh oh oh.*  
*I've found my life at last.*  
*Leaving the darkness behind.*  
*Sailing south to calm waters.*

In considering the significance of Gloria's lyrics, I note the imagery of the final phrase. Imagery involving water is a literary device Gloria uses in several improvisations. In other excerpts she has sung about swimming with the dolphins, driving in a car, and a train traveling on tracks. It could relate to Gloria's desire to move to a better place emotionally, to feel more hopeful about her future. The

sense of forward motion that is created by the music seems to be a strong impetus behind imagery that has to do with travel.

*Navigating through the icebergs*

*Sailing south.*

*Blue skies turquoise waters*

*Songs, music*

*Would she rejoice*

*Would she rejoice for me? Oh*

*Who knows?*

Gloria sang this improvised song “*Do I Dare Imagine?*” several times during the early years of treatment. In her public performances she would choose an additional lyric to end with depending on what would feel true to her in the moment regarding her attitude toward her mother and her general emotional state. The addendum would either be a confirmation that Mom would rejoice, or a conditional statement wondering whether she would.

#### Detailed Description and Analysis

This example is rich in material for analysis related to the tentative hypothesis that musical choices by the therapist at the piano influence the unfolding psychological process of the singer. The uses of major and minor harmonies are a vital component of this idea. Smeijsters (2005) asserts that “when there is a change in the musical act, then there is a change in the intra-and /or interpersonal process” (p. 85).

The music is in a slow tempo (about 45 beats per minute) as Gloria sings about playing the piano:

Chord symbols:  $C^b/B^b$ ,  $G^b\text{maj}$ ,  $E^b\text{min}$ ,  $D^7\text{sus}$

Lyrics: Play - ing the pia - no won - dering what my mo - ther is think - ing

Lyrics: play - ing the pia - no won - dering what she's think - ing

Overall the music has a kind of sentimental quality to it, as if supporting the idea of remembering a past event. The melody from the piano is slightly louder than the harmony, so that it stands out from the harmony. This melody that I play after Gloria has sung “*what she’s thinking*” has a melodic rhythm that does not match Gloria’s exactly, but matches the unspoken words I have in my mind. I do not say it aloud but I play the rhythm ‘what is she thinking’:

4  $D^b_{sus}$   $B^2min^+$

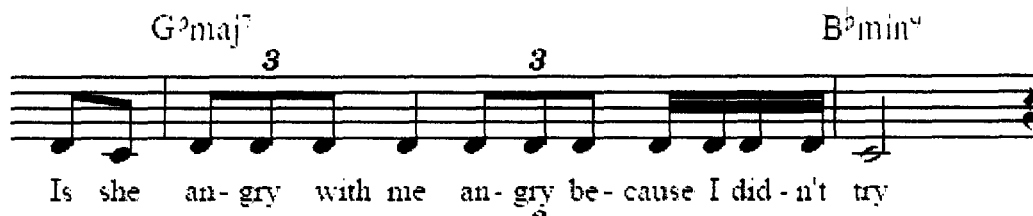
It is a musical commentary on Gloria's musical and emotional expression.

My intention is to support reflection and keep the process going, a process that includes both musical creation and emotional exploration.

Gloria continues to sing about her mother:

5  $B^2min^+$   $G^2maj^+$   $B^2min^+$

Is she an-gry with me an-gry be-cause I did-n't try Is she



Gloria sings this lyric with two tones, C and Db. I create two harmonies, Gb major and Bb min 9. The relationship between the melody tones and the harmony creates a tonal ambiguity. The Gb chord combined with the C sung creates the sound of the Lydian mode. This has both a more hopeful and questioning tone than the minor chord. The Lydian mode is often used to create a sense of mystery and wonder, hope and opportunity. Throughout the course of treatment I utilized it to both trigger and enhance imagery. The Bb minor creates a quality of sadness, yet there is also a blend of warmth and comfort with the C being a ninth in the chord. The harmonic ambiguity created both within each chord and between the two chords reflects the questioning content of the lyric that remains unanswered. It also leaves open tonal possibilities.

The music is dramatic, and open ended. As she sings “*because I didn’t try*”, a countermelody from the piano descends down to the C she is singing, conveying a sense of companionship in the music as we travel to the same note together. It also adds to the intensity of the word “*try*”, animating the conflict that Gloria feels as she remembers disappointing her mother by not practicing the piano. The tone that ends both the melody that Gloria sings and the countermelody from the piano is not the tonic but a step away.:



G<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup>mi

Is she an-gry with me an-gry be-cause I did-n't try

Gloria continues as the chord progression establishes the minor key of Bb minor:

10 G<sup>b</sup> A<sup>2</sup>sus B<sup>b</sup>min<sup>4</sup>

Play - ing the pia no fool-ing a-round

hang - ing out with the pia - no

Gloria shifts her attitude and sings content related to her conflict with her mother, who felt she did not practice the piano enough:



In response to Gloria's vocal statement I play a harmonic response with a similar melodic rhythm, playing a melody a third above what Gloria sang. The dynamic is louder and the articulation sharper, in effect intensifying her sentiment while making it more harmonious:

17 B<sup>b</sup>min

After hearing these chords played at a forte dynamic, Gloria shifts her subject back to singing about the piano and then returns to the conflictual topic, her mother:

B<sup>b</sup>min      G<sup>2</sup>/B<sup>2</sup>      E<sup>2</sup>min      3      3      3

but I do hang out with the pia-no it's a-ma-zing a-ma-zing a-ma-zing a

ma-zing to me What is my mo-ther think-ing

After hearing her melodic phrase about her mother, I repeat it starting on the same tone that she did, both to let her know that I hear her and also to encourage her to continue to reflect on the question. I play it again in octaves and then Gloria does continue to ask herself about her mother:

22  $B^b \text{min}$   $B^b \text{min}^{\text{omit}3}$   $A^b/D^b$   $G^b \text{maj}$   $B^b \text{omit}3/F$

Is it

24  $G^b \text{maj}^7$

poss-i-ble to think she might be re-joic-ing for me

might she be re-

Gloria repeats might she be rejoicing on Bb as I play a Bb minor harmony:

26 E<sup>b</sup>min B<sup>b</sup>min

joic-ing for me might she be re joic ing for me night she re-

The minor chord with the tonic note being sung lends the music a sad quality. So as she sings about the possibility of entertaining the notion that her mother might be rejoicing, the music I play has a quality of sadness that suggests that it may not be possible. Realizing the influence my accompaniment could have, I change its sonority with clinical intention. In the space after Gloria finishes her phrase, I do not repeat the melody as Gloria sang it as I had earlier, but play a melody that ascends while harmonizing it with a major chord, the Gb chord that we heard earlier:

$G^b\text{maj}^7$

might be re-joic-ing for me

Since the  $G^b$  major chord is closely related to the  $B^b$  minor chord (they share two common tones and the  $G^b$  is the natural harmony on the sixth step of a  $B^b$  minor scale), the music at this point can still be heard in the context of minor, even as we hear the major chord. Instead of  $B^b$  minor sadness, playing the major chord and the melodic motion manifest to a hopeful sound, reflecting my sense that it may be possible for Gloria to feel more hopeful about her mother. I am modeling a musical experience for her to try out as she sings the words expressing her desire to feel more positive about her mother.

Gloria's lyric content expresses her desire for a better relationship, but the limited tones in her melody are sung with weak support, resulting in a vocal quality that indicates a lack of emotional involvement. She is singing what she hopes without truly believing it. My implicit intention as music therapist is to create the opportunity for Gloria to try out the experience of singing about her

mother as a more positive, supportive presence. My challenge is to create the emotional qualities in the music of possibility, without exceeding Gloria's current tolerance level.

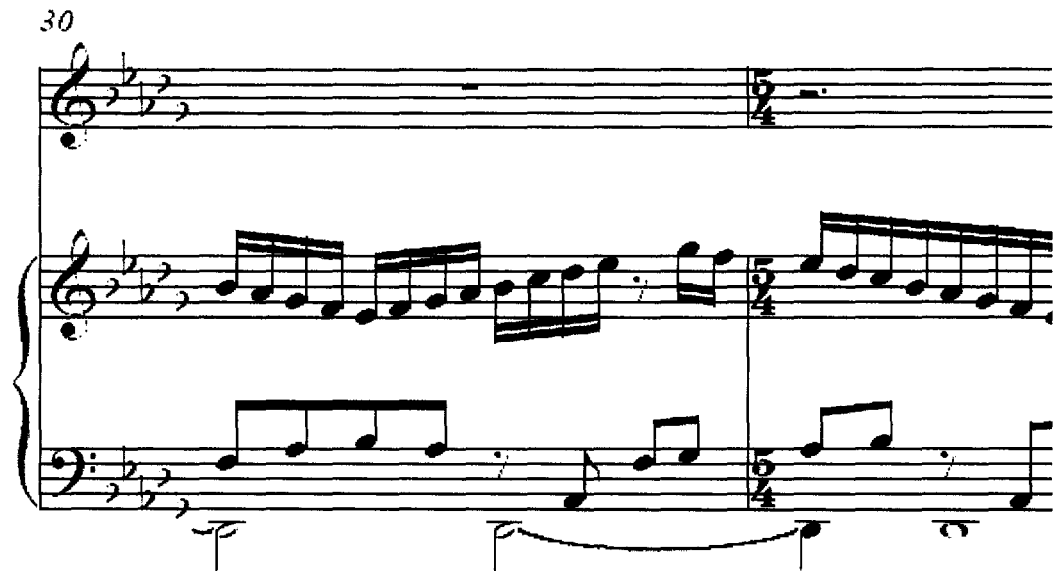
The music cannot be too hopeful, too major. This would impede Gloria's investment in the music and hamper the sense of mutuality needed in creating meaningful music together. It has to leave the situation more fluid than that, and the close relationship between the Gb major chord and the Bb minor chord allows for that. The music can easily shift back to the Bb minor tonality even as the Gb major chord is sounded. The word *possible* utilized by Gloria in the lyric is a strong influence on the direction that I take at the piano after hearing it. It is a key word that stands out in terms of therapeutic significance. I am trying to create possibilities in the music that have a more hopeful quality to support a new possible perspective regarding Gloria's relationship to her mother. I make a strong musical intervention that has a clear clinical intention. I continue to use the Bb melody tone as Gloria sings "*the depression has lifted*," but I do not continue the harmonic progression to Bb minor:

28      G<sup>b</sup>                      6      G<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>      G<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>      3      D<sup>b</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>

joice      that the de-pre-ssion has lift-ed      that mus-ic is in my life?

Gloria has made a powerful statement that is hopeful and I want to reflect this. I harmonize by staying on Gb major chord, adding a major seventh to the chord as the progression moves, and then harmonize the last melody note of the phrase with a new major key of Db major. Gloria is still singing a Bb melody note. The Bb note in relation to the Db major chord is a major sixth. This gives the music a happier quality as Cooke (1959) describes, matching the lyric content that Gloria created regarding her acknowledgment that she is less depressed. Db is the relative major of the Bb minor key established earlier. So the major chord has a strong relationship to the minor key.

Gloria pauses as I continue to play melody notes to accentuate the harmonic tonal presence of Db major, playing tones that clearly establish tones of the Db major scale:



The notes in Db major move in an ascending direction. My intention here is to suggest to Gloria that she can indeed experience her mother in a more positive light; that she can sing about her mother with less sadness. Even as she



sings the same tone, she can experience a new context for it, just as she can consider her mother's attitude with a new emotional framework. Gloria sings the same lyric again and it is interesting to note that as she starts to sing it her first two melody notes are higher than her often repeated Bb tone. But she falls back to the Bb melody tone and repeats it. Perhaps her musical reaction triggered an incipient response but she was not psychologically ready to sing a tone away from the Bb and she returns to it.

30

is it poss-i-ble

She returns to her less hopeful consideration regarding her mother, singing the words "*see her*" with a descending interval of a minor third ending on the Bb. The word-music combination here - the word "*see her*" with the melodic interval of the minor third - suggests to me that it is not right to continue with the new Db major tonic. It was premature. Gloria was not ready to move from her emotional stance which was reflected in her tonal choice and lyric content, and I shift back to Bb minor:

32  $G^2$   $F^{min}$  format

she might be re-joic-ing for me or do I al-ways have to see her

35  $B^2min$   $G^2$   $B^2min$   $G^2$   $B^2min$   $G^2$   $E^2min$   $F$

cri-ti-ci-zing an-gry cri-ti-ci-zing an-gry ne-ver sat-is-fied cri-ti-ci-zing an-gry ne-ver sat-is-fied

My piano music becomes more rhythmic, louder, reflecting the tension of the word meanings. Gloria continues to sing with a quality that suggests she is feeling victimized and perhaps overwhelmed by her mother's critical voice. She sings the stinging words of the lyric in a soft dynamic that conveys a kind of hopelessness. The louder and more intense music from the piano is an intervention that tacitly seeks to energize Gloria. By playing with more intensity I am reflecting the content of the words and also hoping to invite and encourage Gloria to sing with more intensity, more anger, to feel less paralyzed in response

to the way she depicts her relationship to her mother. At this point in the session a clinical hypothesis emerged for me. I theorized that she may need to express her anger toward her mother, to feel she could stand up to her in an emotional sense, before she was ready to accept the possibility that her mother could be rejoicing. Here she is singing as if she is in the role of the daughter meekly responding to her mother's criticism. Could she sing with the same intensity she brings to her lyrical description of her mother's attitude towards her, identifying with the aggressor as she has done in past music therapy sessions to fuel her expression? In this way she can also move beyond the role of the helpless daughter waiting for her mother's acceptance. Gloria's dynamic does not change much in response to the intensity of the piano. She does show some melodic movement as she leaves the Bb to sing an A natural in response to my moving the harmony to an F chord, the dominant chord of Bb minor:



After Gloria sings these words, I pause on the Gb major chord. This is a chord that can go either to Db major or Bb minor. The musical intervention serves to create harmonic pathways to different musical and emotional destinations:

:

37      B<sup>2</sup>m      G<sup>2</sup>      B<sup>2</sup>m      G<sup>2</sup>

ne-ver sat-is- fied.

I try the major key again:

D<sup>b</sup>

would she be re-joic-ing for me?

As Gloria sings this lyric, she sings in a softer, gentler dynamic that I clearly identify as sad. I hear this and sense that there has been an emotional shift.

Gloria sings about an important male family member who she misses and feels a strong sense of support from. Then she returns to the family member who is the catalyst for much of her expression, again asking what her mother might think about her involvement with music:

The musical score consists of three staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The time signature is 4/4.

**Staff 1 (Measures 40-42):** The melody starts on a whole note G4, followed by a half note A4, and then a quarter note Bb4. The lyrics are "Di-no was re-joic-ing for me". Above the staff, the chords are G2maj7, G2maj7, and D2.

**Staff 2 (Measures 43-45):** The melody continues with a half note C5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The lyrics are "im - pressed and a-mazed". Above the staff, the chords are D2, G2maj7, and G2maj7. A bracket labeled "6" spans measures 44 and 45.

**Staff 3 (Measures 46-48):** The melody continues with a half note F5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. The lyrics are "What is my mo-ther think-ing". Above the staff, the chords are D2, G2maj7, and E2min. A bracket labeled "3" spans measures 47 and 48.

**Staff 4 (Measures 49-51):** The melody continues with a half note Bb5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note D6. The lyrics are "could she poss-i-bly be re - joic-ing for me?". Above the staff, the chords are G2maj7 and G2maj7. A bracket labeled "3" spans measures 50 and 51.

Hearing Gloria again sing the lyric about depression lessening, I play a melody and then move to the Db major chord again, but this time in second inversion:

G<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>      E<sup>2</sup>min      D<sup>b</sup>/A<sup>b</sup>

de-press ion

Once more I sense that it may be possible to move Gloria to a more hopeful stance by moving to a major tonality. As I play the second inversion Db major chord, I repeat Gloria's Bb melody tone and begin a melodic phrase that rises and then falls, coming to rest on Ab, the dominant tone in relation to the key of Db:

49      A<sup>2</sup>sus      A<sup>2</sup>sus      D<sup>b</sup>/A<sup>b</sup>

(S)<sup>7</sup>

There is a strong sense of leading to Db now. This melodic idea from the piano is a suggestion for Gloria. By beginning my melody on the exact tone Gloria sang, on Bb, I join her musically and psychologically, and then try to take

her a little further. Musically I suggest she move a little closer toward the new tonality, manifesting the psychological possibility of her mother's acceptance with the acceptance of the new key.

Gloria responds to this by singing a Db without words and then with words:

4S Db/Ab

What could she be think-ing

Sensing that Gloria can now sing in the Db major tonality, I set up a harmonic rhythm and progression that sounds like an introduction to a song leading to Db major. Gloria's self enhancing attitude reflects a new emotional state that is now present and the music is used to anchor it, establish it.

I alternate the Db major chord in second inversion with an Ab sus chord. An Ab chord that also contains a Db. This is a harmonic device that I find useful and use often in creating a new key and establishing the potential for a song to unfold.:

A<sup>2</sup> sus                      A<sup>2</sup> sus                      D<sup>2</sup>/A<sup>2</sup>

In my right hand I play a melodic figure with the melody tones Db and C. These are the same two tones that Gloria sang as this excerpt began and the harmony that emerged was minor, but now the harmonic context and emotional quality are very different. As I play the Db, Gloria enters into the music by singing a Db:

53                      D<sup>b</sup>/A<sup>b</sup>                      D<sup>2</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>/A<sup>2</sup>                      G<sup>2</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>                      G<sup>2</sup>                      G<sup>2</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>                      G<sup>2</sup>

Gloria sings a clear melody with a tonal range that is wider than anything she has sung up to this point. Her melody starts on Db and rises! She uses five different tones for her melody, with her highest tone on the word “*dare*”.



Musically she dares to clearly sing a high tone in a major key as she seems to accept the psychological dare to imagine that her mother is rejoicing. Perhaps she is taking steps to rejoice by singing this melody, whether or not her mother would rejoice for her. In any case, the melody Gloria sings indicates some kind of an intra-psychic shift. The tone she sings on the word dare is an F, the major third of the Db chord. She is clearly in Db now with her melody. Her voice does wobble slightly on the word rejoice, revealing how challenging it is to enter into this experience. But she continues on in the new key as the song becomes more established:

57      D<sup>9</sup>/A<sup>9</sup>                                      G<sup>9</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>                      G<sup>9</sup>maj<sup>6</sup>

Do I dare im - a - gine that she would re - joice for me

The song form is clearly established at this point, with a clear though flexible tempo, definite measures and an accompaniment pattern that is consistently creating the beats of the song. I chose to play a countermelody along with Gloria's melody, since I am confident that she knows the direction and length of the phrase. The natural musical-aesthetic impulse also had the effect of solidifying a sense of mutuality between us while heightening the forward momentum of the music. Gloria continues to try out the more hopeful stance. In

between each 'do I dare' lyric, I play a melodic phrase that at once echoes hers and also creates dialog, beckoning further response:

61 E<sup>b</sup>min<sup>-</sup> Fmin<sup>-</sup> G<sup>2</sup> D<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>-</sup>/A<sup>2</sup>

do I dare do I dare do I dare im - a-gine

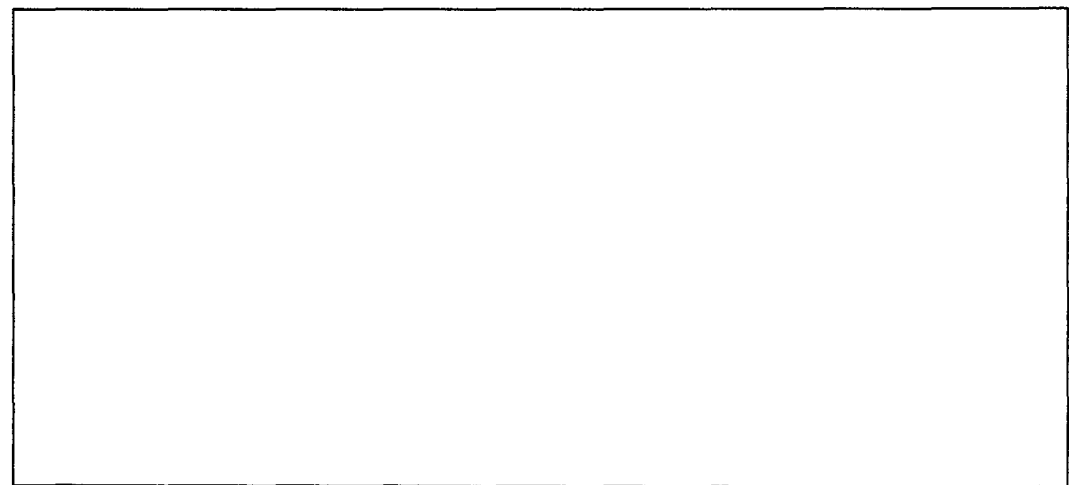
As Gloria sings "*Do I Dare Imagine*" I go to an extremely high register, reinforcing the idea suggested in the lyric of imagining:

8  
65 G<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>-</sup> D<sup>2</sup> G<sup>2</sup> D<sup>2</sup> D<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>-</sup>

Oh oh oh oh Do I dare im - a-gine

60 G<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> D<sup>2</sup>maj<sup>7</sup> A<sup>2</sup>min<sup>7</sup> D<sup>2</sup> G<sup>2</sup>

that she would be full of joy to see to



In response to Gloria's lyric I play a light counter melody in the upper register representing her idea and then she continues, shifting the sentiment:



As Gloria sings the word angry I start to play descending chords. At this point Gloria starts to speak rather than sing, taking the perspective that she imagines her mother might take:

78 Parallel Fifth: Descending

say she did-n't lis-ten to me      *Spoken: she didn't listen to me so now she has to do it on her own she didn't listen to me*      Would she be re

Gloria pauses as the pulse of the music slows and I play chords in the lower register of the piano. She returns to singing and asking about her mother's perspective:

Fmin

Would she be re-sent-ful      re-sent-ful of my succ-ess      5

B<sup>b</sup>min

keep point-ing out my fail- ures      point-ing out how long it's tak      3

85 B<sup>b</sup>min Bmin

en      how much dark-ness I went through      3

As Gloria sings I play the two minor chords that Gloria had chosen and played earlier in the session that she said represented her conflicted relationship with her mother:

Bmin B<sup>b</sup>min

igh would she rid-i-cule me oh that dark-ness would she

88 Bmin B<sup>b</sup>min

say you did-n't have to do all that you chose that you were a fool

As Gloria sings I respond by alternating G major seventh with B minor to support her lyrics. She continues to vacillate between trying out a more hopeful attitude, and then punishing herself for even daring to open herself to the possibility:

91 B<sup>b</sup>min 3 Bmin Gmaj<sup>7</sup> Bmin 3

you were a fool would she rid-i-cule me would she rid-i-cule me put me down

Hearing the word "*rejoice*", I move the harmony from G major 7, which contains the notes of B minor to B major 7, and then move to a new key:

94 Gmaj<sup>7</sup> B E

or would she re-joice that I found my life at last I found my life at last

This shift to a new key mirrors and heightens the contrast between the attitudes that Gloria is taking as she creates the lyrics. “*I found my life at last*” is a significant statement, a definitive statement that I hear as a change from what has been sung by Gloria up to this point. I play music suggesting a movement to a new major tonality. Gloria pauses, and I continue, using the B major that Gloria suggested and the B that Gloria has continued to sing to transition the music into a new key, E major. This is another point where I play a harmonic sequence that suggests the possibility of a transition like a transition to a new section, an introduction to a new musical place:

97 F<sup>#</sup>min<sup>7</sup> Bsus Emaj

Harmonic direction has influenced Gloria to emerge from meekness and conflict and take the stance of psychological strength represented by her singing the lyric "*I found my life at last.*" This psychological stance in turn leads both participants to the establishment of a new key. The B tonality, whose alteration between minor and major exemplified psychological conflict, now serves as a dominant pivot for the establishment of a new key and new tonality, E major:

Emaj<sup>7</sup>      E      Emaj<sup>7</sup>      Amaj<sup>7</sup>

The musical score is written on two systems of staves. The first system consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody begins with a quarter rest, followed by a half note G2, then a quarter note A2, and a half note Bb2. This is followed by a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, a quarter note E3, and a quarter note F3. A slur covers the next four notes: G3, A3, Bb3, and C4. The melody then continues with a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note G4. The system ends with a quarter rest. The lyrics 'I've found my life at last' are written below the first staff, with a blank space after 'last' corresponding to the quarter rest at the end of the first system. The second system also consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It begins with a quarter note G2, a quarter note A2, and a quarter note Bb2. This is followed by a quarter note C3, a quarter note D3, a quarter note E3, and a quarter note F3. A slur covers the next four notes: G3, A3, Bb3, and C4. The melody then continues with a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note G4. The system ends with a quarter rest. The lyrics 'I've found my life at last' are written below the first staff, with a blank space after 'last' corresponding to the quarter rest at the end of the first system.

I've found my life at last I've found my life at last

[illegible]

Gloria is singing a melody with tonal motion and a wider range. This entire section includes tones that span her widest range up to this point, an octave from B to B. The music here is delicate, tender, with the harmony tones in the higher register of the piano. There is a firmly established and predictable harmonic progression that moves with Gloria's melody. Gloria continues to sing with a more hopeful attitude. In response to the lyric "*leaving the darkness behind,*" I play a descending melodic line, to manifest the motion of leaving:



104 Amaj<sup>7</sup>

leaving the darkness be-hind

The motion of the tones may have triggered imagery for Gloria as she continues to sing:

sail-ing south to calm wat-ers

After hearing Gloria's lyric content, I begin playing tones in an arpeggio-like fashion, using E Lydian alternating with E major, to manifest the sense of water and motion. The fact that it is in a lower register creates the sense of a big expanse of water:

107 Bm Emaj<sup>7</sup>

nav-i-ga-tung through the ice-bergs sail-ing south

The lyric content continues to be filled with imagery that is congruent with the warm flowing quality in the music:

109 E Emaj<sup>7</sup> A/E E

blue skies tur-quoise wa-ters songs mu-sic would she re-

As the song comes to a close, the A minor chord reminds us of previous minor tonalities, blending emotional qualities as Robinson (2005) describes, and Gloria ends not definitively but with a question:

114 F<sup>7</sup>/E Amin E

joyce would she re-joyce for me oh who knows?

Though the words depict doubt, the quality of her voice and the shift of the music from minor to major indicate that something has changed for Gloria regarding her relationship to her mother.

### Concluding Thoughts on Do I Dare Imagine?

The fact that Gloria sang many of her lyrics on only one or two tones allowed me to create different tonal centers. This has the effect of creating a sense of momentum and movement even as the melody tone does not change. Many of Gloria's melody tones were either Bb or Db. I created harmonies related to Bb minor or Db major. When she sang the lower tone it usually related to the minor, the higher tone to the major. At a particular point in response to the ongoing process, I harmonized the lower tone with the major tonality, and this seemed to make it easier for her to take advantage of the musical and psychological possibilities presented by the major tonality. Her tonal range expanded as the improvisation progressed. This expansion of range corresponds to an expanded capacity for emotional experience and expression.

### Woman Why Are You Weeping?

The next excerpt revealed some of the life-long psychological conflicts that Gloria began to grapple with in music therapy. "*Woman Why are you Weeping?*" contained issues of loneliness, sadness, and the sense of having a weak sense of self, which Gloria attributed to her mother's smothering parental style.

*Choking, choking on her tears*

Gloria sings about a “her”, a woman who is crying, and is also identifying with the woman. Singing ‘her’ instead of ‘my’ was a way to gain some distance over the potentially overwhelming feelings and to create imagery and a dramatic story.

*Choking on her tears*

*Suffocating*

*Silent tears*

*Choking on her tears*

*The song of the tears*

*The song of the tears*

*Oh...oh... oo*

*Woman why are you weeping?*

*Woman why are you weeping?*

*Woman why are you weeping?*

*Why are you weeping?*

Gloria often sang questions to herself, developing a way to reflect on the content of what she was singing. A religious person, she was familiar with the Bible and often used words and images from it. The woman she is singing about in this example has to do with herself, while also relating to the image described in the Bible of Mary Magdalene crying after the death of Christ. Religious imagery not only gave her a source of inspiration in creating lyrics, it also lent a

spiritual tone to the music making process. She often sang in a prayer like style or chant. At times she consciously referred to Biblical text, at other times only afterwards realized the connection. She often made conscious efforts to find solace in singing to God or singing from God's perspective. So there is a dual perspective, as Gloria asks a question to the woman, and also seems to relate the experience to her own feelings in the moment.

*They've taken away my song*

*They've taken away my voice*

*I have no voice!!!!!!!!!!!!!!*

Gloria shared that the sense of being stifled, of being rendered powerless by having cancer, was related to life long feelings of being stifled, of having "no voice." Though the feeling was familiar to her, she had never framed the issue in quite that way.

One of the powerful effects of the infusion of words and music was that it allowed for Gloria to make statements related to her inner life of thoughts and feelings that were at once contradictory, yet true to her experience. She sang the lyric 'I have no voice' with a very strongly supported tone that lasted for a significant amount of time. So even as she sings she has no voice, she experiences having a voice. The frustration in trying to express herself fueled her expression. These paradoxical moments came up often in therapy and seemed to hold special significance for Gloria. It seemed to be a way that Gloria integrated previously

disparate parts of herself. She was experiencing her voice, discovering her voice, even as she sings about having no voice. Austin (2004) writes that “the process of finding one’s voice, one’s own sound, is a metaphor for finding one’s self” (p.215).

*What do you want to sing about?*

*I don’t know anymore*

*It’s all gone*

*I don’t know anymore*

*Whatever was there, I don’t know anymore*

*And I can’t find it anymore* (the music cadences to the tonic)

Though the content of the words convey a sense of hopelessness, the experience of the music making – both creating it and listening to it while creating it – evoked a powerful sense of satisfaction for Gloria. She described the process as going deeply into her own pain, the “underworld of darkness”, and coming up feeling changed, feeling more accepting of herself.

After a powerful improvised song like the one above, she often reflected on the experience by taking a different perspective within the same session. Later in the session in which we improvised “*Woman Why Are You Weeping?*” she continues to refer to its content. She begins to sing once again about the woman who cannot find her voice, but as the music continues and Gloria renders the

characters in greater detail, a connection to her childhood appears to develop. The weeping woman becomes a child, a “kid” and her interrogator becomes – partially in response to music from the piano that Gloria later characterized as nurturing – more involved and concerned. Here are the lyrics that exemplify this development:

*Now this is a sad sad story indeed. I'm so sorry to hear it.*

*Let's go down to the cellar and bring that kid some cold water*

*Put my arms around her*

*Just prop her up, hold her, give her a little hug*

*Drink the water*

*Don't be afraid to drink the water*

*It's safe*

*It's safe to drink the water and tell your story*

*Sing your song*

*I was lonely and afraid*

*I was lonely, no one to talk to*

*I was lonely and afraid.*

Like a dream, the characters she created in these song improvisations represented distinct parts of herself. There is a part of herself that feels lonely and damaged. And there is a part of herself that is capable of nurturing and accepting feelings towards herself. Like a dream, the characters give her some distance from

the material so she can explore the emotional conflicts of her psychological condition that the characters represent. She sings of a kid in a cellar, representing the isolation she felt as a child and that has affected her as an adult. She also creates the point of view of a character that can nurture the child. The musical experience seemed to provide an environment of nurturance that contributed to the emergence of this nurturing character. After being nurtured the isolated kid character can answer the question to which the woman who was weeping could not voice a response. Why was she (the child) weeping? She wept because she was “lonely and afraid”. Gloria explained that the answer to the question “Woman, Why are you Weeping?” was found during this experience. Though the answer was intensely sad, the experience of finding the answer was powerfully satisfying for her.

I too, experienced an intensity of emotion and a powerful sense of completion as the experience of creating the music with her words and melodies came to a close. The mutual music making experience allowed us to journey together. This was integral in order for me to resonate with and understand Gloria, and for Gloria to experience my presence and support as she continued to tap deeply into her creative expressive process.

#### Detailed Description and Analysis

Gloria is half singing, half sighing in a breathy voice, a series of gentle moans. She sounds tentative, fragile and tenderly sad. I play a D minor arpeggio and then hold a D minor chord. I add an E on top of the chord:





This E is also repeating but at a faster rate than the sound of the moans. Because it is being played in a higher register, repeated and played more quickly, the E note brings a quality of urgency to the music.

Gloria's vocal sounds are moans of short duration. Upon reflection her moans are related to the music in that they have pitches - E and then D. I add a D in the bass D, and this D minor chord adds a sense of finality. When this happens there is no tempo from the piano, but the tones are still heard as they are held and begin to fade. This is a decisive moment in the music: it can come to an end by simply fading, or continue.

But Gloria continues to moan, creating a pulse as each moan has the same duration and the same length of time between them, and I take up that pulse and begin to play D minor chords in a very low register and in marcato articulation, playing a chord for each moan:



The low register and close spatial relationship of the chord tones, in addition to the rhythmic articulation of the piano creates a more primal rhythmic quality in the music. The combination of Gloria's moans, the repetition of both the voice and the piano on the same pitches, and the piano accompaniment lends the music a more ominous quality. The entire section described occurred in eight seconds. The next three paragraphs will review these eight seconds.

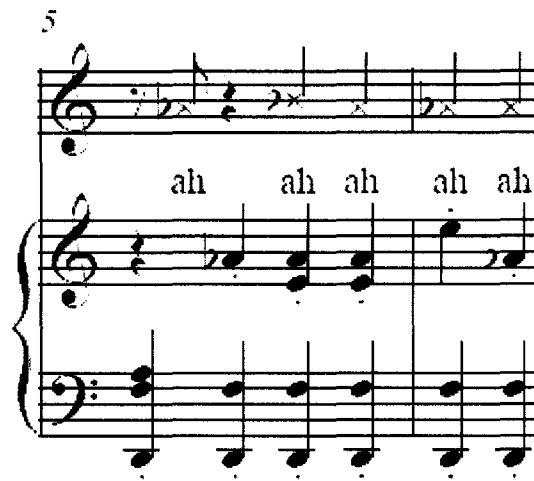
My intention is to help Gloria involve herself in musical expression even while supporting her non-musical sounds. The D minor ninth harmony, which upon reflection is one I often use to create a blend of sadness and warmth, creates a tonal context for Gloria to sing. My faster E note in the higher range of the piano is a provoking, stimulating factor for Gloria to respond to. By matching the tempo of Gloria's moans in the left hand while playing at a faster tempo in the right hand, I am attempting to follow and lead at the same time. Yet upon analysis this is a limited understanding of the interaction. Gloria is also leading me, and the sounds are going on at the same time, so that there is no clear cause and effect. There is rather a simultaneous and mutual shaping of the music.

The ominous quality of the music created by my repeated marcato D minor chord in the low register is a musical commentary; “I hear that something painful is present and there is more that has yet to be expressed. Go ahead.” The fact that the chord at the piano does not change tones and does not sustain tones brings the thick texture and rhythm to the forefront. This is done in an attempt to match the primal quality of the vocal sounds. Yet it also provides tonal possibilities that might lie ahead for Gloria if she chooses to sustain her vocal sounds. She has a harmonic context within which to make melodies. The fact that the primal moans she makes are in the tonality of the music is an indication that the harmony is being perceived and responded to on some level, and that melodies are possible in the future.

It is not apparent that Gloria is making a conscious choice to match the music she hears from the piano. Her sounds are breathy, revealing of her physical state and her respiration. Upon analysis, the shifting of my music at the piano from a higher to a lower register was an invitation to Gloria to sing, as the higher register sonority of her vocal range was now available for her. It was an invitation for Gloria to take up where I left off in that register of the music. The bass notes create the ground, the platform for the vocal melody.

Returning to the description, the D minor ninth chord continues in a marcato articulation at a slow, steady tempo. Gloria stops her moans, and then comes in at a higher pitch. She sustains her higher pitched moan, and then does two shorter moans. Her pitch on the last moan is an Ab. I add this note into the

harmony, adding an additional tension as this note has a tritone relationship with D, the bass tone of the chord:



I now begin to roll the chords of the harmony so that we hear the bass note first with the other notes following rapidly, almost but not quite simultaneously. The chord ends with the Ab, in effect emphasizing that note. The Ab, a tritone away from D and a dissonant tone in D minor, adds a more painful quality to the already painful sounding music.

Gloria reenters with a sound close in pitch to Ab for each beat of the music. In tempo and matching the length of the harmony, the vocalizing sounds like the beginning of weeping that is being restrained. More breath is heard after the tone of each short vocal sound. The music has more of a rhythmic emphasis now, as the marcato articulation and the voice entering together accent each beat. I bring back the E natural we heard earlier in the higher register. This E alternates with the Ab below it, and then tones G and A above the E are added in pointilistic fashion, slightly anticipating the pulse:



Upon analysis, these tones are suggestions for Gloria and from Gloria. They start with the Ab which she barely moans, and then move with each moan that she makes.

Gloria stops vocalizing. After five beats of piano alone in marcato, I change the articulation to legato, and the dynamic becomes louder, emphasizing the highest note E:



Upon analysis I did this in response to Gloria's stopping. No longer responding to her sounds, my music now has a slightly dreamy quality, and there is more forward momentum in the music as notes are heard on every eighth note

of the pulse. During recursive listening the metaphor that came to mind is that the legato has created a pool for Gloria to enter into.

More time passes without the voice. The D minor chord with the E on top continues until a high C that rings out at a louder dynamic enters strongly and is held:



Upon analysis, I hear the playing of the C as a way of calling out, searching, for a direct response from Gloria. It is an invitation and a stimulation to try and encourage her to come back actively into the musical creation.

More tones- both tonal (A) and nontonal (Ab), are added to the D minor accompaniment figure, so that it takes on a rocking quality. This combined with the legato articulation creates a more soothing effect than the earlier marcato music.

I am adapting the music to make the accompaniment pattern more soothing, but at the same time acknowledging the dissonant quality of her feelings. It is my attempt to convey my acknowledgement that Gloria is in turmoil, and yet continue to present possibilities for movement and development. The combination of elements creates a blend of emotional qualities: soothing,

comforting, painfulness and foreboding. This is an example of how music can blend a variety of emotions in the way that Robinson (2005) describes.

Gloria begins to sing now in a low register. The vowel “oh” is used as she enters and ends on pitches that are predominant in the harmony. The melody begins with E and quickly rises up to F and then leaps up to Bb before settling on A to end. It takes up 2 beats and ends right in tempo:

The musical score shows a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is on a single staff with a treble clef, starting with a whole note E4, followed by a half note F4, and then a half note Bb4. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a continuous eighth-note pattern. The vocal line is labeled 'S' and 'oh oh oh oh ah ah ah ah ah ah'. The piano part is labeled 'Ped' and 'sim...'.

This is the first truly musical vocalization of the improvisation, and as such it bears analysis. There is an unsettled quality to this phrase as it slides from pitch to pitch before it ends on the A and sustains this pitch. E and F are half steps and Bb and A are half steps, and so the melody has qualities of tension. The Bb is a minor sixth away from the minor tonic and creates painful tension as described by Cooke (1959) that resolves sadly downward to the fifth of the D minor chord.

Gloria makes more soft primal vocal sounds in tempo and then moves to the higher melody note D and sings:





harmonic landscape that has emerged. However, they are not tones of relaxation, of resolution, but of tension. This creates the possibility of musical and emotional exploration.

The piano bass line continues as we hear the first words sung:



Gloria has moved from moans, to tones, to sung words, to creating melodic phrases. Upon analysis, the first words sung - “choking on her tears”- reflect her experience a few seconds earlier. She is describing her physical state as she made the sounds described earlier in this analysis as “weeping that is being restrained.” Considering what she is experiencing, reflecting on her previous inability to make more sustained sounds and sing words, Gloria then creates words and melody. Singing specifically about her struggle, about her inability to express, is a successful approach for her in finding her creative voice.

The first melodic phrase starts on the tonic and goes down to the fifth step of the key. The downward direction of the tones of the natural minor scale combined with the words give the music an expressive quality of anguish. This is reinforced by the repetition of the word “choking” and the repeated tonic note D. Yet the words “she” followed by “her” rather than ‘I’ and ‘my’ add an ambiguity to this inward quality. At this point it is difficult to know: is Gloria singing about herself, or is she telling a story about someone else? The ambiguity is amplified by the actual tone on ‘her’ going upward rather than down. By emphasizing “her”

through this tonal movement, Gloria appears to be distancing herself from the character of being observed.

The phrase “*she’s choking on her tears*” starts on the melody tone A and repeats with some pitch variation before sliding up on the last note of the phrase to D. There is a metric implication to the timing and length of her lyric, and the content of the words sets the stage for a story to be told. The words “choking” and “tears” begin to explain Gloria’s previous expressions of anguish, adding to what is now emerging as the basis for the creation of a lyric song form, with the theme of a protagonist who is in turmoil.

After the first singing of the words “*choking on her tears*” I respond harmonically by echoing the rhythmic pattern of the lyric phrase, then rising to a higher register, with the notes moving in parallel motion in fifths to create a counter melody, as Gloria repeats the phrase:

The image displays musical notation for a vocal phrase and its harmonic response. The first staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, with lyrics underneath: "tears she's cho-king on her tears". The notes are A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, and A5. The second system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and shows a harmonic response in parallel motion, with notes A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G6, and A6. The lower staff is in bass clef and shows a counter-melody in parallel motion, with notes D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. Both systems conclude with a double bar line and a key signature change to one sharp (F#).

The parallel motion and the use of the B natural to establish tones of the Dorian mode on D give the music a slight suggestion of Organum.

The fluctuation in her vocal pitches seems to be a reflection of Gloria's tentativeness. Yet her entrance and exit reveal her sense of phrasing and that she is feeling the pulse and meter of the improvisation, and that she is in the flow of the music. The musical process allows her to experience and express her vulnerability even as she takes a developmental step forward by creating a melody with words. The fact that Gloria is now creating words that reveal her being reflective of her experience conforms to Robinson's (2005) description of the process of how feelings emerge. There is cognitive monitoring here, evidenced by the addition of words, and this music and word combination adds to and alters the experience that Gloria is having.

Gloria continues to sing using words:



The limited tonal range of the melody, the repetition of tones and words, and the content of the words create an overall quality of being constricted that is relentless in its persistence. The accompanying harmony reassumes an ostinato-like repetitive form reflective of the relentless constriction of the experience. The accompaniment continues the clearly D minor harmonic base, while creating motion with the descending half step motion of F to E.

The fusion of the word “suffocating” with the repeating tone A, harmonized in minor with a repeated ostinato harmony, gives the sense that there is no escape from Gloria’s predicament. Yet the basic pulse of the harmony, and the more sustained melodic rhythm are creating and building forward momentum at the same time. The word “tears” is held for the longest amount of time of any melody note sung to this point, then fades out gradually.

By beginning to use words and melodies, Gloria has accepted the invitation to enter into the song form and in doing so there is hope that at the very least she can discover and express herself in music. The words imply any feelings present are repressed. Perhaps there are tears that need to flow outward in order for the sense of choking to diminish. Singing is a way of breathing with support and not suffocating.

The vocal melody comes in at a louder dynamic and on the tonic D:



The accompaniment pattern continues in eighth notes, alternating the C and A notes on top of the D minor harmony. Harmonically the F and E movement is still heard inside the chord. Parallel motion of perfect fourths and perfect fifths are utilized within the pattern. Then a piano melody emphasizing the E and accompanied by parallel motion in fourths underneath enters:

The B which is repeated below the E melody note brings out the Dorian modal quality and the parallel motion of fourths and fifths in the overall accompaniment create an Organum quality. The parallel motion of the interval of the fourth, which begins and ends away from the tonic, brings attention to two notes searching together, a metaphor for the journey Gloria and I are taking. The phrase swells dynamically and continues. The piano melody, coming after the vocal phrase, has a mournful, introspective quality. The dynamic swell and the slight quickening of tempo lend a searching quality to the music.

Gloria starts singing on “lu.” These tones are the highest we have heard sung to this point:



These high tones are in a similar range as Gloria’s earlier crying like sounds. A break can be heard between her head voice and then the chest voice when she moves down to sing the D. Her first D is in her head voice, and then shifts to chest voice. This has as much to do with breath support as pitch range. She is sustaining her breath here as she sings with legato, in contrast to her brief vocal sounds of her earlier singing. There is a physiological shift occurring in how she is breathing and supporting her sounds. She is supporting her expression more strongly and her vocal range is expanding.

The harmonic pattern from the piano continues, with the bass tone D and tones of the Dorian mode, with dynamic swells on occasion to create a sense of motion and energy. A new melody with words, entering on the upbeat at a louder dynamic, is begun:

34 Dmin<sup>15</sup>

The song of the tears      the song of the tears

The louder dynamic, regular rhythm and repeated tones contribute to an overall quality of definition. There is a countermelody in the accompaniment that echoes the non-verbal melody heard a measure before. The harmonic pattern with the countermelody adds a reflective quality and a sense of forward motion. Upon reflection the image I have is a canoe being paddled steadily, carefully, moving through waters that are unknown. The dynamic swells and the parallel fourths of the accompaniment contribute to this image.

The fact that Gloria's melody returns to a repeating note on the tonic D after containing tones both ascending and descending on nonverbal singing could be an indication of the difficulty in improvising lyrics while simultaneously creating melodies that have tonal direction. But the rhythmic entrance, on the upbeat, and the ensuing rhythmic phrase with its syncopation, is a more complex rhythm than previously heard. Upon analysis this is an indication that what has occurred to her initially is the verbal phrase. "The Song of the Tears" will be the

subject of her singing. The phrase itself automatically organizes the rhythm. The lyric reveals that Gloria is aware of how to put her words and music into the structure of a song.

Gloria's vocal melody continues without words and now has an ascending direction:



The melody ascends from the tonic and quickly descends to the tonic. It is a tentative attempt at creating a melody that would accommodate the phrase “the song of the tears.”

Again Gloria's melody has more movement when the singing is nonverbal rather than when it contains words. This alternation of singing a melody without words and singing words on a single tone is a developmental step towards creating a melody with both words and tonal motion. The repeated single tone reflects an emotional state, and also a stage in the creative process of becoming able to improvise melodies. It is noteworthy that whether she uses single tones or multiple tones without words she is locked into the basic tonality of the

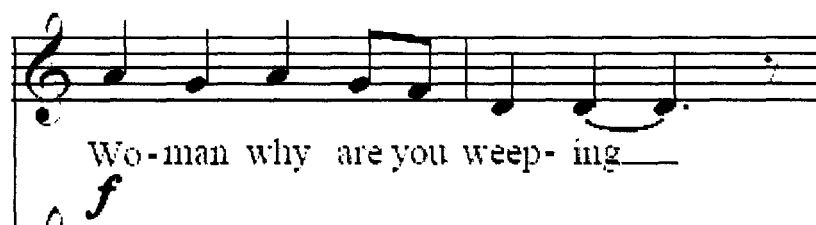


accompaniment. The more she sings the stronger and clearer her voice becomes and this seems to be an indication that she is drawing support from the music of the piano.

Gloria enters with a defined vocal melody in a steady moderate tempo right on the downbeat of the established metric structure of the music. She sings:



This is an essential moment in the development of the improvised song and Gloria's ability to enter into this creative process. She has created a melodic idea that is the same exact range as the non-verbal melody she sang right before. Upon analysis this non-verbal melody could have been accommodated to the phrase "song of the tears." But Gloria has shifted in significant ways. First she conceived of a different lyric to be used with the emerging melodic idea she is forming. Second, in fusing the new phrase to the melodic idea she has also changed her perspective on the psychological issue she is dealing with. Rather than continuing to experience and suffer the effects of the constriction that had been eloquently portrayed musically, she now addresses the constricted character, asking "*Woman, why are you weeping?*" She has moved away from the emotional vortex to explore the situation from a perspective in which she can be more contemplative, and not restricted in her use of her creative musical and vocal capacities. The melody and words continue:



The music overall is getting stronger, more forceful. The second phrase of the melody which starts on the fifth above the tonic gives the question “*Woman, Why are you Weeping*” a sense of assertion. The accompaniment during this eight beat phrase swells, utilizing an even wider range of dynamics, becoming louder and slightly faster. In addition the articulation in the right hand of the piano ostinato is changing, with a more attacking sound on the entrances.

The overall musical quality creates the sense of a quest for something without much hope of getting it, given the sense of finality of the melody’s tonic D. I hear the lyrics and understand them in terms of Gloria’s personal feelings. In retrospect, my change in articulation in the right hand to a sharp attack is revealing of the psychological theory that depression can be anger turned inward toward the self, and I begin to model turning the energy outward.

Now I change tones of the repeated harmonic pattern, which have consistently been in the Dorian mode, by making a striking shift in the bass

register, adding an Ab, a tritone away from the tonic D, while the D remains the lowest tone:



The Ab in the bass replaces the A, the stable fifth of the key. The alternation between phrases based on the now familiar D and the suddenly interjected Ab gives the music an unbalanced, turbulent quality. This contrasting harmony contributes to the instability, and yet there are also common tones to the previous D minor harmonies, suggesting links to what has gone on before. The change in harmony I make is a way to intensify the psychological question by musically adding unresolved tones of tension, and in effect creating more momentum to encourage an answer to the question. It supports the questioning by creating a harmony that is unstable, less resolute, and this harmony creates new tonal possibilities for Gloria.

As the new Bb harmony reaches its apex, Gloria continues:

47 B<sup>b</sup>7<sup>b</sup>9/D Dmin<sup>+</sup>

They've ta - ken a - way my song they've

The harmony resolves back to D minor as the final word of the phrase is sung on the tonic D. This final word “*song*” is sung at a louder dynamic, and the harmonic accompaniment is also louder and adds a counter melody with a B natural in a high register, a strong contrast to the Bb of the previous harmony. Taken all together there is more intensity in the music, a sense of surging and swelling. The metaphor I use retrospectively is that of a storm, with ocean waters swelling.

It is significant that now Gloria is singing in the first person, using the word “my”:

50 B<sup>7</sup>F<sup>7</sup>A/D

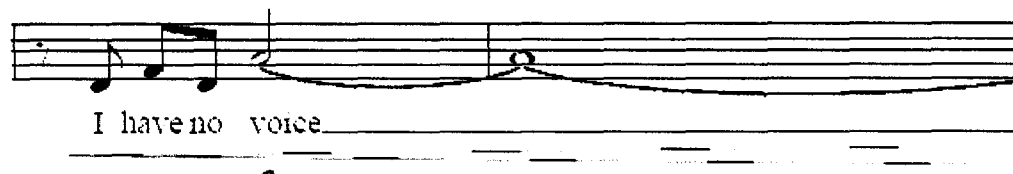
tak - en a-way my song

Clearly the “song” she sings at this point is hers. The music is fueling her, creating momentum and energy as the intensity builds. The harmony is in reverse order as the melodic phrase now starts on the tonic D minor harmony and moves to the more unstable and dissonant one based on D and Ab. The counter melody from the piano, which started on B and moved down a third to G, now starts on G and ends on E, another descending third. These countermelodies occur after the vocal melody is sung, creating a kind of echo response to the vocal line. These descending thirds amount to a sense of falling.

The melody and lyric continue, and for the first time Gloria uses the word “I” which signifies more ownership of the content and the sentiment:

I have no voice they've tak - en a way my song

Gloria continues, singing forcefully and with full breath support:



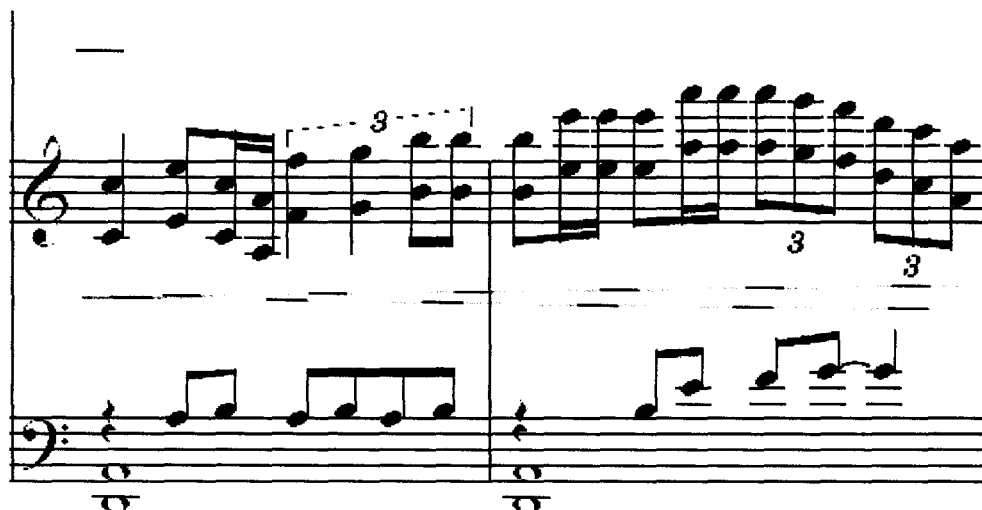
This strongly sung melody ascends to the final tone of A, which is a noticeable contrast to the previous vocal phrases which ended by descending to the tonic. Even more striking is that the last word is held for nine beats - over two measures –and is by far the longest tone to this point. While the tone is held vocally, the right hand piano countermelody, now in octaves ascends and then descends, using repeated tones and a sharp attack:

 The image shows two systems of musical notation. The top system is the vocal line from the previous image, with the lyrics "I have no voice" and a long note for "voice". The bottom system is the piano accompaniment, consisting of two staves. The right hand (treble clef) starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and plays a series of ascending and descending eighth notes, creating a countermelody. The left hand (bass clef) plays a series of repeated eighth notes, providing a rhythmic foundation. The piano music continues throughout the duration of the held vocal note.

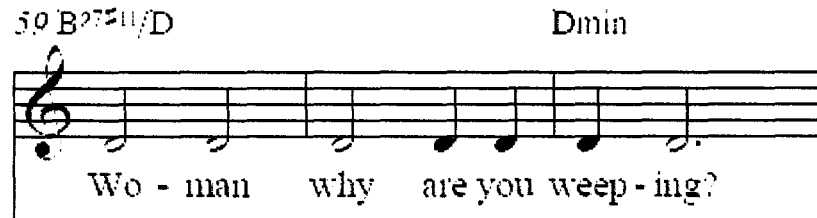
This adds to the overall intensity of the music. The vocal tone gets softer and fades, while the piano music continues at a loud dynamic. The piano music has an articulation that creates sudden shifts in dynamics, which create the sense that it is responding to the message of the protagonist, reacting with desperation to her fading voice.

Gloria seems to be nourished by the paradox of singing “I have no voice” with a tone of the longest duration and on a phrase that rises. She indeed is using her voice here. It is impossible to deny this as she gives herself the support necessary to sustain a pitch of that length. I acknowledge the intensity of her duration and the idea that she has no voice by playing countermelodies with great intensity. There are multiple messages being communicated here. Gloria is desperate because she has no voice, yet she is actually giving herself the opportunity, is allowing herself to support her voice most strongly. On the narrative level she is experimenting with the idea that she can and does have a voice. In the music she is giving herself an experience that is expressive and very self-assertive. I play more intensely and with a particular melodic countermelody that comments on her cry: “I hear your cry and I am responding. Don’t give up. It is horrible to feel that you have no voice. I will try to keep you going. Don’t stop, this is a dramatic moment and I will make an effort to join you.”

I continue a driven countermelody:



After this, Gloria sings, all on the tonic tone D:



This melodic rhythm is slower here, with half notes starting the phrase.

Gloria's repeated D and her use of "*you*" rather than I, indicates a shift of persona again. She has moved back to a distanced stance by singing "*you*" rather than "*I*", and singing only a single tone that has no motion. She has removed herself from the statement, and therefore cannot infuse her melody with life to let it have motion. The singing of "*I have no voice*" had tonal direction and was a personal statement. The lyric with the question using the word "*you*" is outside of herself, and has less melodic contour, less animation, less life, less involvement. After making such a powerful statement that she, personally ("*I*") has no voice, she has fulfilled the prophecy of that statement by following her strong melodic statement by singing with no melodic motion. Here is evidence that a lack of melodic motion is indicative of the feeling, the sense that Gloria has about herself, that she has no voice. But even a single tone is evidence of the desire to have a voice, to try and communicate. The fact that the tone goes to the well established tonic D is indicative of the congruence of this image of herself, the acceptance of the idea that she has no voice. Though she poses a question, the melodic phrase is definitive: Here is that old familiar place, that feeling that there is no where to go, nothing to say. The tonic is comfortable, just as the idea that she has no voice is



comfortable, fits her self image, is a well established stance, even though she never would have thought to put it in this way. Only because she is singing does she sing "*I have no voice.*" Having no voice is symbolic of her not having a sense of herself, but the phrase is a new metaphor for an old characterization.

Yet upon analysis there is another perspective to gain an understanding of the music and words here. It may be that Gloria's experimentation with musical form leads to the use of two contrasting melodic themes, one with a wide vocal range and the other utilizing only a single tone. This return to the single tone can therefore be interpreted as the discovery of a musical technique – the alternation of theme and counter theme – and a facet of her musical development, as well as evidence of a psychological paradox. To give credence to one perspective over the other is an arbitrary and distorting act of interpretation. Gloria is developing a way of being musical, and being musical helps her to evolve, as music naturally evolves and develops.

The piano music continues and I play with greater intensity, playing with more rhythmic emphasis on each beat of the measure, picking up on the more deliberate melodic rhythm of the previous vocal line. The first beat is played in the bass register giving us the tonic pitch D and then notes of the harmony in the upper register of the piano on the next three beats. This music continues as Gloria continues to sing:

Wo-man why are you weep-ing      They've tak - en a -

55

way my voice my song      They've tak - en a -

60 B<sup>7</sup> Dmin

way my voice my song

**ff**

The dynamic intensity is at an apex here, with both voice and piano at forte. The bass notes on the tonic D are loud and ring out as Gloria sings the word “*song*”. The harmony moves briefly to Bb7#11 under the melody note A on the word “away”. This adds a new tension/dissonance between the A of the melody and the Ab in the harmony. The highest tones of the vocal phrase are sung strongly by Gloria and held for a longer duration than the other tones. This gives the sense of a drama, a battle, a great struggle being waged, through the song at this point. The loud notes from the extreme registers of the piano are creating an orchestral texture to the music and amplify the intense sentiments of the singer.

The frustration of having no voice is fueling the expression and allowing Gloria to exercise great strength in communicating, in fact finding her voice. The strong and various counter melodies I play on the piano actually offer more melodic choices for Gloria and may give her added confidence in freely singing tones other than the tonic. The musical intervention has a direct bearing on her emotional state. If she can feel she does have a melodic direction, she can feel she has a voice. There is an internal battle going on in a sense here, as Gloria’s tentatively newly emerging sense of self battles with the old sense of self, as Nordoff and Robbins (Robbins and Robbins 1991) describe. Can she have a voice - can she break out of this sense of having no voice? Harnessing her frustration seems to be fueling the strength and determination of her singing.

As the music continues, the harmony I play becomes softer, echoing the fading vocal note Gloria sings, and has a different quality here. The high register

counter melody descends and lands on F. At the same time the bass note moves from the relentlessly repeating D to a new tone, Bb:

The musical score shows two measures. Measure 72 has a treble staff with a descending eighth-note melody, a middle staff with a triplet of eighth notes, and a bass staff with a descending eighth-note melody. Measure 73 has a treble staff with a whole note chord, a middle staff with a whole note chord, and a bass staff with a whole note chord. The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4.

These strongly consonant tones being heard at the same time diminish the tension heard in the music. These tones are primary in creating a root position Bb major chord. This Bb chord has been heard only once a few moments before at the end of a vocal line, and this is the first time we hear it in the bass of the harmony at the beginning of a phrase, before the vocal line starts. This is a significant change in that the harmony now moves to the relative major. The change to the relative major chord, gives the music a more hopeful quality, although the fact that these tones have been heard earlier during the D minor harmonies indicates that we have not moved too far from the turmoil. The softer dynamic lends a more reflective quality to the music.

The change in harmony suggests to Gloria that there is another option, a direction, a path to an answer and a way out of the turmoil that she has not considered. It is an opportunity to experience her tones in a new context. The fact that the change of harmony is the relative major allows for all of the tonal sentiment to be accepted and included among possibilities for future melodic creation. It eliminates nothing but recontextualizes the very tones that have been sung to express turmoil and sadness, into harmony that is capable of inducing a less painful, more hopeful emotional state for Gloria. The change to a softer dynamic also acts in this way.

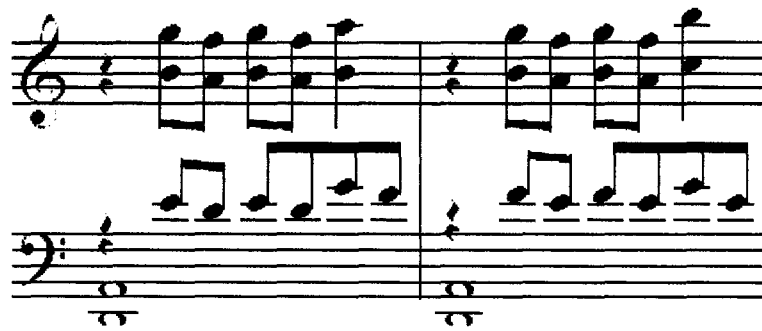
Gloria continues to ask questions as she sings:



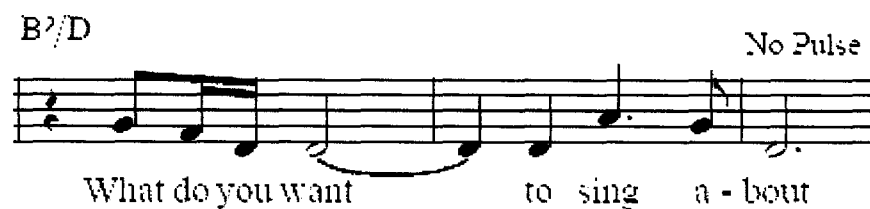
Gloria once again distances herself from the acute emotional turmoil of the situation that stifles her, shifting her perspective to ask a question of the person in distress. Upon reflection it seems that she is trying to focus on what she needs to do rather than what is stopping her from doing it. By asking “What do you want to sing about” she is giving herself the option: if you had a voice what would you sing about? By doing this she is trying to find who she is, what she has within her. This happens almost immediately after a strong expression in a loud dynamic claiming that she has no voice. The new question “What do you want to sing about” offers new possibilities, and my shift to the Bb major harmony and

softer dynamic helps to manifest this shift. It is as if both participants sense that this is the natural direction the music can take, after such a strong and intense musical section. There is a natural alternation to the contrasting harmony and dynamics and this corresponds to a potential shift of perspective for the client.

The harmony moves back to D minor and the countermelody enters after the vocal phrase ends:



The countermelody GFGFA repeats with GFGFB, the B creating the effect of reaching, of striving, of ascending, supporting the sentiment of the words in trying to find a new perspective. The vocal line returns:



I support this question harmonically with tones from the whole tone scale. This creates a cohesive fusion of words and music as Beardsley describes in that the whole tone scale has a questioning quality which matches the question of the lyric.

The music continues. I stop the accompaniment and play a countermelody in the high register, playing the phrase in octaves:



This is a dramatic alteration and upon reflection seems to be a way for me to make the commentary "What do you want to sing?" In fact the melodic rhythm of this phrase articulates these very words. Gloria continues:



An instrumental interlude then occurs for about 17 seconds:



This is the longest wordless gap of time since the lyrics began and creates the sense that Gloria is deliberating, trying to come up with an answer. The repeated ostinato motion in the left hand creates a sense of marking time, of contemplation occurring, of silent activity in the absence of vocalization. Because the usually present low register bass note D is not present, there is a less heavy quality in the music. The melodic fragments in the right hand manifest the search for content that Gloria is undertaking.

Gloria begins to sing again. The harmony is held after the vocal line enters and then shifts on the last melody note D to Bb major:



89 B<sup>9</sup>

I don't know an-y more

The fact that the harmony is not the tonic, and that the rhythmic pulse is continuing as there is an echo in the melodic rhythm of the countermelody, helps to create the sense that the sentiment is not final, that we are in a process. The D melody tone is comforting to Gloria, giving her stability as she tries to ponder the answer to the question.

Even without knowing what she wants to sing about, Gloria continues singing:

I don't know an-y more

After this vocalization, I move to D in the bass and introduce a new idea from the piano. Upon reflection I wanted to change the music somehow and break out of the pattern. The music called for a change, and I suspected Gloria needed a chance to break away from the constricting structural aspects of the song. I play a chromatic descending line in octaves beginning on the tone A in a higher register and continuing downward. The descriptive image is of a heavy object getting heavier as it falls. This music from the piano continues as the vocal line returns:

03 No Pulse

The musical score for 'No Pulse' features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is on a single staff with lyrics 'I don't know an - y more'. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a complex, chromatic descending line in octaves. A large, stylized graphic of a hand or a musical instrument is positioned below the piano staves.

The piano melody and the vocal melody intersect. The piano tones continue past D to C# and then C, repeating these last two tones before stopping. I am stopping the flow of the pulse in the music. There is less of a quality of traveling forward here, of journeying.

As Gloria pauses to take a breath the chromatic descending line from the piano repeats again at a slightly louder dynamic and slows down, finally resting on C#. The vocal line returns on D, a dissonant half step away from the C#:

0.5

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line with the lyrics "It's all gone" and "I don't". The piano accompaniment features a chromatic descending line in the right hand and a single pitch C# in the left hand. A "Ped." marking is present in the right hand. The second system continues the vocal line and the piano accompaniment, with the right hand playing a chromatic descending line and the left hand playing a single pitch C#.

The accompaniment from the piano now has the single pitch C#, played in octaves and in different registers, while Gloria sings the D, accentuating the tension between these two tones. I am musically commenting on the lack of movement of the single tone that Gloria sings, the stuckness of it, by repeating a piano tone a mere half step away from her vocal tone.

I add a D so that now I am playing the half step of C# and D simultaneously in various registers of the piano. I am deliberately creating tension, bringing out the fact that Gloria is repeating a single tone by repeating the same tone as well as a tone a half step away, that creates a dissonant clash. This is an intervention to stimulate and evoke a response. Gloria's tones are under pitch and rise up to the D, as if the C# is pulling her down and the effect is like

releasing a taut rubber band as she rises to the D. The tension between the two tones creates energy for her, and triggers her to sing in response to the C#.

Gloria continues to sing on one tone:

I don't know an - y more it's all gone

sim...

The harmony at the piano continues to consist of repeated soundings of the D C# interval. These become more frequent and more insistent and spread to all registers of the piano. They become almost continuous, bursts of energy that threaten to engulf Gloria's monotone in a swarm of dissonance. Then the bass tone C# is heard in a low register and held as the minor second interval of C# and D continues above it. This C# in the bass, shifting of registers plus the erratic rhythmic patterns of the intervals creates a sense of transition in the music, suggesting we may be moving away from the tonal center D even as the vocal line continues to repeat it.

Gloria's tones now are occasionally a little sharper than D, suggesting a yearning to move out of her present state. Her sharper tones may be in response to the closeness of the half step intervallic relationship between the emphasized C# in the piano and her D vocal tone.

With a hollow vocal quality and with little change in dynamic or inflection, her tempo gets faster as she sings:

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system features a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics "It's all gone I don't" are written below the notes. The piano accompaniment is in the same key and time, with a bass line in the lower register. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics "know an - y - more what - e - ver was there I don't". The piano accompaniment includes triplets (marked '3') and a crescendo (marked 'cresc.') leading to a final chord. The piano part is written in treble and bass clefs.

The pace of my piano music becomes quicker as the vocal phrase is sung. The lack of pause between words also creates a sense of rapidity. This rapidity and the continued dissonance tones add intensity:

know I don't know an - y - more it's all

102  
gone it's gone

As Gloria sustains her last tone on the word “gone” I bring this turbulent music to a close, ending on a gentle Bb and E tritone as Gloria sings more softly. The tone of the music is warmer with legato articulation and a brief melodic phrase that echoes “anymore” The Bb E tritone, plus the pause leaves an expectant space in the music. This is the first time in this transitional section that Gloria’s vocal melody moves from D. After the vocal phrase ends, a very low bass tone D is heard from the piano. There is no motion as the previously articulated tones fade away and only the D remains:

107

3 3

it's gone I don't know an - y - more

108 109 110

3 3

8 8

Gloria returns with a descending melody and a familiar question. The low D repeats creating a funereal quality, while the right hand enters with soft descending parallel fifths starting on E and B moving by half steps:

111

Wo - man why are you weep - ing?

softly

112 113 114

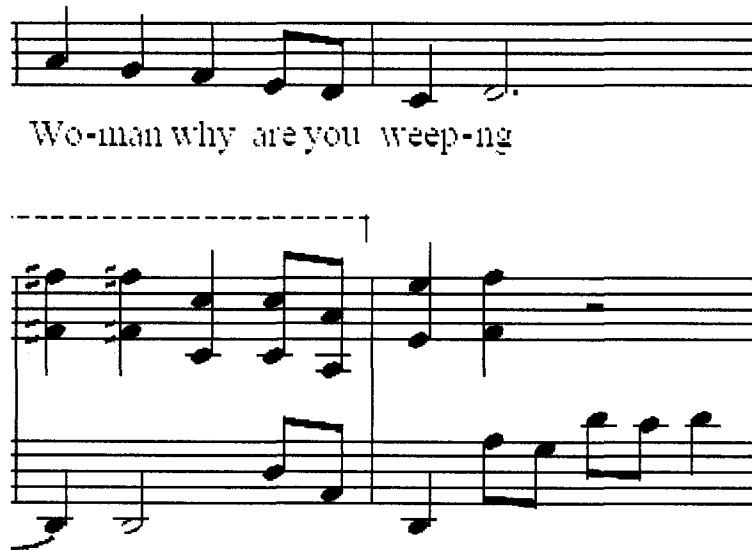
8 3

The rhythm of this half step movement in the treble is the same rhythm as “Woman why are you Weeping?” It is a way to continue to support and amplify

the theme of the improvisation, and emphasize that not having an answer does not have to squelch expression.

The pulse gently returns to the music and the D minor tonality is reestablished. The harmonic accompaniment pattern returns while the chromatic descending right hand continues. Two returning musical ideas-the familiar harmonic accompaniment pattern, and the chromatic descending right hand tones-are integrating into one sound now. This creates within the music the sense of returning to a familiar place having dealt with turmoil without fully resolving it. There is a potential synthesis within the music that is not quite realized.

Gloria continues to sing:



The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a single melodic line for a vocal part, with lyrics written below it. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment, consisting of two systems of staves (treble and bass clef). The first system of the piano accompaniment is connected to the vocal line by a dashed line, indicating it occurs simultaneously. The piano accompaniment features a complex, chromatic texture with many dissonances.

Wo-man why are you weep-ng

Gloria continues as the music intensifies. Chromatic dissonances from the piano supporting long held tones that Gloria sings contribute to this intensification:



116

Wo - man why are you weep - ing?

Gloria's downward bends to C# may be in response to the downward direction of the piano notes. Perhaps it is easier to leave her primary tone of D by going down, rather than going up. It takes less musical/psychic energy. Upon analysis it is a positive event that her tone is shifting, not static, and may represent some sense of inner psychic motion within her.

Gloria's vocal line is sung while the harmonic accompaniment continues in D minor. The right hand plays an interval of the fourth that moves chromatically starting on D creating moments of dissonance as it descends.

The tones of the piano come to a slightly softer dynamic in the right hand, landing on a consonant tone, the F, the minor third of the D minor tonality:

113

The music gets softer. With the landing on the F natural the harmonic and the dynamic intensity diminishes. This gives the music a qualitative shift from swirling turmoil toward calm, even gentleness. Soft and painful music is heard as Gloria enters into the music, singing more softly:

114 B $\flat$ /D

They've tak - en a - way

The vocal melody note A is held for almost 2 measures. The quality of her voice is different here as she is singing softly in a high register and sustaining the tone, really trying to create a musical gesture that describes her sense of loss. The phrase continues:



The high register of the piano music echoes the melodic rhythm “voice and my song” with the tones E A E E:

117 Dmin<sup>7</sup>

voice and my song

Gloria continues, obviously feeling emotions as she sings:

118 B $\flat$ /D

they've tak - en a-way

Gloria sings this while beginning to cry, and though she starts out by singing an A on the last tone, she wavers and bends the tone down to G#. Though the style of the music is not blues, the Ab that she sings, the minor seventh in relation to the Bb chord, gives an aching quality reminiscent of the expressiveness of the blues idiom. It sounds as if Gloria is feeling the pronouncement as a final, unalterable condition. Yet she keeps singing:

120 *softly* Dmin

my voice and my song

After this lyric I play and softly repeat the tonal sequence DFGA in the left hand of the piano, creating a minor pentatonic sound, while the right hand repeats pairs of staccato E's in the high register, the first one on the weak beat short and soft, and the second on the downbeat, strongly articulated:

121 Dmin

voice and my song

This high E is a reminder of the E that started off the improvisation, but it is played in a higher register, as if distant, or moving away. The pentatonic sound of the harmony adds a less emotional, more soothing quality to the music. The repetition is also meant to reassure. It is my way of trying to comfort Gloria. I continue being motivated to comfort, playing a melodic phrase:



The parallel thirds lend a quality of sad warmth with each tone having a companion tone. The thirds are a different quality than the fourths and fifths that we have often heard. The sonority of the third brings a fullness that the interval of the fourth earlier does not. The thirds are closer together, but there is less tension in the harmony. This conveys that there we have been through the most painful part of the expression and our relationship has been sustained.

This movement of thirds in the high register with syncopation in a soft dynamic has a child-like quality. Upon retrospect it is music I have used to visit painful childhood imagery of Gloria's with a sense of delicacy, sadness, and a hint of playfulness. The thirds also support the possibility of resuming the journey. The melody plus the syncopated rhythm help to create a small measure of momentum and hopefulness within the overall sense of exhaustion after great effort.

After these thirds from the piano, Gloria sings with every word being sounded with the tone D. It is sung with a soft fragile quality. As the vocal line

begins, the harmony tones shift to a Bb chord, and then the D melody tones are harmonized with a series of chords, some major and some minor:

B<sup>9</sup>                      Gmin<sup>9</sup>

and      I can't find it      an-y-more I

128   E<sup>9</sup>   E<sup>9</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>   B<sup>9</sup>/C B<sup>9</sup>A<sup>9</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>   E<sup>9</sup>maj<sup>7</sup>   Cmaj<sup>9</sup>   C<sup>9</sup>

can't find it   an-y-more I can't find it   an-y-more I can't find it   an - y -

132 D F#7/D D F#7/D D

more

8

3

These are the most chord changes we have heard in the entire piece. There is a fusion of words and harmony here as Gloria sings “I can’t find it” as the song comes to a close, and the harmony moves from chord to chord, in a sense trying to find the final chord of the cadence before finally coming to a close. The harmonic cadence finally arrives to its destination of D but shifts to major. This is the first time we are hearing the tonic D in a major key. This gives the music a sense of rest, of finality, of completion, and some solace. Ending on D major adds a hopeful quality to the music. Gloria has just had the experience of utilizing her voice, creating a musical form, and the D major chord functions as an affirmation, a punctuation to the experience. The dissonant augmented chord alternating with the major chord as the music ends is a reminder of all we have been through, the musical psychological journey we have taken.



Concluding Thoughts on Woman Why Are You Weeping?

Placing Gloria's single tone within different harmonic contexts offers the possibility of creating different qualities of musical-emotional expression. She can gain a sense of the possibilities for forward momentum through tonal movement which she is unable to perceive or realize while she restricts herself to the single melody tone. The sense of moving through to a cadence, even as she continues to sing on one single tone which does not move, can provide Gloria with a sense of moving to completion.

Within the sadness of the overall mood of the music, the emotional process intensifies, amplifies, diminishes, and the mood shifts to other emotions such as frustration and indignation. There is a sense of exhaustion, a sense of resignation, acceptance, and the possibility that the journey will continue even as this music ends.

By improvising a song with words and melodies Gloria is relying on her own musical impulses. This is a way to overcome the sense of having no self, of being stifled, of having "no voice".

Gloria utilizes repetition throughout the improvised song. Several melodic phrases and lyrics repeat, yet the changes in the other elements of the music - dynamic swells, tempo shifts, changes in register, alteration of chord voicings - helps to keep each repetition fresh. The repetition works as an unfolding expression within the context of the developing song form. Each repetition allows for a revisiting and therefore another possibility to have a new experience. This is

reflected both in how the actual music is produced, and the emotional intensity and quality conveyed in the music. The tension of unresolved questions stated in the lyrics – “*Woman why are you weeping?*” “*What do you want to sing about?*” - is reflected in the tensions of the unresolved harmonies of the music.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE THERAPIST'S PROCESS OF CLINICAL-MUSICAL CREATION

In this chapter I have included findings related to my process of listening and responding as therapist. The three major categories are: How did the therapist listen? What did the therapist listen for? How did the therapist respond?

The three categories are used for organizational purposes to help the reader assimilate the material. In reality it is an artificial distinction to separate listening from playing in terms of technique, because a major facility that needs to be cultivated in this approach is to listen while doing, to do while listening.

I begin by explaining how intuition played a role in the process. This follows with a focus on therapeutic techniques, including how I approached listening, how I considered both psychological and musical perspectives, and the importance of balancing an inquisitive stance of forming questions with a sense of acceptance for what unfolded. I describe how emotion shaped my visceral reaction and shaped my fingers, as well as go into some detail about my preparation and my state as I approached listening.

The second category, "What did the therapist listen for?" includes the perceptions that I formed as I listened. I include two tables to organize the various perceptions that formed for me during the therapy process. These tables include the emotional qualities, the musical qualities, the intentions I perceived Gloria

having when she sang, the underlying stance or personae she created as she sang, the form her singing took, and who she seemed to be directing her singing to.

Within the third category, “How did the therapist respond?”, I have included the presentational form of the pastiche to illustrate how the three categories are related. Also in this final section are specific musical elements and examples from the analysis to clarify how I utilized particular elements as therapist. At the end of the chapter I include some unexpected findings that emerged.

Before beginning the exploration of therapist technique I want to reiterate that this was a collaborative process. Gloria’s willingness and ability to work on developing herself by entering into the creative process by singing was the major factor in making the music-word creations meaningful. Her desire to sing and to become more involved with music motivated her to stay immersed in the process. Her particular attributes helped to make the musical process psychologically meaningful for her. Her unique combination of skills and needs were essential factors and cannot be overlooked. Her aspiration to be a music-maker allowed her to improvise melodies and tap into her dormant strengths as a lyricist. Her crisis became an opportunity in that her diagnosis spurred and intensified her exploration and expression in creating songs.

#### How Did the Therapist Listen?

**[To listen to any of the excerpts cited in the following sections, go to [alanturphy.com](http://alanturphy.com)]**

This category relates to the state I was in, the approach I took, and my preparation in approaching the potential emergence of the improvised song.

The actual improvisation process that led to the creation of the archived material under discussion was based at times on hunches, sensations, and preconscious responses. Intuition played a major role in influencing how I chose what to play and how the music ultimately developed. Brescia (2004) recently completed a study that illuminated how music therapists experienced and utilized intuition in their clinical practice. She identified cross case themes to relate the collective experience of the music therapists who participated in her study. The following theme expresses her findings on the use of intuition during improvisation: “When I open myself to the moment and listen deeply to the client, my intuition can guide the music that I play. The music comes from a place where I am not analyzing or organizing in a conscious way” (p. 151). This is an apt description of my intuitive faculties as I approached each session.

By listening closely to Gloria’s expression, I tried to base my musical choices on what I was sensing from Gloria, what I was hearing, what intuitions I had regarding the unfolding musical process. My listening and responding emotionally allowed my music to be informed by my intuition. It is only due to this retrospective analysis that I can describe the therapeutic uses of the particular elements of music and the techniques and processes that I have uncovered regarding the music-word relationship. Many of the findings below were only tacit understandings at the time this music was created. At other times I was aware of a particular clinical issue due to the quality of Gloria’s singing or the

content of her words. Clinical interventions were embedded in the emerging musical forms I played with Gloria, so that musical goals and clinical goals overlapped.

### Listening with the Whole Body

Building on Robinson's (2005) ideas, I was prepared to be informed by my emotional responses as I listened. That meant being prepared to have emotional reactions which emerged and influenced the shape of my hands and the touch of my fingers as I played. I was prepared to be moved emotionally but not overcome by emotion. I was "poised in the creative now" (Robbins, in Turry (1998) p.353), actively waiting and listening for the potential musical form in Gloria's demeanor, tone of voice, content of lyric, and the rhythm of her words and/or music. Stamboliev (1992) describes the importance of the state of the therapist as he responds to the client, stating, "an alert and anticipatory relaxation is a prerequisite" (p.48). Maintaining this state allowed me to anticipate how the music would structure as a developing form. I was poised to create form as I listened, hearing the phrase structure implied by the fragment of a phrase, the meaning of a word, or a physical gesture or motion.

A very important factor in my listening process was my physical connection to the music. I was moving and using my body to lead what I would play and how I would play it. My hands were poised to react in a gestural fashion. The shape of my hands as I listened was a result of my reaction to the content of the words or vocal quality. Varieties of hand shapes included caressing,

scrunching, spreading. All of these hand movements influenced my voicings, articulation and texture. Moving my fingers closer together or farther apart related to my visceral reaction to the material. Widening the distance between my hands to play in contrasting registers of low and high related to my body's reaction to the lyric and or musical content. My body entered into the flow of the ongoing pulse and influenced my pedaling and articulation. All of these musical elements influenced the development of a particular musical form as it emerged. Robinson (2005) addresses the mind-body connection explicitly stating that "physiological responses to the music are in fact emotional responses" (p. 373). She goes on to say that "music affects us emotionally by affecting our bodies" (p. 411) and our bodies affect our emotions. By entering into the music in a physical way, I allowed myself to translate my emotional responses to Gloria's expression through my body to my hands. My body's reactions not only informed my playing, but helped me to understand Gloria's emotional process, and her emotional process informed the way I played as I responded to her through my physical sensations and actions.

#### A Balanced Listening Approach

I often asked myself questions as I listened to seek more understanding. To balance the questioning/listening stance, I simultaneously took a stance of unconditional acceptance towards what was happening and what was going to happen. For me this is a spiritual approach; I accepted that what is going to happen is meant to happen. I attempted to embrace the unknown, living in the now immersed in the loving creation of the music. I tried to do this with an

absolute focus of attention. The combination of listening with questions as well as an accepting attitude helped me attain this kind of listening state.

### What Did the Therapist Listen For?

This section includes how I listened for the content of the words to understand their meaning, and how I listened for the quality of how the words were sung. This contributed to the overall listening for the musical quality of the lyrics, the rhythm of how they were sung, the tones used, the metric implications of the words, the tempo implications based on the speed with which they were sung, and the volume of the singing. I listened for the harmonic or stylistic implication based on all of these areas.

Two tables will be included in this section regarding what the therapist listened for. Table 2 includes perceptions of the therapist regarding Gloria's vocal quality including emotion, music, and the possible intention Gloria had when expressing herself. Table 3 includes perceptions regarding Gloria's underlying stance or persona, the form her singing took, and who she was singing to.

### Listening for the Client's Needs

Related to the physicality of my approach is the idea that my playing was influenced by my sense of how Gloria needed to be touched. How I touched the keys was informed by how I sensed she needed to be touched. Rather than a reassuring clasp of her hand, I would articulate my music with the same supportive energy. If I felt she needed to be soothed, my hands touched the keys



informed by my assessment. If I felt she needed comforting, if she needed physical support, if she needed stirring, if she needed to move – all of these apparent physical needs influenced how I would touch the keys. This in effect influenced my articulation, dynamics, tempo, register, texture, and tonal direction. For example, during “*Tell The Truth*,” when I heard Gloria softly moaning and sensed that she needed soothing, I shifted my dynamics and texture and played more delicately, with a more sparse texture rather than continue to match her dynamics, even as I continued to play with dissonant tones. My tonal choices kept the tension in the music which I felt was necessary for Gloria to continue her process, while I changed the touch of how I was playing in order to comfort her in the moment.

There are other examples when my tones reflected my sense of what Gloria needed energetically. When I sensed she needed to feel my supportive presence more directly, I played thirds moving in parallel motion to create a sense of being close to her and being present with her as she continued her process. When Gloria sang “*There’s no place for me to sit or stand*” during “*Broken Pieces*”, I moved my tones down a half step, sliding them down, manifesting the downward motion of moving to sit down, providing an aural place of sitting. When I sensed Gloria needed to relax as she sang this lyric, my hands became relaxed and this changed my articulation as I played. If I sensed that Gloria needed to be awakened, I changed my touch to play with a crisper articulation. This can be heard in “*There, There*” when Gloria used a kind of numb zombie-

like voice in creating despairing lyric content (“*I’m bleeding*”) and I played a cluster with a sharp attack.

### Listening for the Message in Words and Tone

While I listened I sorted out the messages that I received, with the most vibrant one- a descriptive word, or a tonal direction- coming to the forefront for my response. When I heard a quality in Gloria’s voice that suggested she was becoming more animated or emotional, I shifted my focus from tones to assessing what her emotional state was, and this informed the music I played. An internal dialogue took place which brought either the content of the lyric or the quality of how the lyric was sung, or the musical quality of the lyric to the forefront. At times all of these components were perceived as a single entity. At times they were perceived as separate elements. I listened for musical potentials while trying to comprehend the meaning of the lyric, and the significance of the lyric in terms of my understanding of Gloria and her challenges. I sorted out whether the lyric called for more attention or the way/the quality of how the lyric was sung the most prominent factor. Repetitive lyrics, which occurred often in the material under study allowed me to shift from concentrating on the lyric content to the quality of how the lyric was sung. For example, in “*Tell the Truth*”, I shifted my attention to the quality of Gloria’s singing rather than the content of the words as she continued to repeat the same words again and again.

### Listening for Psychological Discovery

This was an area that was made explicit during the research process as I listened recursively in the listening stance as therapist. I attempted to understand the meaning of the lyric content and its significance. I considered whether there was more that Gloria was not revealing. I tried to understand her motivations, the latent content of what she was singing, and what perspective she was utilizing as she sang. Was it the “wounded child” persona heard for instance in “*Oh my child*” or the “angry critic” persona heard for instance, in “*There, There?*” I considered how emotionally connected she was to the content. I wondered what the lyric content revealed about our therapeutic relationship. An important consideration was the congruence between the content of her lyric and the quality of her musical expression. I considered whether her expression was more emotionally driven or more driven by aesthetic considerations. All of these psychological considerations fed into my musical choices, sometimes consciously, more often than not unconsciously.

### Perceiving Gloria’s Vocal Quality

One of the areas of my listening and perception was in discerning the wide variety of emotional qualities Gloria utilized in singing. That entailed attempting to hear the quality, the underlying perspective, and the form of how she was singing.

The following categories list the different ways that I heard Gloria sing. They are not conclusions regarding what Gloria experienced, but are descriptions of what I perceived to help the reader understand my listening process.

### Perceived Emotional Quality

Emotions could be heard in the quality of the voice as Gloria sang. Her breathing, phrasing, volume and pitch variance revealed emotional intensity. Emotion was often heard in the bending of or length of tones. At times the pitch of her tone would waver and this was an indication of strong emotion, though not always. There were times when she sang with a gradual increase of emotion as she repeated one note or one particular phrase. There were also times when her emotion fueled melodic direction and the interval between notes. There were times that as she was singing, Gloria began to cry and she stopped singing. The music I played at the piano helped her to reenter into the music. Yet reenter can be misleading because often during those times that she was crying she would be responding to the music in some way. For instance, in “*Open up my arms*” Gloria sobbed in tempo, using the same melodic rhythm as the piano. She then began to sing again.

At other times Gloria continued to sing even as she began to cry. This can be heard in “*Woman Why are you Weeping*” and “*There, There*”. Though these occurred in the same way, the quality was different. In “*Woman Why are you Weeping*” Gloria’s crying related to her resignation that she could not find her voice. In “*There, There*” her crying related to allowing her compassion towards herself to emerge.

For organizational purposes, Table 2 lists the varied emotional qualities as single occurrences. Many times there were blends of emotion in the way Robinson (2005) describes as one emotion became more prominent than

another as the improvisation evolved. Even as I list them separately I acknowledge that some took place at the same time.

### Perceived Musical Quality

Gloria often sang on one tone which could be variable in terms of pitch. If she did not sing but spoke, I listened to the inflection, rhythm and pacing of what she said, hearing it as potential music. If she did sing only one tone, I listened to the length and volume as well as the implied pulse in order to form the phrase. When Gloria did start to move her tones, I listened for where she was headed, listening for the next note and the implied harmony that the note would imply. At times Gloria did create patterns and I anticipated what tones she would repeat or head for. At other times my harmony led her to start and move to particular tones.

### Perceived Intention in Creating Lyric and Melody

I sensed during each of the improvisations that Gloria had a purpose. Though this purpose may not have been explicit to either of us at the time, upon reflection as it occurred or upon retrospective analysis I have been able to list the intentions that I perceived Gloria had as she created her lyrics. One of the guiding principles behind my findings was to understand her intention by closely examining what she actually did. I believe that her intentions shifted as her involvement in the music changed and her psychological defenses became less or more rigid. At times the feelings triggered by the music may have occurred before she was ready to handle it. Often she could not start off ready to experience fully the feelings that were triggered by the musical experience. The evolution of the

improvisation led her be able to experience them. Many times the music itself became more intense as the improvisation unfolded. This was something I tried to gauge and respond to, sometimes with explicit changes in the music, but mostly with an implicit reaction based on my intuition at the time.

**Table 2: How the Therapist Listened: Perceptions regarding Client's Vocal Quality**

<b>Emotional Quality</b>	<b>Musical Quality</b>	<b>The Intention Perceived by the Therapist</b>
Disdainful	Monotone	To experience feelings that are not present
Hopeful	Speaking voice with inflection	To establish a melody that has words
Fearful	One tone that is fluid	To lessen present painful feelings
Disbelieving	One tone that is solid	To avoid feelings that may surface
Desperate	One tone that is repeating	To question whether the content is true
Contrasting earlier emotion	Moving tones	To question the impact of the content
Nurturing	Moving tones in relation to the harmony	To convince herself that the content is true
Searching	Moving tones implying a new harmony	To feel playful
Enthusiastic	Singing a new tone in response to a new harmony	To resolve a conflict
Desiring	Creating a brief melodic statement	To debate contrasting positions
Yearning	Responding to her previous melodic statement to create a longer melodic phrase	To find an answer to a question
Wishing that the experience would last longer than it will	Creating a melodic idea	To understand a diffuse feeling
Mournful	Repeating a previous melodic idea	To be heard
Forgiving	Creating a melodic sequence	
Ironical	Searching for a new tone	
Mocking	Searching for tones that help to convey the intention of her lyric	
Sad	Searching for a tone or phrase that will complete the musical phrase/experience	
Assertive	Rhythmic	
Angry	Holding one tone for an entire breath	
Congruent	Implying a musical style (bluesy, operatic)	
Incongruent	Head voice	
Bubbly	Chest voice	
Silly	Weak breath support	
	Strong breath support	
	Close to whispering	
	Close to screaming	
	Narrow tone	
	Open tone	
	Sharp	
	Flat	
	Wavering	
	Precisely on pitch	

Perceived Underlying Stance of the Client: Personae

Gloria could use the same phrase, intervallic distance and direction yet create a different emotional quality in her melody depending on how she was singing, from what perspective she was singing from, or to whom she seemed to be singing to. For instance, there were times when she was singing about her father and her entire demeanor changed such that she sounded like a child. At other times she might sound as if she was singing from the perspective of a wise and knowing persona, particularly when she sang from God's perspective. An example of this can be heard in "*Oh My Child*." Sometimes the content of her lyrics and the emotional quality of how she sang them were congruent as I heard them. At other times they seemed to combine to create a more complex quality, and at times they were in opposition, creating a paradoxical quality. "*There, There*" contains examples of these qualities.

Gloria's immersion in music produced a very fluid mental and emotional state in which she was able to evoke and give voice to different – sometimes contrasting – self-personifications. Just as different characters may emerge in dreams, all of whom are ultimately recognized as representing elements of the attitudes, feelings and character of one dreamer, so Gloria gave musical expression to different internal aspects and perspectives that I came to call "personae." These personae were musically distinct, and appeared to arise from deep-seated personality traits, articulating long-held underlying stances relating to issues, situations and personalities. In her state of musical involvement she was able to access several different personae as she sang, moving from one to another

during the course of a single improvisation. A vivid example of this process is heard in “*There, There.*”

The significance of these personae, their emergence in conjunction with the music being created, and their reciprocal influence on subsequent shifts and changes during the course of an improvisation will be discussed in the next chapter.

### Musical Forms

The musical form Gloria utilized was related to the emotional quality of how she sang and the persona that Gloria tapped into as she sang. Many times this was associated with the actual content of the lyrics. For instance she could sing about God in a chant like prayer form, or sing about God in a blues style. She often had dialogues with herself and this fueled her to continue her process when it became difficult. The dialogue form was one she utilized particularly when she hesitated and the music from the piano encouraged her to continue.

Gloria had a wide variety of resources to tap into. She was familiar with many of the classic operas and often referenced storylines from particular ones that moved her. She knew the Bible very well and at times in the session recalled specific sentences from the Bible and sang them with her own original melodies. Her connection to religion and her experiences with music from church contributed to the forms she created in the session. Her prayer-like singing often had a chant-like quality, particularly when her melody repeated a single tone.



Gloria had an eclectic music collection including recordings of jazz vocalists and classical singers as well. This was a collection that she intrinsically tapped into during this creative process. She did not bring in specific melodies, but she might snap her fingers and move in a way that suggested a particular musical form.

Gloria often had a conversation with herself, asking a question through a melody and lyric and then searching for an answer. This is heard in several examples including “*There, There*”, “*Do I Dare Imagine?*” and “*Woman Why are You Weeping*”. Her lyrics and melody also unfolded as if she was telling a story. “*Tell the Truth*” is a vivid example of this, with the lyric “*I love to sing and tell my story to you in a song.*”

Gloria developed confidence in searching for and finding the particular form she needed as she created her ideas, and this helped her to keep going even when the material she was singing about was difficult and challenging.

The song form itself functioned to anchor a new emotion or attitude, support it, reinforce it, establish it, and bring it to fruition. At other times the song worked as a vehicle to bring various polarities together, holding together seemingly paradoxical qualities and combining them to enhance the overall quality.

### Who was Gloria Singing To?

Gloria often sang to sing, not to sing to a particular person either in her present or past. But as her investment in the music became more complete and her personae started to emerge, it would seem as if she was singing to a particular audience or person. At times it was just a general group of people who she might want approval from. This would occur when she might be stating her case and waiting for judgment. So in a way she was testifying for a jury. At other times she seemed to be singing to God or trying to capture God's perspective.

Of course since I was always present as Gloria sang and listened to what she sang, it could be argued that everything Gloria sang she sang to me, or for me to hear, or had to do with the dynamics of our relationship. This was something I regularly considered when listening to her music. Many times I sensed that she was singing to me, to herself, and to another unseen person. In this way there was a blending of who Gloria was singing to. Gloria often felt bolstered when she felt that I was listening to the content and formulating the same questions and reactions that she was. At times she would ask a question to herself and then look at me and ask if I also wanted to know the answer. It was a way for her to validate her direction and reassure herself that I was with her in her unfolding process. Usually she heard my response in the music itself and this was enough for her to continue.

**Table 3: How the Therapist Listened: Perceptions regarding Stance, Form and Direction**

<b>Gloria's Underlying Stance (Persona)</b>	<b>Form of Gloria's Singing</b>	<b>Who was Gloria Singing To</b>
The Playful Child	Prayer	To an unseen audience
The Vulnerable Child	Hymn	To her father
The Wounded Child	Dialogue	To the therapist
The Playful Woman	Statement	To herself
The Inner Critic	Plea	To God
The Faithful Disciple	Conversation	From God's perspective to herself
The Sympathetic Judge	Soliloquy	To her mother
The Sarcastic Adult	Performance	To a particular persona she created and then to another to take different perspectives within the same improvisation
The Vengeful Judge	Story Telling	
The Frightened Child		
The Wise Guide		
The Hopeful Child		

### How Did the Therapist Respond?

This section focuses on what I actually did musically. To illustrate the connections between how I listened, what I listened for and how I responded, I have created a pastiche. The structural outline of the pastiche depicts an improvised song as it emerges, establishes, and comes to completion, and cites particular examples where these developments can be found in the archived material.

How did the Therapist listen? What Did the Therapist Listen For?  
How Did The Therapist Respond?

I listened for the shape and quality of Gloria's breathing to inform the development of my music.

*The process begins. Sensing the energy.*

I listened for any cues or sounds that imply a rhythmic form or tone in order to inform the development of my music.

*Simultaneous shaping as my music influences the sounds that Gloria is making. This can come from her series of moans that determine the pulse or a verbal statement that has an implied melodic and rhythmic contour which I play.*

I listened for the pitch of the tone Gloria is singing and the harmonic implications of the emerging melody.

*The potential for an improvised song emerges. I can choose to determine a tonal center and overall tonality or keep the tonal organization more ambiguous, depending on what I sense Gloria needs and/or what the music needs.*

**An example of the above material can be heard during the opening moments of “*Woman, Why are You Weeping?*”**

I listened for the quality of Gloria’s tone - strong or weak, detached or connected, thin or thick, soft or hard, hollow or full - and the content of the lyric in order to determine the emotional quality of my music.

*The tensions and resolutions of the music determine the emotional quality. How I play-touch volume and tempo- and what I play- consonance or dissonance- contributes to the qualities in my music and the overall music that Gloria and I are creating together. Her vocal quality influences my choices. The mood of the music emerges.*

**An example can be heard in “*There, There*”**

I listened for the quality of Gloria’s tone and the content of the lyric in order to form the structure and style of the music.

*Organum structure combined with dissonance to match Gloria’s religious contemplation and sadness?*

**“*Oh My Child*”**

*A blues with a swing feel implied by her sliding tone?*

***“Broken Pieces”***

*The Lydian mode to encourage more imagery?*

***“Do I Dare Imagine?”***

*The Dorian mode to convey warmth and tension in response to her turmoil?*

***“Woman Why Are you Weeping”***

I listened for the volume of Gloria’s tone and the content of the lyric in order to determine the volume, register and texture of my music.

*Setting the stage for mutuality by making sure we both can be heard*

***“Tell the Truth”***

I listened for the pulse and phrasing of Gloria’s expression in order to determine the tempo and metric implications of our music.

*Sharing in the development of tempo and how it changes, stops and starts again is an important component to making the experience a shared, co-active one. It also helps to organize the different sections within the overall song form.*

***“Open Up My Arms”***

I listened for the rhythm of Gloria’s melody and how she phrased it in order to form a bar structure that allowed the two of us to create with a sense of the ongoing structure of the music with regard to measures and sections of the music

*Creating a meter and measures are key factors in creating forward momentum and shaping the structure of the improvisation into a song form.*

***“Open Up My Arms”***

I listened for the harmonic implications of Gloria’s emerging melody not only to place her current note within a harmony but to anticipate what the next harmony could be. This determined not only the changing chords as a whole but how the tones within each chord could change.

*The more harmonic options I can hear the more I can choose from. The more choices I have, the more options I have to make musical choices that have clinical intention. Will it be major or minor, or a chord with more ambiguity? Inversion or root position? Closed or open voicings?*

***“Do I Dare Imagine?”***

I listened for the potential motion of Gloria’s melody and the lyric content to determine the motion of my harmonic progression

*If Gloria is singing one tone, I can create harmonic motion in ways to move the song form forward. It can be the bass tone, an inner voice of the chord, or the chord as a whole. If Gloria is singing a sequence, I can anticipate the next set of tones and the implications for the harmonic progression become clear.*

***“Do I Dare Imagine?”***

I listened for the notes of Gloria’s melody to determine the mode or scale she is utilizing and the implications for my harmonic choices.

*If she is singing tones of the pentatonic, I have many options with regard to harmonic accompaniment. I can stay in the pentatonic, choose a mode, create a diatonic progression, since all of these contain the notes of the pentatonic. I can choose to play tones in contrast to the tones of her melody. Discerning her tones is not a conscious determination but a response by ear to what I am hearing.*

***“Woman Why are You Weeping?”***

I listened for both the melodic rhythm and the lyric content in order to shape a potential counter melody.

*My musical commentary often comes directly from my melodic rhythm. The rhythm often is the same as a lyric that Gloria has just sung, or an answering lyric that I hold in my thoughts while playing. My melodic rhythm often has an interval that moves in parallel motion. The parallel motion makes the melodic rhythm more noticeable, and the relationship between the tones of the interval can reveal some aspect of the relationship between Gloria and me.*

***“Tell the Truth”***

I listened for the relationship between the meaning of the words and Gloria's current quality of musical expression in order to develop clinical context and direction.

*When she is unable to deal with the emotions related to the lyric content, what can I do with my music to help her? Infuse the music with dissonance and dynamics? Change my touch to trigger a shift in her perspective?*

**"Tell the Truth"**

I listened for the emerging meaning of the words in relation to the client's general issues and development. How did what she sang fit into my understanding of what her current issues were?

*Is there a kind of music or musical quality from our past collaborations that could help now?*

**"All My Life"**

I listened for clues in developing an understanding of the perspective Gloria was taking

*When she sings from the persona of "the wounded child" I often play soft arpeggiated minor music in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time in a high register to both manifest the persona and comfort Gloria. "The critic" usually gets low pitches with angular intervals and a harsh articulation, which can lead to earthy music and a way to transform the energy of the persona that Gloria is living in. Sometimes my music leads to the development of the persona, sometimes the persona leads to the development of my music, and sometimes the music and the persona emerge together.*

**"There, There"**

I listened to the melody and lyrics in order to determine whether to match it, enhance it, create music that depicted the imagery of the lyric, or respond and musically comment on the lyric with my own melody.

*This is a process that could be based on my musical countertransference, on purely musical considerations and or specific clinical intentions, or a combination of all of these. I may react to a word or words that Gloria sings and respond to it, or try and create a musical description of it. Intuition plays a part in my musical choices.*

**"There, There"**

I listened for the relationship between Gloria's pitch and the pitch of the piano.

*As Gloria's pitch places in between two notes that are a half step apart, I can play both of those notes and accentuate the tension of being "out of tune". Bringing out these tones can help in moving Gloria's psychological process forward by helping her live in the tension of the interval and utilize the tension to go on, and at the same time help her to become grounded in the musical experience by choosing one or the other of the tones to sing.*

**"Tell the Truth"**

I listened for the emotional expression or dynamic intensity Gloria was utilizing in singing lyrics

*This plays an important part in determining the third of a harmony that I play - whether it is major and minor, or left out completely- and the tones included in the harmony -- tritones, sixths, sevenths, ninths, elevenths, thirteenth, that together determine the emotional color of a harmony.*

**"Do I Dare Imagine?"**

I listened for Gloria's shifting emotional state to determine how much support to provide in the music

*Creating a definitive tonal center helps to provide organization and safety. Singing with her is a way to provide support more directly. She feels the sound of my presence as we have a defined melody and lyric to join in together.*

**"Open Up My Arms"**

I listened for the quality of the words and music and the form of the song to determine when to end

*A sense of wholeness and completeness often accompanies the ending of an improvised song. Sometimes bringing the music to a close allows for a new perspective and a continuation of some kind in a new musical form. This*



*depends in part on when the song is occurring within the overall session.*

***"Woman Why Are You Weeping?"***

Musical Elements as They Relate to Therapist Intervention

Many of the findings regarding how I responded are embedded in the previous chapter detailing and analyzing the four excerpts. This section provides additional information on the therapist's use of musical elements. Though I organize the topics by musical element, I acknowledge that music requires a constant and simultaneous interaction of all these elements.

**Harmony: Determining Emotional Qualities in the Unfolding Music**

Harmony relates to the progression of chords, and the notes in chords. One of the main findings regarding the use of harmony was that harmonic ambiguity – a lack of a clear tonal center, or a progression that did not end on an expected cadence, or a progression that evolved and headed to an unexpected place – was a way to support and enhance Gloria's lyrics that were unresolved. The description and analysis of "*Tell the Truth*" includes several of these moments. Lyrics that asked a question were combined with a harmonic progression that did not cadence to an expected chord, but remained unfinished, incomplete.

Sometimes the harmonic ambiguity was created by the relationship between Gloria's melody, which would imply one tonal center, and my harmonic progression, which would imply another. An example of this can be heard in "*Do I Dare Imagine?*" when Gloria sings melody tones implying Bb minor as a tonal

center, while I was playing chords that created a progression in Db major. The relationship between my implied tonal center and Gloria's could be very close, as in major or relative minor, or between Dorian and Mixolydian built on four ascending steps away from the Dorian. In these examples, the melody tones could be exactly the same in either tonal center.

An example of this ambiguity related to tonal center and in terms of mode can be heard in "*Oh My Child*". The melody can be heard as either a Dorian modal melody with A as the tonal center, or as a D Mixolydian melody starting on the fifth step of the mode. There is an ambiguity between tonal centers as the melody could be placed with D as the tonal center or A as the tonal center. The A as tonal center establishes A Dorian, the D as the tonal center creates Mixolydian. Because there was a close relationship between Dorian and Mixolydian this shift from one to the other was possible and helped to create ambiguity in terms of tonal center. This created ambivalence about tonal center and whether the music is in a major mode or minor mode. So, like major and relative minor scales, modes that utilized the same tones but had a different fundamental tone could function to create ambiguity.

The relationship between Gloria's implied tonal center and my harmonic tonal center could be distant. In "*Gardenia*" Gloria sang a mostly one note G# melody while I stayed away from G# completely as a tonal center, using E major and then Db major. This created a sense of motion and richness even when Gloria's single tone remained unchanging. The further away we were in terms of

implied tonal center the greater the opportunity for Gloria to experience a sense of independence even as we created together.

Melodies that had a single tone or a repeated series of tones were harmonized in ways that allowed for ambiguity regarding the tonic and whether the music was major or minor. An example of this can be seen in the “*Do I Dare Imagine?*” The same melody tone of Db was harmonized with progressions in Bb minor and Db major.

Creating ambiguity by ending a phrase with sustained harmony tones on a clear cadence away from the tonic was a way to blend emotional qualities. The music was settled yet unresolved. An example of this is described in “*Tell the Truth*” right before Gloria began to sing her “*They tell me I’m Sick*” melody. The musical moment was imbued with possibility.

Harmonic ambiguity was also created when two chords that created a progression shifted so that at some point, each chord becomes the tonic key. Examples of this can be found in the song section of “*There, There*” where the key first established is Bb minor, though the first chord of the phrase is an Eb minor. Later, the key of Eb minor becomes the tonic as the song develops. This kind of shift helped to create a potential psychological shift for Gloria as she sang the same tone or series of tones.

Pentatonic melodies were harmonized by chords that contained more than the notes of the scale. The chords alternated so that it was not clear which chord was the tonic. Each phrase could begin with either a major chord or a minor

chord, a chord with consonances, or a chord with dissonant tones. This helped to create musical ambiguity. Examples of this are found in the excerpt “*Broken Pieces*”.

One particular technique with regard to harmony was creating a harmonic progression that set up an expectation of a particular tonal center, but then staying away from it, arriving at a new tonal center at a significant psychological moment. In “*Gardenia*” Gloria sang mostly G#’s, with some F#’s as well. I did not establish either of these tones as the tonal center. She sang and repeated “*Oh, I am a Gardenia*”, as I established E major. When she came to the end of a phrase and sang “*I flower in the night*” I heard this as a significant musical motion and psychologically meaningful as there was a blossoming that is described in the content and I moved the harmony after she sang “*night*”, on the same G# note, to Db Major.

I discovered a tendency on my part to utilize certain harmonies for certain situations. For instance, the minor ninth chord was often used during lyric creation that depicted tension to create both a containing warmth and a sadness or yearning tension. Chord progressions that contained contrasting qualities among chords – major and minor, consonance and dissonance – were used to create ambiguity. For instance, in “*Woman Why are you Weeping*” the melody tones



were harmonized with the D minor ninth and a Bb7#11. Not only did this create ambiguity between chords, it also gave the opportunity to Gloria to alter her tonal

choices as she sang. All the tones worked with both chords to create relatively consonant tones. But she also added an A that was consonant with the D minor chord, or Ab which was consonant with the Bb chord. The A would be dissonant with the Bb chord. So this created the possibility for Gloria to create tensions and musical ambiguities with her melodic choices.

Chords with flatted fifths were often used to support the creation of the Lydian mode. The Lydian mode was often used during lyrics that created imagery and had a quality of imminence, that something was about to happen. At times it had a quality of dream-like mystery. There were times when I utilized the Lydian as a transition from a minor key to a major key, or from a tritone interval to a more harmonic accompaniment. The Lydian created a sense of expectation, of hopeful opportunity. Throughout the course of treatment I utilized it to both trigger and enhance imagery.

A minor ninth chord was often the basis for melody tones that helped to establish the Dorian mode. The Dorian manifested during moments of turmoil and comfort, sadness and hope. This can be heard most clearly in "*Woman Why are you Weeping*".

In "*Do I Dare Imagine?*," a shift of tonal center between Gb and Eb allowed for the alternation between tones of the Lydian mode and tones of the Dorian Mode. This alternation allowed for shifts of emotional expression. The same melodic tones could be utilized while the shift from one mode to another worked to create either a major (Lydian) or minor (Dorian) tonality.

The major ninth chord was used frequently and conveyed a quality of warmth yet could also propel the music forward as it did not completely have a resolved quality. In general, chords with extended tones were utilized often and this may have to do with the clinical intention of infusing emotional expression and intensity into the session in order to both allow Gloria to experience it and respond and awaken to it. The fact that she described herself as emotionally frozen triggered a clinical intention to allow her to feel, and these extended chord tones was a device I utilized.

A harmonic technique I employed was to take two chords with little in common harmonically and use them consecutively to harmonize the same tone, to accentuate a sense of transformation, since the chords were so different. For instance I played C Major 7 flat five to harmonize the melody note B natural, and then shifted to E major. This created a sense of transformation, or a shift from one place to another. When two contrasting chords were used as a repeating pattern, it created a sense of slowly working to shift Gloria from her present state to a different state. An example of this can be heard in the excerpt "*Broken Pieces*" as Gloria first sings she cannot accept when others notice she has done something well, but eventually can agree that she can say thank you.

When two chords that are not from the same key were alternated they created potential tonal scales that are different for each one. This gave Gloria a chance to shift from one tone to another as the chords shifted from one to another. Examples of this chord alternation can be found in "*Woman Why are you Weeping?*", with the D Dorian including the B natural and the A natural, and Bb7

which includes a Bb and an Ab. Tones that were a half step away created a significant shift in the overall mood and quality of the music. Another similar chord alternation is from the excerpt “*Broken Pieces*” where a Bb7 chord is alternated with an F chord with an additional flatted fifth. This alternates a potential Lydian mode with a Mixolydian mode, but with two different tonal centers. When there were more options for melody, there were more options for Gloria’s emotional expression.

Harmonic progressions often grew out of one note in a chord moving. Descending bass line motion often occurred as Gloria sang one tone. This created a sense of moving within familiar territory Chord progressions that cycled out of a diatonic key – B major Eb major G major, for instance- cycled upward and created a different effect, as if moving to unknown territory. Placing Gloria’s single tone within different chords gave her the opportunity to feel her tone in a different relationship – singing as the root of the chord, the third, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, the ninth, and the eleventh. These relationships each have unique qualities. Singing on the root added a definitive quality to the music. The third determined the emotional color of the chord and therefore an important way to create an emotional color in the music. Singing the fifth could bring a triumphant quality. The sixth could be used as a note that transitioned the key from major to minor, or minor to major. The seventh in minor could trigger a bluesy sound. The ninth, when sung with a syncopated rhythm such as the tango, could bring a sensuous quality to the music. “*There, There*” reveals how Gloria’s single tone Db is harmonized in different ways. Early in the improvisation her

pitch wavers between D and Db while I harmonize her pitch with the dissonant interval of a major seventh. Then as the gentle song starts her Db is contextualized as the minor seventh of an Eb minor chord played in a lyrical way, and finally as the minor third of the Bb minor chord that comes at the end of the same phrase. Each experience of singing the Db is different for her, and the final Bb minor chord creates a sense of arriving to a familiar place, but not resolved as she sings the third rather than the tonic.

At times the combination of word and music combine to create a complex quality. For instance, during “*Woman Why are you Weeping?*” Gloria often sang the tone A, the fifth as the harmony was the tonic D minor. Though the content of the lyrics depicted hopelessness, the quality of the music created a sense of assertiveness.

The less tonal motion in the melody the more opportunity there was for me to provide emotional tensions and resolutions with harmonic motion. It was wide open for the tone to be harmonized as a consonance or dissonance, and to move a progression with the tone being repeated. When there was a melody with more tones and sequences, the harmonic implication of the melody was more clearly established.

Though the difference between a major chord and a minor chord was a single half step, the effect on the quality of the music was significant. “*Do I Dare Imagine?*” contains a vivid example of the use of major and relative minor and how that played a significant part in shifting Gloria’s word content. This detailed description and analysis also describes the use of the move from parallel minor to



major. The parallel motion was used to make a more startling change than the move from minor to the relative major, as these utilized the same tones.

The direction of the shift of harmony had implications. Moving from one tonal center to ascend to another was a way to create a sense of arrival to a new emotional landscape. This can be heard in “*Do I Dare Imagine?*” It is interesting that I did not find the common harmonic device used in contemporary songs of creating a sense of increased intensity by moving the key up a half step or a full step. When I did use ascending shifts of key, it was usually a third, such as in “*Do I Dare Imagine?*” when I moved from Db to E major. This could be because the shift to a half step higher would have required 5 new tones for Gloria to sing. It could also have to do with this device of a half step ascending modulation as being overused and I refrained from using it because it was trite. Gloria herself would comment when she thought her music sounded “too Broadway”. Yet much of what we created was well-worn in terms of harmonic progression, but the way it emerged and the context of what we were doing, and that it could shift and change at any moment, gave the music life and a sense of discovery as we created it.

#### Ostinato Patterns: Stable yet Flexible

Ostinato patterns, a short melody or pattern that is constantly repeated, usually utilizing the same pitch, were used flexibly, almost in contradiction to the

definition of an ostinato which means consistent and stubborn in its continuing repetition. In fact, many times I wrestled with and ultimately changed some of my descriptions of the music from “Ostinato Pattern” to “Harmonic Accompaniment Pattern,” because I was changing many of the elements of the music even while keeping the basic form the same. There were often decreases or increases of tempo. There were also dynamic swells, and many times the patterns were used with sustained pedaling to create a flowing tonal environment.

Yet even when I did not hesitate to designate a pattern a true ostinato pattern in that there were no obvious changes in the musical pattern, there were subtle changes in dynamics and tempo in relation to what Gloria was singing that helped to create a feeling of pulse and groove in the music. This was often a key factor in allowing Gloria to enter deeply into the flow of the music, and when she was feeling stuck, enter into the music and be moved by it. Aigen (2002) writes of the importance of groove in improvisational music therapy. He refers to Keil (1995) who asserts that groove is about “constant relating” between the participants. My ostinato pattern was constantly being influenced by Gloria’s vocal contributions and thus built a strong but flexible musical connection between us.

There were times where Gloria resisted the groove created by the ostinato because she had a fear of what emotions might have been lying dormant within her. So the timing of when the pattern became a fixed part of the music was an important factor in how effective it would be.

Ostinato created stability and grounding, and allowed for overlapping phrases starting at different places in the measure. This could be heard in “*Woman Why are you Weeping?*” The repetitive nature of the ostinato pattern provided forward momentum and a seamless way of creating motion. Like waves of the ocean, the repeated patterns often swelled and shifted with subtle changes in tempo and dynamics. Yet the tones themselves continued and provided a smooth tonal texture within which both Gloria and I felt propelled.

Because of its repeating tones, Gloria could enter anywhere in the pattern as it was played, and I could shift the rhythmic accent or begin the tone pattern from the beginning to shift the amount of beats in each measure even while keeping the same tempo. This created the effect of Gloria’s entrance being a new first beat of the measure on the very same beat that I was completing the last beat of the measure. Our metric structures were independent from each other while the tempo and ostinato pattern held us together. Changing my accents and altering the dynamics was a way to keep the ostinato from lacking energy.

There were times when the ostinato pattern was a way to manifest a sense of contemplation during the absence of Gloria’s singing, a way to keep the process alive even as Gloria stopped to regain her momentum. An example of this use of the ostinato pattern occurred during “*Woman Why are you Weeping?*”

Counter melodies as Musical Commentary

The musical interventions of the therapist included not only creating music that supported, enhanced or amplified the emotional content of the client's music, it also commented on the emotional content. This was a way that the therapist intervened to encourage the client to reflect, consider, pause, react, intensify or calm. Robinson (2005) makes a point to say that music "does not merely present an emotion, it may 'comment', on the expressions so expressed" (p. 307).

Not only did I make musical commentaries, but Gloria often responded directly to them. An example of this occurred in the improvised song "*Broken Pieces*", a song that dealt with Gloria's tendency to choose hiding and her ambivalence about being noticed. Here is a portion of description from "*Broken Pieces*" that began after I gave her positive feedback on her piano playing in the session.

*I just want to hide*

*I just want to hide*

Rather than play music that supported her hiding by getting softer, I began to play in a louder dynamic and a sharp attack with dissonant tones that ascend. It was as if the harmony is commenting on the lyrics, not allowing the protagonist to hide. In psychological terms, my musical countertransference was the strong touch and musical idea; I don't want Gloria to hide. Gloria reacted to this music and continued by changing the way she sang, almost screaming as she went on, as if she was reacting directly to the strong notes being played at the piano.

*Yeeaow!! OOWW!...*

*it's nothing I didn't do anything*

*it's nothing, it's nothing*

*please don't notice*

*please don't notice*

*please don't notice*

*please don't notice what I do oh please*

Here the musical commentary triggered a direct response. The music from the piano was a direct response to Gloria's psychological condition and she reacted directly to it. Gloria commented on my musical commentary. In this case my music could both accept the condition by creating a mirroring path of running away not noticing, and also with its sharp attack and dissonance I was penetrating to break up a conditioned response that Gloria has with regard to being noticed.

Another example of a time when Gloria clearly responded to my musical commentary was during the "*Open up my Arms*" excerpt. Gloria sang a melody, and after she paused I played the melody, gently, in a higher register, and harmonized it in thirds. The thirds moving together emphasized the companionship element of our relationship. My commentary was something like "I hear you and I am with you. I value what you have sung." Gloria immediately began to cry while stating "*It's pretty*". This became the impetus for the rest of the improvisation, as her motivation to sing "open up my arms" was to express

her desire and her difficulty to acknowledge the good qualities and skills that lay within her, and to embrace the ‘pretty’ things both inside her and around her.

There were times where offering a musical choice, playing music that Gloria noticed, did not have the effect that I intended. During a moment of intense expression of lyrics that revealed a hopeless stance, I intervened by playing in the pentatonic and created a soft melodic idea. Gloria then half sang, half stated

*“no matter how much happy music comes out, it’s still rotten in here”.*

Here Gloria is commenting on the music that she heard, rejecting the intention to create an emotional option for her continuing musical expression.

Musical commentaries were used to ask questions. One way I did this was by playing a melodic phrase that was closely related to the one Gloria sang - perhaps the same exact rhythm and general shape - but tonally ended at an unexpected resting place, a different tone than the one Gloria finished with. This created a response to Gloria that sounds as if it was posing a question.

Repeating a melody that Gloria sang at a softer dynamic and slightly slower tempo was a way to encourage reflection and emphasize the moment. It was a musical commentary to Gloria to “listen to yourself”. An example of this was when Gloria sang “no” in an adamant fashion. In response I played a soft ascending line, the effect is to suggest being less adamant, that she could consider changing her mind. It also communicated that she had an effect on me, in my relationship to her, as she sang “no” and I played softly, as if to say “all right I

will not continue what I was doing in the same way". So the commentary had potential layers of meaning.

My commentary was often triggered by my emotional reaction that superseded my original intention to create music that depicted the imagery of Gloria's words. For instance, when she sang "*the poison went into my soul*" I didn't play music that sounded like poison, or music that sounded as if someone was poisoned, or the effect of the poison on me. I played an emotional reaction to the idea that poison went into Gloria's soul, that this was something sad and disturbing and I played music to convey my condolences over the fact that poison went into her soul. I played the literal descriptive music to enhance the imagery; I played the relational when I had an emotional reaction to the content and an instinct to put my reaction into the music. By responding empathically I hoped to nurture Gloria and cultivate within her a more accepting stance toward herself.

#### Reflections of Perspectives: The use of Register

Register was used at times to manifest the shift of perspectives, the different characters that Gloria created as she sang. Lower register related to challenging characters, also to adult characters. Higher register related to child like characters and the desire to escape. In general, very low and very high registers were used to support and enhance imagery.

Register was also a way to create an aural space for Gloria to sing. By playing in a register that Gloria could sing in and then moving away from it, it left space for Gloria to sing in that particular register.

#### Repetition: Comfort and Stability

Repetition was utilized for reassurance, to create stability and comfort. It gave Gloria the opportunity to explore and reflect on the issue she was singing about or explore a persona she was creating with her music. Repetition allowed for persistent and prolonged immersion in the experience. Repetition of melodic rhythm allowed for tonal sequences. Repetition of melodic tones allowed for harmonic development. A clear example of this can be heard in the final cadence of “*Woman Why are you Weeping?*”, as Gloria sings “*I can’t find it*” on the same tone while the harmony moves to different chords before finally coming to the tonic. Gloria’s repetition of lyrics created an opportunity for her to reflect on her experience. This can be heard in “*Tell the Truth*” as she repeats the lyric “*they tell me I’m sick*”. Repetition of a harmonic accompaniment pattern created an opportunity for Gloria to reflect on her experience and then sing about it. This can be heard in “*Woman Why are you Weeping?*”, when after making non-verbal sounds she sang the lyrics “*choking on her tears.*” Every detailed description and analysis includes examples of repetitions in various forms and how they functioned. The “*Tell the Truth*” description and analysis has a detailed section on the possible meanings of the repetition and how the evolving improvisation



confirmed a particular understanding with regards to repetition. In that example, the repetition of the same lyric created a clinical opportunity for me to create music with a different musical element, such as a change of harmony, register, or articulation for Gloria to experience the meaning of the lyric in a different way. This was an event that occurred many times in the material under study.

Repetition was a key factor in the formation of song forms. Repetition of a beat of the music created pulse, which created forward motion. Repetition of the lyric often led to the establishment of a melodic rhythm. That melodic rhythm could also be the beginning of the pulse, and the metric implications emerged as the melodic rhythm was repeated in a particular pulse.

#### Swing Feel for Animation

The swing feel- a jazzy rhythmic feel based on walking bass to provide the pulse and syncopated accompaniment in the right hand to create a jaunty dance like music- was utilized to create motion, physical integration and grounding, and a general sense of movement and flow. Gloria often appeared more confident in this style of music. It was a distinct style and was used as a contrast to music without pulse to attempt to shift the direction of Gloria's expression. It was utilized as an intervention to get Gloria to reengage in the music. The excerpt "*Scared and Paralyzed*" is a good example of this. The music literally got her moving, and got her to move out of her paralysis and fear. Smeijsters (2005)

relates his own experience of how music moved him out of his depressed condition, and that this was not a metaphor but an actual physical feeling of empowerment. Gloria became able to signal to me when she wanted to feel a sense of swing in the music by snapping her fingers or moving her body.

The swing feel can be present in blues style as well as jazz. These two musical styles are very closely related. Several times during music with a swing feel, Gloria sang about conflictual content in a happy way. This fits into the conceptual framework of the blues, as it is often used to sing about pain, difficulties, suffering, while the music brings an energy that triggers a feeling of satisfaction. It feels good to sing about the bad in the blues form, and Gloria utilized this in “*Scared and Paralyzed*” and in the more jazzy swing feel in “*There, There.*” This kind of music seemed to give Gloria permission to enter more fully into her body, to enjoy her physicality.

This kind of music often provided a framework for more free tonal expression for Gloria. She could slide and bend her notes within this style and the expression was congruent to it and contributed to the overall music.

### Tempo Fluidity

Tempos in general were flexible and responded to the moment to moment creative impulse of both participants. Tempos became more defined when a particular style emerged or when a song form developed. Even then the tempo was quite fluid and could change measure to measure, or even note to note.

Slowing down the tempo built tension and created a sense of expectation. The slowing of tempo allowed for more reflection on the lyrics that were being sung and thus allowed for lyrics to be created in response to previous lyrics. Examples of this can be heard in “*Tell the Truth*” and “*There, There.*”

When faster tempos emerged they usually occurred when a particular lyric is repeated and is generally of shorter duration. Faster tempos could trigger physical movement. Faster tempos could trigger a repetitive lyric so that it became established and remembered. They were often used in conjunction with a steady pulse to create forward motion and movement, and triggered a sense of flow and physicality in the participants.

Tempo was significant when it moved, bringing attention to a new development by either slowing down to trigger reflection and emotional expression or speeding up to animate and intensify the experience.

#### Intervals: An Important Factor in Determining Qualities

Intervals were a key factor in creating the quality of the overall music. At times a particular interval became a focal point of an improvisation. For instance, in the excerpt “*There, There*” the tritone interval had particular significance as it manifested the contrast between the content of Gloria’s lyric content and how she was singing. It was an interval that she sang and I played at various times during the improvisation. Also, the shift from dissonant interval to consonant interval

heard in the piano music mirrored a resolution of the tension that took place during the improvisation. The dissonant intervals moving parallel represented Gloria's battling personae as she engaged in dialogue between them. Later on, the consoling quality of thirds moving together was a manifestation of the resolution between the two voices she had created.

The tritone interval was also an important determinant of what mode emerged. Depending on the placement of the tritone in relation to the tonal center, any one of the modes or a shift from a mode to a diatonic scale could come out of the moment to moment music that was created by Gloria and me. For instance in "*Tell the Truth*" the placement of the tritone in relation to the tonal center triggered the creation of the Lydian mode.

The tritone was often present when tension was present in the lyric description, or when there was incongruence in terms of the relationship between the emotional quality of how Gloria sang and the meaning of the lyric content. This is vividly heard in "*There, There.*"

Intervals were often used in parallel motion within the harmonic accompaniment. The parallel motion was a way to emphasize the quality of the interval, and this in turn contributed to the overall quality of the piano music. Dissonant intervals when played within the harmonic context often brought out the distinctness of each individual interval and thus represented some tension that was heard in the content of Gloria's music or the relationship between us. An example of this would be the parallel major sevenths in "*There, There*". Consonant intervals, such as the third, were used to convey the sense of

companionship between us. The interval of the third is an interval that blends the two tones in a way that intervals of the fourth and fifth do not. The third is a rounder interval than the dissonant intervals as the tones blend in toward each other. The intervals of the fourth and fifth create the sense of two tones standing straighter, standing somewhat apart as there is space between them.

Parallel motion of the intervals conveyed a sense of Gloria and I moving together. The quality of the interval conveyed the quality of that relationship as it existed in that moment of the improvisation.

Counter melodies from the piano often included an interval that moved in parallel motion. The quality of that interval was significant in conveying the musical commentary of the counter melody. Repeating a melody sung by Gloria and adding a parallel note that created dissonance brought out the emotional turmoil of the lyric content.

Broadly speaking, intervals of minor seconds amplified tension and brought the juxtaposition between Gloria's music and mine to the forefront. When we created a half step between us, it accentuated the fact that we were creating different notes. Thirds, both at the piano in the counter melody and in between Gloria's vocal melody and my piano melody, created a sense of companionship. An example of this can be heard in "*Open up my Arms*", when Gloria responds to my repeating her melody with thirds by crying and later explaining she this was triggered by her recognizing that I was listening to her deeply. Perfect 4ths moving together created a sense of awareness of two distinct notes with a relationship but not particularly close. This can be heard in "*Woman, Why are you*

*Weeping?*” Perfect 5ths usually related to Organum music and brought an austere quality to the music. This can be heard in “*Tell the Truth*”, and “*Oh My Child*.”

The interval of the major seventh was used in parallel motion to depict a tension and a sense that something (the third that creates emotion) was missing. This can be heard in “*There, There*”.

In general the contrast between dissonant intervals and consonant intervals were used to manifest more or less tension in the overall quality of the music.

When I sensed that there was tension or I wanted to manifest tension in the music I played minor seconds, tritones, major sevenths, minor ninths. Sometimes these sound like mistakes in the sense that they break out of the established tones that were being utilized. Sometimes I found myself playing them before I realized why. These dissonant tones often led to a new harmony that included these tones or the harmony came complete with the intervals manifested within them. This can be heard in many of the examples and is particularly relevant in “*There, There*.”

Another general conclusion I came to regarding intervals was that the wider the interval in the melody, the more effort or applied will Gloria made in singing. She could sing repeated single tones and focus on her internal state or what lyric she wanted to create next. But she had to make more of an effort to sing melodies with wider intervals.

Arpeggios: Flowing Imagery

Arpeggios were often utilized to support or possibly trigger imagery. Imagery related to travel- trains, boats, swimming, cars- were very often supported by arpeggios in some form or another, and arpeggios seemed to trigger this kind of imagery. This could be due to the fact that the tones are moving and repeating. Music creates a sense of moving through time, and arpeggios seem to accentuate this experience.

For the most part, arpeggios were used with pedal so that the sonorities were sustained and connected. This helped to create imagery related to water in a variety of forms- a pool, a river, an ocean. Other elements of music related to dynamics, texture and tempo contributed to the specific image that emerged in the analysis. For instance, a faster tempo created a sense of the water moving and thus a river. Swells of dynamics added a sense of water swelling so that the image would be more like waves of an ocean, or an intense storm.

### Chord Position

Root position chords were used as a commentary to confirm the content of the lyric ("*Tell the Truth*"). Inversions were used to create a more fluid music ("*Oh My Child*", "*Uncharted Waters*"). Inversions created more options for individual tones within the chord to move and for different harmonic progressions to evolve. An example of this can be heard in "*There, There*" as the music shifts from a swing feel to a different kind of musical structure. Open voiced inverted chords created a sense of openness and transition that invited participation. A root

position chord sounded solid and complete in and of itself, and in conjunction with Gloria's melody created a sense of distinctness between the two of us. Open voiced inverted chords were less defined than the root position chords and thus had a more malleable quality that could be affected by Gloria's melody tone.

### Open Voicings

Chords that were spaced openly created a sense of mutuality and intimacy in that there was more room for Gloria's expression and more of a sense of equality in that each tone of the chord stood more on its own rather than functioning as a grouping. Each tone of the chord then functioned as one more tone, adding to Gloria's tone. An example of this can be heard in "*Uncharted Waters*" and "*All My Life*".

### Whole Tone Scale

This was used in conjunction with the tritone, and was utilized to amplify the sense of a lack of balance. It was used as a contrast to diatonic and modal music that had tonal centers. The whole tone was used when lyric imagery depicted being lost, and when the relationship between the vocal quality and the lyrics was incongruous.



### Embracing Tensions: Creating Blends of Qualities

During moments of lyrical content describing hopeless imagery or during moments where Gloria's vocal expression revealed turmoil or conflict, the music that I played at the piano included the melody notes and melodic phrase of the lyric statement. This music that held a quality of turmoil or tension was then combined with harmony and a harmonic rhythm that sounds like a beginning, an introduction, or an opening to a new song form and creates a strong sense that the music could continue. This could happen by changing the key or by creating a progression that sounded as if leading to a new key. One common harmonic device I used in creating a sense of beginning was to play a Suspended dominant seventh chord and then play a second inversion chord built on the same bass tone in order to establish a new key and a song form beginning.

A<sup>b</sup>sus                      D<sup>b</sup>/A<sup>b</sup>

The image displays a musical score for a piano accompaniment. At the top, two chords are labeled: A<sup>b</sup>sus and D<sup>b</sup>/A<sup>b</sup>. Below these labels is a musical staff with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The staff is divided into two measures. The first measure contains a whole note chord, and the second measure contains a whole note chord. The notes for the first measure are A<sup>b</sup> (on the second line), C<sup>b</sup> (on the first space), E<sup>b</sup> (on the first line), and G<sup>b</sup> (on the first space). The notes for the second measure are A<sup>b</sup> (on the second line), C<sup>b</sup> (on the first space), E<sup>b</sup> (on the first line), and G<sup>b</sup> (on the first space). Below the staff, there is a piano (p) dynamic marking. The notes for the first measure are A<sup>b</sup> (on the second line), C<sup>b</sup> (on the first space), E<sup>b</sup> (on the first line), and G<sup>b</sup> (on the first space). The notes for the second measure are A<sup>b</sup> (on the second line), C<sup>b</sup> (on the first space), E<sup>b</sup> (on the first line), and G<sup>b</sup> (on the first space).

An example of this can be heard in “*Do I Dare Imagine?*,” right before Gloria begins to sing her melody with melodic motion in D<sup>b</sup> major.

So with this combination of past qualities and current qualities there was forward momentum to continue in the musical experience. Through the use of dissonance coupled with Gloria's original melodic expression of her turmoil, the music from the piano maintained some quality of the tension that was expressed previously. This was a way that musical elements combined to create the emotional qualities of turmoil and hopefulness at the same time. There was hope for a new direction and a resolution in the music even as the music continued to acknowledge the turmoil. When Gloria reentered the collaboration, and suggested a possible more hopeful lyric, the music offered the experience of less tension, of resolution. This can be heard in "*Do I Dare Imagine?*" The music guided Gloria to intrapsychic resolution by creating possibilities for a musical path of resolution/completion. The tension of conflict manifested in the lyric was not ignored, but continued to be present as the process moved forward.

Another example of blends of qualities can be heard in "*Tell the Truth*" where the ascending line I play in response to "*I don't want to suffer*" had both the quality of escaping and acknowledging the illness that Gloria was facing. In general, because music could offer these blends, there was a potential for her to experience both the comfort and the tension that was inherent in the music.

Another example of this blend of qualities can be heard in a different section of "*Tell the Truth*", when Gloria arrived at the same note melodically, and the chord was in root position, a position of stability, yet the actual harmony was a surprise, so that there was a blend of qualities.

“*There, There*” contains several examples of blends of musical qualities, particularly during moments of transition. One clear example was where the music began to subtly shift away from the jazzy music, so that there was both a happy and a questioning quality in the music.

Combining two previously stated musical themes and playing them at the same time was a way to blend qualities. An example of this occurred in “*Woman Why are you Weeping?*”, when two familiar themes, one more consonant, one more dissonant, combined. This was a way to synthesize and integrate expressive elements in a way that created something new, and potential for new experience.

Blends of qualities were particularly important when there was conflictual material to be explored in the music. At times Gloria herself triggered the blends by the choice of music she created with the lyrics. At other times it had to do with the musical choices I made and how the musical process evolved.

### The Use of Contrasts to Evoke Awareness

Contrasts between musical elements were utilized to attempt to shift what was unfolding in the music word collaboration. Sudden contrasts of texture or register could bring awareness of me and my music to the forefront, or support a shifting perspective taken by Gloria. Soft and loud, fast and slow, minor and major, consonance and dissonance, were all utilized in contrasting fashion to keep the energy of the music evolving. One contrast I created was between chords. I contrasted open voiced inverted chords with root position chords utilizing parallel 5ths with no thirds. Examples of this can be found in several excerpts. In “*There,*

*There*”, there is a shift from diatonic chords that create harmonic momentum, to a contrasting Organum like music that slowed the momentum down. The tones and the harmonic accompaniment shifts to a contrasting structure, reflecting the shift in the words.

“*There, There*” contains examples of contrasting persona’s, contrasting structural positions as one made a statement and the other responded, and contrasting musical qualities in terms of tempo, intensity, meter and tonality.

Contrasts took place between the music and the lyric as they combined. For instance, in “*There, There*” there was a strong contrast between the vocal references to words that imply angles and imply pain, with the lyrical, smooth flowing harmonic accompaniment pattern. The effect of this music enhanced the sense of solace that was emerging for Gloria, in a sense healing the wounds she was singing about.

### Music-Word Fusion

Memory of previous music word fusions played a part in the creation of the music word fusions in the moment. The length and rhythm of the lyric triggers a recollection (unconscious or preconscious) of a similar melodic rhythm that influences the construction of the new music. It influences me as I place it melodically and how I might harmonize it. A particular word can trigger a melodic rhythm that has been used with that work previously. The melodic rhythm and phrase creates a structure, a container for the formation of the lyric.

There were times where the music word combination created ambiguity. During an improvisation where Gloria sang “Maybe”, in a strong voice on a P5 interval, there was a quality of definitiveness even as the lyric content contradicted the intervallic quality of the melody. The music word fusion created a paradoxical quality at times. The most notable example was Gloria singing “*I have no voice*” while singing a high sustained tone at a forte dynamic. There was strength in the quality of her tone, in the strong dynamic and sustained pitch, even as she sang about her lack of strength. In the same excerpt she sang “*I have no song*” while at the same time creating a song form with her unfolding words and melody.

Paradoxical expression that occurred during the music word fusion seemed to have particularly meaningful benefits for Gloria. This is an area that is worth looking at in further studies. One reason why paradox might be so helpful is the experience loosens the labels and assumptions that the client holds. It simultaneously brings a new experience to old attitudes.

There are times where the therapist can encourage the client to have a paradoxical experience by creating uplifting music for sad lyric content, for instance, and this in and of itself can change the perspective of the client. The process of creating and singing is paradoxical as the client is both inwardly directed while sharing expression that is heard outwardly. Gloria went into a kind of creative cocoon, yet the process of her creativity is outwardly directed so that she is heard as she is creating. She can go “*deep down inside*” while expressing outwardly.

At times the words and music combined in a coherent fashion. When I depicted the imagery described by Gloria's words, tonal direction was a way to match the lyrics. For instance, when Gloria sang "*he will lift you up*" I played ascending tones to create a sense of rising. As Gloria described descending into the underworld I played descending tones.

The melody and word fusion in Gloria's contributions indicated a clinical development. In "*Do I Dare Imagine?*," Gloria sang much of the improvisation on one or two tones, without motion. But at the point she starts to create a melody with motion, she sings the word "*dare*" on the highest note of the melody. There was a coherence between the lyric she was creating, taking a risk in moving tonally, ascending up, and singing the word "*dare*."

There were other cohesive music word fusions in terms of Gloria's melody and words. For instance, in the excerpt "*Go to Sleep*" Gloria used a large ascending interval to sing the words "without the fear". Intervals are described as moving in steps when moving sequentially and leaps when they move over one or more to get to another. In this case Gloria sang about not have fear while taking 'the leap' in singing an ascending leap. In "*Tell the Truth*", Gloria sang about not wanting to go to the next phase of her treatment, while altering her stepwise motion melody to a skip on the word "*want*."

Other music word fusions between us occurred throughout. While Gloria was singing "*I belong nowhere*" there was no clear tonal center in the piano music. The tonal center is usually the vital component in creating a sense of

home, a sense of knowing where one is when listening or playing music. So in this case there was a fusion between the description of the lyric and the lack of a clear tonal center in the music.

Another example of this kind of fusion was when Gloria sang the word “throw” in the excerpt “*All My Life*”. As she sang the word she used a vocal slide to move up, as if she was throwing her voice to the next tone.

Repeated tones were often used when Gloria sang the word “relentless” or depicted a sense of relentlessness.

When Gloria used imagery depicting moving through water, arpeggiated chords were utilized. For instance, in “*Do I Dare Imagine?*” E Lydian was used with a flowing arpeggio accompaniment pattern.

When Gloria sang “I stopped talking”, I created a pause in the music. A similar moment occurred in “*There, There*” when Gloria sang the word “rest”, and I stopped the pulse in the music.

There were many connections between word meanings and tonal directions. These can be seen in “*There, There*” throughout much of the call and response between Gloria and me.

Gloria’s music word fusion helped me understand her expression with more clarity. If there was an incongruence, it would trigger my consideration that she might not be in touch with feelings that are repressed. This can be heard in “*Tell the Truth*” and “*There, There.*” There were times when the melody and

words combined to be congruent and led me to respond with confidence. This could be heard in “*Do I Dare Imagine?*” when Gloria sang the word “criticizing” with a descending interval of a minor third. This influenced me to not continue in a major tonality but move to minor, and this appeared to fuel her continuing expression.

The way in which Gloria sang often fused with the content of her words in the way that Beardsley (1981) describes, adding to the overall quality of the expression. For instance, during an improvisation where she sang “*there is a place deep down inside, filled with songs*” her pitch was unsure as she sang. She was searching for melody tones and sounded unsure of what tones to sing, as if she was searching for a place within herself to tap into her creative resources but was not sure where it was or if she could find it. This kind of search happened more frequently earlier in the improvisation process. As she gained more experience and developed more confidence, her musical search was satisfied more immediately. This also corresponded with lyrics later in treatment that had less to do with finding her voice, the place inside, and more to do with expressing what was there. In this way her developmental process as an improviser creating songs mirrored her developing psychological process as she gained a sense of having expression that was meaningful and came to feel better about her inner capacities as an expressive artist.

### Unexpected Discoveries

I had thought that I would find a developmental process through the period under study for Gloria in creating melodies. I had held the idea that as she became



less constricted psychologically, her melodies would become more expansive. What I found was that even early on in the process Gloria was moving from her single tone melodies and creating melodies that were wider in terms of tonal range. What did change were her intervallic paths. She became more able to skip, leap, and change direction. Also what changed and developed through time was Gloria's vocal quality with regards to flow of breath support and accuracy of pitch. Her quality became more robust and her sound more sustained. Another development during the period under study was her precision and accuracy of pitch. In general there was less sliding into notes.

Another surprise was how the vocal quality of Gloria changed and how that played upon my response. In listening to the archived material I realized how her constriction and the tension in her voice played a part in my emotional response to the material. Early on I played with more pedal, used more arpeggiation and legato, and this was done in part in response to Gloria's overall vocal quality. It was a way to soothe and relax her and me as well. As I listen to the archived material created later in the process, I notice a slight reduction in the use of the pedal on my part and in the amount of notes used in arpeggiation.

I was surprised at the blends of emotional qualities I found when I listened. During the sessions I had a sense that a particular mood or quality was at the forefront. But as the analysis unfolded I could hear several blends of emotional qualities as they emerged, shifted, transformed, and combined. For instance I eventually recognized an aspect of assertiveness in Gloria's voice as she sang "*they've taken away my voice*" in "*Woman Why are you Weeping?*"

which I did not realize was there. There were times when Gloria's exasperation or even desperation as she sang would also contain elements of insistence and assertiveness that gave her the energy to continue even during moments where the lyric content would suggest she was giving up. She attributed her ability to continue during those moments to listening to the continuing music. In retrospect it may have been that the music accessed those parts of her that were barely present, incipient, but that could come to the forefront when the music could support it.

I was surprised when I learned who initiated a particular musical idea. Closer and repeated listening triggered new understandings as to how things emerged. Whereas previously I thought I began something, it was really based on something that happened much earlier in the improvisation; things I attributed to Gloria were things she was actually responding to that I had already done. An example of this can be seen in "*There, There*". I had thought that the first time I played the tritone was in response to Gloria's lyric "*everything's fine*." I discovered that I had actually played it in the harmony earlier, and this was heard by Gloria and influenced the way she stated her lyric, which then influenced my playing the tritone as a countermelody. Rather than the tritone being an isolated response to a particular quality in Gloria's lyric statement, it was already present in the music, although not as apparent as it would eventually become.

I was surprised to discover a harmonic relationship between "*There, There*", and "*Do I Dare Imagine?*" In both examples, there is a harmonic shift during the improvisation from Bb minor to Db major. In "*There, There*," this

occurs from section to section, when the music shifts from the main lyric theme “*There, There*” which is in Bb minor, to the gospel section, which moves to Db major, an uplifting key change that fuses with the uplifting style of music. In “*Do I Dare Imagine?*” the shift between Bb minor and Db major occurs within the section, manifesting the psychological struggle that Gloria was singing about. The fact that both improvisations had the same harmonies probably had more to do with Gloria’s vocal range than my personal musical tendencies, as these were not keys I found myself improvising in often.

This chapter was designed to convey aspects of the process through the utilization of specific examples from the archived material related to my therapeutic techniques. I abstracted some general principles from the therapy process about the relation between words and music in improvised songs and presented them in a way that they can be interpreted and applied by other music therapists in other contexts. The final chapter will include ideas regarding improvising songs as a specialized form of music psychotherapy.

## CHAPTER VIII

## PSYCHIC INTEGRATION THROUGH IMPROVISED SONG

In this chapter I present my ideas regarding the process of creating improvised songs and explain how this process is a form of transformative music psychotherapy (Bruscia 1998). These ideas have been stimulated by the findings generated in this study.

The songs improvised in music psychotherapy are not merely musical creations; they are musical/psychological creations that emanate from and are intimately connected to the client's intrapsychic states. Music combined with words and given form and structure in the improvisational process has a special ability to evoke the emergence, and subsequent integration and transformation of, different parts of the self - different contrasting personae - that live within the individual. Because of the qualities that music holds it can make this happen in a smooth, seamless and connected fashion.

The idea that improvising songs can have a direct and transformative effect is one of the basic tenets of the Nordoff-Robbins approach to music therapy. Nordoff and Robbins (1977) assert that Nordoff's music - sometimes provocative, even shocking - was a penetrating intervention that broke up habitual behavior patterns held by the autistic child. At the same time, structured songs and activities were improvised that helped re-organize behavior, moving the child away from pathology and toward a new developmental level.

Nordoff and Robbins worked largely from the outside-in, eliciting and refining musical behavior as a way of creating therapeutic relationships that

ultimately transformed personality. However, their keen observations of their young clients have implications for the findings here. In postulating the concept of a “music child,” (Robbins and Robbins, in Bruscia 1991 p. 57) an emergent musical identity that could initiate developmental processes, and a “condition child” (Robbins and Robbins, in Bruscia 1991, p.57) which tended to adapt and cling to limitations, they were identifying personae, intrapsychic phenomena that are not entirely dissimilar from some of those found in this research.

In music psychotherapy, working from the inside-out, events can take place to move a client’s psychological habitual patterns to new psychological states. Natterson (1993) writes that there are particular moments in psychotherapy where “there are shifts or changes in the patient’s attitudes, feelings or behaviors” (p.45). She calls these moments “turning points”. In music psychotherapy, as the therapist provides alternative emotional pathways for the client to take as he or she expresses deeply held emotions related to his or her inner conflicts, there are moments where the possibility for these turning points are manifested. These turning points can be heard in the vocal expression of the client as his or her attitude and emotional quality shift and the personality persona manifested is transformed.

### Improvising Songs as a Therapeutic Process

#### Creativity

Putting aside questions of content for the moment, improvising songs involves singing, a particularly effective form of expression in therapy. The

experience of singing improvised songs creates a uniquely fluid state for the client. In fusing words and music, creating melody and lyrics, a coordination takes place that enables the client to think, describe and express both emotionally and intellectually. The client can think and feel fully during moments of the improvisation by tapping into previously dormant potentials to connect thought with feeling, music with words. The implication from this study is that this ability to express by fusing words and music, to integrate thought and feeling is not an ability that one consciously practices. Rather, it arises spontaneously with the deep immersion into the experience. The flow and form of the music, the dynamic forces inherent in the music, are vital forces in allowing this to happen.

Expressing feelings through singing a song can lessen the sense of isolation with which clients can often struggle. Creating a form while expressing can also elicit a sense of pride. This sense of pride and accomplishment the client can take in creating a song can motivate him or her to continue even during difficult moments. The improvised song also provides a memorable tangible musical idea that can be remembered, returned to, and referred to. It is something that can provide a marker for an experience, and eventually a body of work from which the client can gain a sense of achievement. Nathanson (1992) asserts that healthy pride is a very significant positive emotion that therapists need to pay attention to and cultivate within clients. He explains that there are conditions needed to cultivate this kind of feeling. A goal-directed activity is undertaken, the client is successful in achieving the goal of the activity, and the achievement of the goal "suddenly releases the individual from the preceding effort and the affect

that accompanies and amplifies it, thus triggering enjoyment-joy” (p. 23). The successful creation of a song provides this kind of experience for clients in music psychotherapy. Songs can be particularly effective in doing this. Joy is an experience that is also emphasized by Robbins (Turry, 1998) who points out how important this state is as a trigger for self-actualizing experiences that are transformative for clients.

### Relationships

The creative achievements of the process of improvising songs in music therapy are collaborative in nature. They are the products of a relationship in music that is a powerful therapeutic tool. Robarts (2003) asserts that improvised songs that emerge in music therapy can trigger memories and feelings from a core preverbal level that is a vital component in developing a sense of one’s self. By accessing expressive material from this central part of the personality and creating songs in a mutually dynamic interplay, the therapist can work with the client to help “forge new relational experiences” (p. 150) that trigger a reconstruction of the client’s personality structure. Tacit and explicit self-experiences are bridged with the creation of song forms that include both lyrics and music. Rather than merely bringing conflicted or repressed feelings to consciousness, the creative act of improvising a song together can bring “experiential integration” (p. 150) to the client.

Robarts (2003) describes the therapist’s music while creating improvised songs as having a containing function. I agree that song form does function in this way. The implications from the findings of this study indicate that the therapist’s

music in the form of an unfolding song does more than contain. It can stimulate and influence the unfolding expression and guide the expression. It can offer options for the expression that move the overall process forward. It can create alternative psychological attitudes for the client to take and can provide alternatives that clients may not have been able to bring themselves to on their own. It can help the client to manifest different parts of his or her personality structure in a musical persona through the musical expression that unfolds. The unfolding improvised song form holds together the various personae, amplifying them, intensifying them, while creating an overall whole to the various parts. In this way the therapist is working with deep parts of the personality of the client within improvised song forms. The form of the song holds the stream together, helping to bring back and reflect on important themes and issues that the client brings to expression and exploration.

Musical commentaries -- musical statements that are meant to be heard by the client -- are particular clinical/musical statements made by the therapist meant to create a psychological turning point for the client. Smeijsters (2005) asserts that “just as the verbal therapist is talking to someone about his feelings, the music therapist ‘talks’ by means of music. He listens, shows empathy through music, and through music offers possibilities for how to change the client’s feelings” (p. 73). Musical commentaries are a vital component to the effectiveness of the improvised song process as it relates to the client’s inner life and the relationship between the therapist and client.



The improvised song form is an ideal vehicle for this kind of musical attunement and commentary because it connects strands from earlier moments of the expression, enhances or intensifies the expression, while creating a path for future possibilities. It allows both therapist and client to respond emotionally to each other even as the expression contributes to the ongoing formation of the song. The song form puts the commentary in context, and it becomes the common emergent product that both therapist and client shape together. If the improvised song has the potential to be both emotionally stimulating and structurally memorable, the client can continue to reinvest in the experience without dissipating his or her focus or attention.

When a song has a memorable form, and unfolds in such a way as to animate and intensify emotion, it can trigger both cathartic release for the improvising client and new developmental skills as a creating musician. One fuels the other. The musical form fuels the cathartic release, and the release fuels the content of the form. It is because of this that music psychotherapy which utilizes improvising songs can provide experiences where catharsis is a part of a larger whole of growth for the client. The improvised song form allows the client to shift from tapping more deeply into a primal emotion, a primary process, to a secondary process where creative potentials emerge. This process can shift back and forth within one song improvisation.

Song forms can allow the music psychotherapist the opportunity to work with a client's cognitive reflections while encouraging emotional expression. This is because singing a song requires both the animating qualities of melody and the

specifying qualities of words. For a client repressing feelings, singing words can be a first step in feeling the emotional content that may be triggered by the meaning of the words. The singing of words can bring more investment and emotional honesty to the content of the words.

The process of creating an improvised song allows the client in music psychotherapy to not only express in a way that integrates thoughts and emotions; it allows the client to try on a psychological attitude that would not be possible without the musical experience. The music of the therapist provides the safe environment to encourage risk-taking and suggests the direction and quality of the risk. The path of the unfolding music can suggest entering into challenge or taking on a helpful quality like strength or courage. Because music contains blends of qualities, the music can have both the emotional qualities that the client is experiencing and the emotional qualities that the client is seeking. The fact that the client is not merely passively listening but actively creating makes the experience more related to core personality constructs and thus the potential for more lasting psychological change is possible. The client can experience a sense of initiative even while the therapist makes a significant contribution to the immediate emotional tone and the future musical development of the song by shaping the musical elements.

One of the advantages that improvising songs brings to psychotherapy is that the therapist's music can be both supportive and challenging at the same time. It can hold tones of tension even as it holds the potential for a new consonance. Music can provide support for the homeostasis of the client's condition even as it

begins to disturb it. Because the client is actively participating in the creation of the music, the therapist is constantly being provided cues as to the client's state and what the client may need. There are times where the client can find involvement in the music as the impetus for creativity, and at other times the words that emerge during the thinking process become the primary figure in the figure ground relationship. Yet the melody and words both take place at the same time in an improvised song.

### Processing

The ability to revisit and consider themes and issues in a course of therapy -- to process -- is an important methodological consideration, and one that is debated among music-centered music therapists. With regard to the material under discussion in this dissertation, both musical ideas and lyric themes repeat, vary and return, with moments of pause in the music which triggers reflection on the material for both participants. In this way processing takes place in the musical experience itself rather than by a verbal review after the experience takes place.

By offering different harmonic pathways, engaging in dialogue with the emerging parts of the personality, by musically commenting on her music and her condition, holding qualities of both tension and resolution at the same time and re-contextualizing a repeating melody the therapist can unlock the repressed feelings of the client. Tempo, dynamics and texture are elements that can intensify the expressive components of music and supply the emotional tone that may be missing from the client's emotional expression.

In processing in the music rather than by verbal review outside of the music, this research basically agrees with Austin (2004), who points out that processing can take place in the musical improvisation itself when words and music coexist. It also confirms the musicological observations of Robinson (2005) who explains that by bringing back or varying an established theme music is “actually able to *articulate* a specific cognitively complex emotion” (p.332). Music can do this by “articulating desires, points of view, action tendencies, and so on in the musical persona” (p.332).

#### Bringing Together of Polarities

A virtue of the improvised song approach is that many things occur simultaneously and are intertwined. A mature musical relationship develops where all sorts of musical forms are created and in a variety of figure ground relationships between therapist and client. This relationship takes place alongside an intrapsychic dialogue, where the therapist can take up the qualities of one sub personality in the music and the client can interact with it, or he/she can create different ones and interact. The music created by the therapist can move beyond where the client could go musically and psychologically. But when the client hears the musical possibilities he or she can then take the psychological step to move forward rather than stay stuck.

One significant finding of this study related to the various shifts of perspective that the therapist perceived Gloria taking as she both sustained her musical participation and worked through her psychological conflicts. At times, the client’s lyrics and vocal quality sounded as if she was singing from different

characters, different parts of her personality. By the end of the improvisation the qualities of her voice as she represented these often juxtaposed characters came together into a single character, singing with one voice. She had a shift of point of view that manifested in a more integrated presentation of her self as she sang, and a new perspective in approaching life situations. This idea that aesthetic experience can shift a person's perspective is supported by Rosenblatt (1995), who asserts that the aesthetic experience supports "the development of the imagination: the ability to escape from the limitations of time and place and environment, the capacity to envisage alternatives in ways of life" (p. 276).

Because music can hold a variety of qualities simultaneously, it can be a vitally effective means of shifting a participant's psychological state, to move from one to another persona, to dialogue between personae, to enhance and intensify the personae, to integrate qualities of two or more personae. Robinson (2005) has described the ability to combine blends of emotional qualities in music and this is particularly useful in considering the interventions that are possible when creating improvised songs. When there are blends of musical qualities -- where harmony contains both the tension of a previous musical expression, and a potential release in the same moment -- significant turning points can occur and lead to a significant shift in the expression and the overall state of the client.

Robarts (2003) asserts that while improvising a song, relational experiences occur that change the self. She is focusing on the relational experience between therapist and client, as the client gains a chance to be heard and supported within the containing form of the song by the therapist. This is

certainly a part of the music psychotherapy process. But the relational experiences also happen within the client, between the various parts of the client that become manifest in the improvised song. The dialogue in the material under study here manifested among the client's different characters, personae that dialogued and triggered continued participation in the process.

The process under consideration here has a resemblance to the "Voice Dialogue" approach of Stone and Stone (1989) that encourages the emergence of various selves that make up each person's whole personality. They assert that "a multitude of energy patterns exist inside and outside of us. The internal and external can hardly be separated because the inner so strongly affect our perceptions of the outer ones" (pp. 243-244). They explain that these energy patterns are sub-personalities that make up different parts of the self.

Particular kinds of sub-personalities are identified in the practice of Voice Dialogue. In their chapter on the inner child, Stone and Stone explain that the "vulnerable child embodies the subject's sensitivity and fear. Its feelings are easily hurt and it generally lives in fear of abandonment" (p.149). They explain that this self is the one usually disowned and this is unfortunate because this is the self that allows for intimacy. "The ability to be fully 'with' another human being" comes from this self (p.152).

Gloria utilized several characters, including ones that were vulnerable in her songs. Music seemed particularly effective in eliciting the emergence of this vulnerable character type. The musical experience allowed her to sustain the

developing vulnerable child persona as it emerged and engage with it, ask questions, nurture it, and begin to heal it.

By improvising songs the music psychotherapist can work to bring out the personae that are in contrast to each other in order to facilitate dialogue and integration of those personae. Clients who are drawn to music therapy and have issues regarding self-criticism and overbearing judgment can become engaged successfully in music psychotherapy because they have a sense that they can be more spontaneous and playful. There can be a positive relationship that people hold with regard to musical expression, particularly when the client is not a trained musician. Yet the issues regarding self criticism can arise even within musical interaction for the non musician because music is so closely related to the core of the person. Combining music and words is an ideal vehicle to work on bringing a playful and creative attitude to long-held critical positions within the client.

Stone and Stone have particular ideas regarding these sub personalities that cause conflict. They feel that all of us have these parts of our inner self to a greater or lesser degree, and that when there are destructive disowned energies that impede self enhancing behaviors, dialogue work is indicated. They called these disowned energies "demonic" because of their destructive power.

"Disowned demonic energies often express themselves through the inner critic" (p.141). The music psychotherapist can utilize the song form to help the client give voice to the "inner critic".

Improvised song forms are ideal vehicles for enhancing and combining the energy opposites that Stone and Stone describe. An example of this would be “the protector” in contrast to “the vulnerable child”. Because music can hold contrasting qualities at the same time, it is an effective modality in bringing together these contrasting energetic polarities. The lyric component of the improvised song helps to specify the content and clarify and manifest the particular persona.

Landy (1993) created a comprehensive taxonomy of the various roles that clients in drama therapy can take and utilizes them in assessment and treatment. He asserts the importance for clients to find “effective ways to live within and among their [clients] roles while accepting the contradictory pulls of competing personae” (p.14). In this song improvisation process, the client can actually work to manifest the pulls of these competing personae to both change their intensity and integrate their qualities. The findings reported here bear out that improvised song forms can help to shift the quality of a particular sub personality, diminishing or increasing its intensity through the emerging and evolving expressive process. Stamboliev (1992) asserts that he has seen that the sub personalities of his clients change. The stern, critical ones “can give up some control, begin to lose their dictatorial quality and be satisfied with a more constructive task” (p. 22). These kinds of changes can be facilitated by the music psychotherapist utilizing improvised songs as the intensity of a client’s various personality constructs can evolve and transform through the unfolding song form.



Improvised songs can establish a particular quality and then by shifts in elements such as tempo and dynamics change the energetic experience for the client. This can trigger an emergence of untapped expression and long held feelings that were not being experienced by the client when the song began. This can be heard in several of the songs included in this study. In the Voice Dialogue approach, the energies that have been repressed for a long period of time are referred to as disowned selves. The goal of the therapy is to achieve “both the release of energy that was involved in holding it down and allow the energy of the formerly disowned self to be owned” (p. 24). The task of the therapist is to “explore and stretch the energy patterns” (p.25). The music psychotherapist can utilize musical expression in this way, working on the various elements of music with mobility and contrast. Improvised song forms are an effective vehicle to create a cohesive explicit energy pattern and then vary it.

Improvising songs is a powerful and effective way of eliciting these various parts of the self, creating dialogues among them, and bring them together in a way that only music can, because of its ability to blend emotional qualities. The kind of energy shifts that Stamboliev described occurred for the client at several points during the creation of improvised songs. Identifying potential sub-personalities within the client and manifesting them within the improvised song form, and then creating dialogue and blending them, is a powerful and unique tool for the music psychotherapist.

Inducing intrapsychic integration with improvised music and words was utilized by Priestley (1975) with techniques she developed in creating the

analytical music therapy approach. Rather than singing a song, the client “gives a word picture of her feelings” (p. 124) about both sides of an issue that causes conflict and the therapist then plays the character of one side of this conflict. Later the therapist mixes together the opposing forces of the music in one improvisation, blending musical qualities with the client playing as well. This was a method Priestley used to bring different parts of the client's personality into dialogue with each other. Different than actually improvising songs, it does entail both words and music.

The intensity and intractability of the sub-personalities that are created by a client can be revealing of traumatic events that occurred earlier in his or her life. Austin (2001) notes that she has seen “split off, dissociated parts of the self” (p.23) in the clients she has treated who struggle with traumatic disorders. Song forms can be an effective vehicle in music psychotherapy for the treatment of these kinds of clients because singing is an important way to feel present and grounded in music, something that can be difficult. The song form also allows a shifting focus on either the music or the words. And the predictability of the form can allow for musical elements to work on the stretching and exploring of energy patterns without losing the overall form. It is the combination of words and music that makes this possible. Austin (2004) has articulated how the process of creating words and music in music psychotherapy can “gradually begin to integrate encapsulated parts of the self” (p. 26)

The process of improvising songs differs from the voice dialogue process in the possibility and desirability of reflection and insight. Stamboliev emphasizes

that his voice dialogue process is not about insight, asserting “the transformational quality of the work is not due to analysis and rational understanding” (p.40). Instead it depends on the dialogue process between these parts of the self and the release and expansion of energies. He goes on to say that “from a clear perspective, words and ideas are just energy patterns” (p.43). Such a shifting of energy patterns clearly took place during several of the improvised songs under consideration in this study. Yet there were also times that music and in particular musical commentaries made by the therapist triggered a reflection on the experience and the client gained insight. In this way the process of improvising songs can include insight as Bruscia (1998) described, yet maintain its music centeredness.

Music combined with words dramatizes, intensifies, and brings the emotions to the fore. The music can subtly shift and respond, intensify and diminish, allowing the creative aspects of the client’s personality that are driving the particular expression to be altered. This is a powerful means of integrating previously fragmented parts of the client’s personality together. The words work to specify and manifest particular characters, places and events from the client’s life. Because of this combination of music and word expression, an integration can occur on multiple levels; a synchronization of thoughts and feelings as music and words are created, and an emergence and coming together of previously disconnected parts of the self.

In his theory of analogy in music therapy, Smeijsters (2005) argues forcefully that there is an opposition between music that follows stylistic

conventions and music that is analogous to psychic structures, and that it is only the latter forms of music that are relevant to music therapy. The findings of the present study offer a strong counterweight to Smeijsters' position.

Gloria used stylistic conventions to tap into psychic structures, experiencing powerful emotions as she expressed herself by creating improvised song forms. The work in this study is an example of how music can be both formed and recognized as conventional song forms, while also being deeply connected to the client's inner psyche.

## CHAPTER IX

## CLOSING

This was a study of archived material that was produced during a particular course of music therapy treatment. Forty eight excerpts were originally chosen while categories were created to examine the relationship between words and music during the creation of improvised songs. Four excerpts were analyzed in great detail, with findings embedded in the analysis. These analyses are the heart of the findings. They include my understanding of the musical interventions I made as therapist, and details regarding musical events and what they reveal about the psychological process that unfolded during the improvised songs. Therefore I am including a summary for each of the four excerpts that were analyzed in detail.

Summary of the Excerpt Tell the Truth

The words “*Tell the Truth*,” hold an essential meaning that has emerged from the analysis of the data. By improvising music with the intention of sustaining, supporting, encouraging, stimulating, containing, questioning, bolstering, and enhancing Gloria’s expression I am hoping to provide the opportunity for her to become aware of and ‘tell’ her ‘truth’.

I created harmonic progressions that did not cadence as a way to lend a searching, unresolved quality in the music. This matched the sense of searching I heard in Gloria’s expression and encouraged the continuation of her search for the

‘truth.’ There were blends of emotion in the music that conveyed my desire to both support and challenge her as she engaged in the process.

Elements of the music were utilized for particular effect. I used specific intervals moving in parallel motion to convey a quality I was picking up from Gloria’s expression, or to reflect some aspect of our therapeutic relationship as we continued to explore unknown territory. Register was utilized to create an experience of motion; moving higher as a sense of moving away, moving lower as a way of coming back. The Lydian mode created a sense that some event was imminent, and moving from the Lydian to diatonic was a shift to something more definitive. Repetitions played an important part, both musically and lyrically. Gloria’s repeated lyrics gave me the chance to create different musical qualities each time and thus bring a different emotional quality and perspective to the music as a whole. The repetition of the lyric allowed for the formation of a song since the rhythmic cadence set the meter and the pulse. This is something that both Beardsley (1981) and Robinson (2005) point out.

Gloria took several perspectives in creating the words. She had a conversational tone as she made certain realizations. In this example, her choice of words indicated her struggle in accepting her condition. “*They*” told her that she was sick, and she had to work to believe it. There were times where my music was a provocation to go deeper, to consider a change in her point of view. There were other times where the music functioned as a cushion to support the unfolding ideas that Gloria sang.

As the process of the improvisation unfolded, Gloria's form moved from conversational, to discovery, to cathartic expression, and finally to a tonal song form. The tension and release that preceded the song form seemed integral to the emergence of the song.

### Summary of the Excerpt There, There

The song form functioned to bring together the disparate personae that Gloria manifested and anchor the integration of them. This was accomplished through the realization of the inherent possibilities and tendencies of music. The ebbs and flows, the tensions and releases, the shifts and transformations happened naturally, cultivating with a song form that allowed for an increasingly gentle and accepting persona to emerge. Nordoff (Nordoff and Robbins 1971) states that music "can encompass all heights and depths of human experience, all shades of feeling. It can lead or accompany the psyche through all conditions of inner experience, whether these be superficial and relatively common place – or profound and deeply personal" (p.15). This is an apt description of what went on as the improvisation evolved.

My musical responses after Gloria sings a particularly descriptive lyric vary. Sometimes they sound like a musical manifestation of the words that were sung. At other times they sound like a response and comment on the lyric description. The form of this particular improvisation was held by this call and response, until at a significant turning point, the mood changes. The song that unfolds with the lyric "*there there, my dear, it's going to be ok*" is created with both participants simultaneously creating at the same time, though the rest at the

end of the melodic phrase allowed for an opportunity to continue to make musical commentaries.

Because of the call and response nature of this excerpt the relationship between lyric content and musical qualities can be explicitly seen. Words that depict imagery of tension contained intervals of tension, and the direction of the tones and the register of them also was an important factor in matching the meaning and quality of the lyric. The tritone played a particular role in conveying a sense that something was not quite right, not all right, as it fused with the words “Everything’s fine”. This short phrase contained a paradox that fueled the experience. Intervals that moved in parallel motion seemed to reveal something about the quality of the relationship between us as we worked through the various moods and perspectives of the improvised song.

The overall process of the word music interconnection developed through time. At first there was an incongruence between the content of the lyric and the quality of the how they were sung. The music helped to accentuate this incongruence. Finally, after a dialogue of perspectives and the formation of a song form, a coherent fusion between the content of the words, the quality of how they were sung, and the music that occurred simultaneously was achieved.

Zuckermandl (1973) theorized that the act of singing was “an enhancement of the self” (p.23) that breaks down the separation between subject and object. Words that are sung “build a living bridge” (p.29) between the singer and the topic being sung about. In this way the singer can “without losing his identity, be with what he is not” (p.30). Rather than singing to communicate to others, the



singer is singing to become more vital, to become more connected to the subject of the song. Here, Gloria breaks down the separation between her various selves to enhance her overall self. She seeks to be with the consoling and accepting qualities she often cannot be with in everyday life.

#### Summary of the Excerpt Do I Dare Imagine?

The overall character of the music has qualities of dramatic intensity, emotional sadness and hopefulness that related to Gloria's issues regarding her relationship to her mother. The alternation between harmony in major and harmony in minor, both between chords and in sections of the song, is a significant event in this excerpt. Like Robinson's (2005) description of the vocal piece by Brahms, the music blends the apparently disparate emotions of hopefulness and sorrow. The passages in major have an undercurrent of minor and vice versa. The close relationship between the major and the relative minor chord allows for shifts in the music and a blending of the emotional qualities.

When Gloria sings a lyric that has content that is hopeful yet is sung with a tonal quality that does not sound hopeful, I play an echo that takes some element of the sad tonal quality yet adds a hopeful quality, by employing a shift to a major harmony or more melodic motion. This is a technique that both supports Gloria's current emotional state and creates the potential for a new musical direction, which could lead to a different emotional and cognitive perspective for her.

Nordoff and Robbins (1977) describe a three step process in helping to establish a new development or skill in disabled children. There is an incipient stage when the new development is barely discernable, a finding stage where it

appears sporadically, and then an establishing phase where the development is solidified. These stages can be seen in the intrapsychic process Gloria goes through to move to a more accepting attitude regarding her feelings toward her mother, and in a broader sense, toward herself. In both instances the catalyst is the musical intervention of the therapist.

Because we are improvising and the form is not totally predictable as it unfolds, several diverse and divergent emotional qualities may be aroused at one time and expressed – both musically and lyrically - at any time. At the piano, shifting register to high, texture to thin, creating weaker pulse, and a soft dynamic in a minor tonality can quickly create within the music qualities of sadness and the conditions for an expression of sadness within the sad music. Shifts to low register, and loud dynamic and sharp articulation can create musical/emotional qualities of aggression and the conditions for the expression of anger. The timing and mutuality of the creation between Gloria and I are key determinants between what qualities the music has and what emotions are aroused and expressed.

The song form allows for the variety of emotional states and musical qualities so that the process can be a connected flowing one and the sense of revisiting and building on previously stated themes and ideas can occur. In this way the processing of the feelings takes place in the music making itself.

This excerpt is also a clear example of emotional and psychotherapeutic effects of major and relative minor and the movement between them, and how these can elicit, reflect and transform emotional states and thereby influence psychological process. For Gloria, the song improvisation process resulted in a

dramatic enhancement of her ability to evoke, express, and address emotion and emotional issues.

The person who played an important factor in the creation of this improvisation was Gloria's mother, who died many years ago. Denora (2000), who has studied the importance of singing in a variety of cultures, has pointed out how songs can be vital in helping the singer connect to the past, and work on past relationships even if this is no longer physically possible in the present. This is particularly relevant for Gloria in terms of her working on her relationship to her deceased mother through the creation of several improvised songs. Denora (2000) notes that songs can activate the feelings from the past that remain for the person in the present moment. The activity of singing a song can allow the singer to move from a sense of feeling stuck with his or her past conflict to moving to a sense of resolution. Gloria herself described this process as she sang about her mother later in treatment.

#### Summary of the Excerpt Woman Why are you Weeping?

The music that I created with Gloria as she created her lyrics contained blends of emotional qualities. It was both comforting, with the minor ninth chords and lyrical accompaniment style creating a warm cushion of containment with its soft dynamic and gentle, stable harmonic accompaniment pattern; and turbulent, with the additional tones of tension, sharp articulation and rise in dynamics. The dissonant tones and changes in the expressive components of the music were a way to create tension and to help Gloria stay with turmoil. The comforting qualities of the music made it bearable when things she sung about were painful.

This combination of comfort and turbulence made it possible for her to work into and stay with the painful content, rather than move away from it.

Gloria's non-musical sounds were a starting point, but the emotion and meaning offered in the musical experience enticed her to move right into the music. The music gave her a focus and direction so that she could allow her expressive capacities to emerge. She sang passionately, sustaining her tones.

Singing about her inadequacies, her circumstances, seemed to be a way for Gloria to distance herself from them somewhat, gaining a perspective that allowed her to explore and begin to understand her own predicaments. It was the deep immersion in musical process that seemed to be the key factor in her being able to do this. She expressed strong emotions, described a difficult situation, and then having done that she created another character who is somehow outside of the situation, observing it and asking why the situation is occurring. Later in the song she starts to weep, becoming the woman who is weeping in a literal sense.

This excerpt revealed a developmental sequence in creating a song form. Gloria started with sounds that turned into longer sounds which evolved into tones. Her thoughts developed into words, then into sentences, to sentences with a cadence or rhythm. Then Gloria worked to develop a non-verbal melody. Finally she put together a melody with words. This musical development may have been the key in the important psychological moment when in a paradox she sings "I have no voice" with her longest strongest vocal tone. She gained the musical skill and confidence to sing about a core psychological challenge. Bringing the

challenge and the strength together seemed to be an important turning point for her.

When words and music come together to create a melody, there is an internal coordination, a synchronization of the flow of music and words. Even as Gloria pulls back from the situation and gets a different perspective by singing about the “woman”, there is also a new development in that she is now able to sing a melody and say something with words at the same time. This emerging development allows her to proceed, in this case to get in touch with and express core aspects of her self.

Gloria’s motivation to sing is an important component to this process. She enjoys developing her emerging skills in creating melodies. She is searching for a way to create melodies, and this is a personal development she values. Musical development is a prerequisite for this approach and musical development facilitates personal development, it parallels personal development.

There are moments where Gloria’s phrasing exactly matches my phrasing as if she is trying to hold on to some facet of the music to keep her balance and gain support when getting ready to face difficult emotions. The music seems to create a possible anchor, and a place to put painful expression. The image I get is of someone walking in a storm and slipping and grabbing a companion by the arm so that they don’t fall. They lean on the person, and continue to move forward.

There are times the music contains qualities that resonate with feelings that Gloria may not be fully conscious of. In this way the musical experience

helps her to discover what she is feeling, by supporting her attempts to formulate her expression.

Gloria's feelings are shifting and changing as the process unfolds. Her feelings are affected by the music she is creating and the music I am creating with her. The multiple process of creating, listening, reflecting, and, responding combines events both internal and external, past and present. What is aroused within Gloria is a combination of her personal feelings about herself and how she feels about the music she is creating and responding to.

Creating a song may have had particular relevance to Gloria as she faced an uncertain future in terms of her physical condition. To create something memorable, something that she can leave behind, likely gives her a particular satisfaction.

There were times that the overall musical form guided both contributors to change the intensity of the music. Experiencing the unfolding of the music's form -- shifting to a contrasting section, or sensing a new section, or coming to the middle or end of the piece as a whole -- had an effect on the expression of both participants. Each of us contributed individually and responded to each other, yet also entered into the overall whole.

### Reflections as a Researcher

The actual description and analysis of these excerpts took place over several years. When I began I had originally approached the material solely from

a musicological perspective, in a sense trying to omit what I already knew from my experience as therapist. I thought that this was a way to listen with fresh ears. Instead of writing in the first person I used the word “therapist” to try and distinguish what I already knew from what I was finding out. Though it was ultimately helpful to make a distinction between what I was conscious of at the time as therapist and what was an understanding I was developing retrospectively as researcher for the reader, writing “therapist” was a false attempt to try and be a “researcher”. It was actually impossible to bracket out my experience. What I was observing and analyzing as a researcher was intimately connected to my experience and understanding as a therapist. Once I accepted this it made the writing of the narrative more cohesive.

I was aware of having the clinical intention of helping Gloria work through her denial and accept her diagnosis on an emotional level. I was not conscious of the shifts of tone, changes in melodic direction, and the detailed analysis of the word music relationship in illustrating how my intention manifested. During analysis, my hunches regarding why I chose to take certain tonal directions were confirmed. Upon analysis I realized that I used certain tones when I needed to hold onto my bearings tonally even during moments in the improvisation where Gloria was not producing tones. The research process made explicit many tendencies I had but was not aware of and now can utilize with more conscious intention.

Even after repeated listening of the excerpts and persistent analysis including musical transcription and notation, I was constantly discovering new

data. At times the process seemed endless. It was extremely helpful to listen to the material with a peer so that I could share my frustration as well as my tentative findings. If someone wanted to do a similar analysis I would suggest formalizing a process of listening with a peer on a regular basis, particularly during periods where the material might feel overwhelming.

I was constantly struggling to find ways to write about the music. A review of writings describing musical compositions as they unfold could be helpful the next time a research project like this is undertaken. Perhaps a course exists or could be developed that helps the researcher write about music.

It was quite informative to have members of a peer support group read portions of the writing as what can seem clear to the researcher, since he or she has heard the material, may not be clear to someone who has not heard the excerpts. Even though I always had the intention of including the actual audio material for readers to listen to, I wanted to make the writing clear enough so it could stand alone. Though I am fairly confident that I got close to what I wanted to achieve, I recognize that the listening of the material is a vital component for the reader. This is why I have made the archived material available.

### Suggestions for Further Study

An interview study with Gloria could be a valuable companion piece to this study, gaining more direct access to her point of view and her insights about music and words. It would be useful with any client who creates songs in music therapy for broadening the understanding of the connection between music and words in music therapy. Perhaps a survey of music therapists can take place



where those clients who are improvising songs in therapy can be identified and interviewed.

It may be useful for music therapists to consider how listening to and creating music can trigger the emergence of different parts of the personality, and approach listening to the client's musical expression with this in mind. A study could be developed where the researcher brings a conscious manifest of sub personalities as identified by Landy (1993) to the arena of a course of music therapy for study and see how particular musical elements are related to particular personae. A project calling for collaboration between music therapists and drama therapists may hold promise in cultivating more effective strategies when working with music and personae.

It could be fruitful to create a research project where music therapists from a variety of different approaches listen to the excerpts and share their perspective. This would have the potential of discovering different findings in relation to the words and music heard. Another possible approach to build on this study would be to take professionals from various fields outside music therapy -- psychology, musicology, drama therapy, poetry, experts on the voice – and systematically listen to the excerpts to share perspectives.

I recognize that I am a musician therapist listening to the music. It would be a very interesting study to find experts on linguistics and words and see what findings would emerge from the same material.

The current study presents the idea that personae are important psychic constructions for the music therapist to be aware of, cultivate and work with. An

interesting study building upon the current one is taking Robinson's (2005) ideas regarding hearing personae in the music to understand the structure of music better. For instance, one can study the relationship between bass tones and treble tones in music at one instrument and hear each individual tone as a persona, relating and responding to the other as the music unfolds. This can give us insight into the qualities of music which can then inform the music therapist to make more effective interventions.

### Implications of the Study

It is my hope that this study illustrates the deep psychological processes that can take place during the creation of improvised songs. Rather than looking at psychological processes as separate from musical ones, music therapists can recognize that it is possible to have an enormous psychological effect on the client by making musical choices as therapist.

This study can be useful in illustrating that Nordoff-Robbins music therapy is a form of music psychotherapy and that psychological processes are a part of what takes place in the therapy in the musical process itself.

It is my hope that this study may be useful for music therapists in developing more awareness and intention regarding their musical interventions when creating music with a client. I have been reluctant to create a specific taxonomy of musical elements with regards to intervention, because I do not want the findings to become a recipe for the music therapist looking to improvise songs with a client. I do think that considering the findings here will trigger more awareness and facility on the part of the music therapist and thus this study can

make a contribution to those therapists who are looking to expand their musical resources and psychological awareness when it comes to improvising songs.

This study can be useful for Nordoff-Robbins therapists who have musical facility and want to apply their knowledge to work with self-referred adults. This is a relatively new area of practice for Nordoff-Robbins therapists

I believe that this study may be useful for musicologists who are interested in understanding the emotional qualities of music and how emotion affects the music making process. Theories about music can be built upon the actual experience of music-making and the understanding that has emerged from looking at the music-making process.

This study can also be helpful to musicians working to understand and develop effective song writing techniques. The relationship between tonal direction and word meaning, the qualities that emerge when lyrics combine with melody, and the various elements of music that are examined here can contribute to the songwriters understanding and technique in creating songs.

### Final Thoughts

After listening to the excerpts under study repeatedly for a prolonged period of time, I decided to spend a period of time working to complete the study without listening. I feared that when I returned to listen to them again, they would not hold the same meaning for me as a researcher, and that in some way I had desensitized myself by becoming too conscious of what I understood was going on. In actuality, when I came back to listening again, I was relieved to find that the excerpts were actually more interesting to me and that my findings were still

good representations of what I understood. I have come to the conclusion that you can't listen too many times to the excerpts. They are the central core of this study and hold the potential for discovery each time they are listened to. I hope that the reader has an opportunity to immerse him or herself into the data by listening as many times as possible.

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APPENDIX A

EXEMPTION FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS





**New York University**  
*A private university in the public service*  
 Office of Sponsored Programs  
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# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Alan Turry  
 328 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Apt. 3D  
 New York, NY 10011

**FROM:** Barbara Hummel-Rossi, Ph.D. and Chairperson  
 University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects

**DATE:** January 12, 2004

**RE:** "The Interconnections Between Words and Music in Clinical Improvisation"  
 (SED/Music & Performing Arts Professions, no agency; diss., *exempt* 01/13/2004)

The above-referenced protocol has been granted exempt status by the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects.

Please note that, where applicable, subjects must be given a copy of the signed consent form before the subjects' participation. All data as well as the investigator's copies of the signed consent forms must be retained by the principal investigator for a period of at least three years following the termination of the project. Should you wish to make changes to the Committee-approved procedures, the following materials must be submitted for Committee review and be approved by the Committee prior to being instituted:

- **description of proposed revisions;**
- any **new or revised materials**, such as recruitment fliers, letters to subjects, or consent forms; and
- *if applicable*, **updated letters of approval from cooperating institutions.**

If you have any questions regarding the Committee's requirements, please contact Tina Johnson Littlejohn at 212-998-2124 (tina.johnson@nyu.edu) or Patricia Rose at 212-998-2119 (phrl@nyu.edu).

cc: Dr. Barbara Hesser—Faculty Sponsor

## APPENDIX B

### EXAMPLE OF RESEARCH PROCESS WITH MUSICAL NOTATION

call and response  
Rubato

Voice

(Spoken) **Hollow tone**  
I'm bleeding I'm throwing up My knees are weak

Piano

Forcefully  
**reaction to tone & lyrics content**

1

(in between singing and speaking)

V

My ankles can't hold me up very well E - very - thing's fine

(sustain)

Pno

**was gly support in music**  
(after spoken line)

5 3 mp 8th

V

**X tone** E - very - thing's fine **emphasizing not but I'm bleeding** you do it to

**fine - more tone** (rake)

Pno

**heavy strong voice return of dynamics**

8

V

yourself      you did it to yourself      *now! never more!*      I'm bleed-ing

Pno

12

*can't move*

V

*tempo*      *melody can't move*      *rubato*

*tempo*      *start it*      *slow groove*      *can't*      *walk*      *end in end groove*      I'm bleed-ing      *I can't walk*

Pno

17

*can't move*

V

*cantabile*      *Hollow man serving*      What's the use in helping you?

Pno

20 (still sustaining chord)

*mf empty a) opposite to ph2 in chord*

there's no use in helping you

*pause - thinking of answer why not help?*

There's no use to help you because you're just going to do the same thing again

*no use no harmony*

24

easy swing groove - *gentle - harmony interval - harmony off*

*soft, warm*

Why should I help you anymore? *speaking*

you keep...

G<sup>M</sup>A<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>/F G<sup>M</sup>A<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>/F

27

*Swing/sharing*

(in between shouting and singing not exactly the written notes)

com-in' in this room

*subito f*

*leaves voice*

all

blood-y *word inflation Dictates Dances*

on you keep

G<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>/F

31

V *3*  
comin' in this room all blood - y! (Spoken) I'm supp-

*xriore (relaxing)*

Pno

35

V  
osed to wash you up, put bandages and ointments on you

*Downward motion in scale*

Pno  
(serie) accelerando

39 *Downward direction of 64.6*

V  
comb your hair wash your face

*tumbling → trying to stay up*

Pno

43

## APPENDIX C

### EXAMPLES FROM RESEARCHERS LOG

1 Analytic Memo September 17, 2004

2

3

4 At the piano I took one fragment of an excerpt I just listened to- "Though I seemed to

5 talk. I didn't talk from my heart". First I played the music at the piano. As soon as I

6 began to sing the words, I experience feeling more emotion, more fragility, more energy

7 in the music itself. Then as I held tones at the end of phrases, I felt supported by the

8 music and by the motion of the harmony. There is something reassuring about the music

9 that allows for one to continue when there are difficult feelings being explored. Its hard

10 to know where my emotional response is coming from. Am I responding to the content of

11 the words, or the task in trying to analyze and write up the data. My sense right now is

12 that it is related to the content of the words and the actual experience of putting ideas

13 together with music. That the reason why this is so powerful is that the experience of

14 putting words to music connects different parts of the self that triggers less inhibition and

15 more action in terms of feeling.

16

17 A research device/technique- play music after listening without a specific intention. I just

18 had a thought to play and experience how improvising is without pre composing what I

19 was doing to give me insights into the experience of improvising with Gloria in sessions.

20 What came to me is that even though we have not planned what we will do there is an

21 implicit understanding of how tones are used – what we have created in terms of how

22 tones are used to create melody and song forms. There are global things we know about

23 music and each other like opera form and blues, but then more specific about tonal scales

Research  
method  
Empathy  
as  
Research

Parts of self  
people?



Revised Dec 29, 2004

- 1 Harmony bass tone harmony and then switch to chord not in the key- something is off -
- 2 wacky
- 3
- 4 Rats in the Cellar 2-4-96 ABCDE
- 5 gloria singing a D-A playing G minor with alternating AG AG AG AG predominant. "A
- 6 war, artillery" Gloria trying to use metaphors, artistic imagery to describe her inner
- 7 world. A responds by playing loud bass tones. The harmony stays consonant and then
- 8 goes dissonant briefly before. "My body is a battleground". A goes into civil war kind of
- 9 rhythm- not following Gloria. "There seems to be a Ceasefire for a few days" Dynamic
- 10 relationship is piano a lot louder then voice for most of this. (OC The repetitions in the
- 11 music trigger Gloria to reflect on what the possible solution is to the conflict she is
- 12 singing about. The music continues, but does not provide an answer, it provides
- 13 momentum for the search for the answer- at least here.) 3:26 (9) Gloria has been
- 14 singing predominantly on D. Now she hints at C sharp and A plays the C sharp but
- 15 Gloria stays on the D.
- 16 Rats in the Cellar 10
- 17 "Suppose I wasn't here- suppose I could just disappear". Gloria sings this on a major
- 18 third. (OC This may be a tendency of Gloria- that when she sings the most dire
- 19 depressing ideas she sings them with consonant intervals.) I've always wanted to
- 20 disappear" She sings this in a gentle, relaxed, almost as if she is sinking in to the relief
- 21 of disappearing.
- 22

Disappear, I, a  
I Rise Rise, Son is Japan B  
Combination - relief in singing

APPENDIX D

COOKE'S DESCRIPTION OF MUSICAL TENSIONS

Pitch tensions are created by tonal tensions, what the actual tones are in the context of a scale. They are also created by intervallic tensions. This refers to the direction and distance the notes are from one another. These intervallic tensions can occur with notes played successively, which create melodic ideas, and between notes played simultaneously, which create harmony. Even without being specific about particular tonal relationships the move away from a starting tonal point “implies an active effort; and to come in or come back implies a relaxation of the initial exertion” (p.103). The stronger the establishment of a tonal starting point, the stronger the quality of effort and relaxation. The tonal starting point is usually referred to as the tonic.

Time tensions refer to the rhythmic element of music. Rhythm is the “measured movement of similar tone groups; that is, the effect produced by the systematic grouping of tones with reference to regularity both in the accentuation and in their succession, as equal or unequal in time value. A rhythm is, therefore, a tone-group serving as a pattern for succeeding identical groups” (Baker 1978, p.182). Cooke explains that time tensions express “the speed and rhythm of feelings and events-in other words, the state of mental, emotional, or physical *animation*” (p. 97).

Time tensions can be created by establishing a meter that is utilized to set clear fixed points with which to measure the time. Time tensions can also be created by the duration of tones as they relate to one another, and by the accent placed on a note in relation to other notes. For example, 4/4 time means there will

be 4 beats in each measure.  $\frac{3}{4}$  time refers to having 3 beats in each measure. The 4 refers to the beat being equal to a  $\frac{1}{4}$  note.

Music can exist without a strong feeling of tension with regards to time. Cooke gives the example of plainsong. Plainsong was vocal music sung in unison that did not have any defined meter. Cooke uses the word “other-worldliness” (p.36) to describe this kind of music, with its lack of time tension, and feels it lends a spiritual quality to it. He makes a point to say that even music that has a meter can have less time tension when the other elements of music- very slow pulse or rubato, for example, are present to obscure the meter.

Cooke examines the two major meters that create a different rhythmic experience. Duple meter is where there is one strong beat and one weak beat, and triple meter, where there is one strong beat and two weak beats. The strong beat is often created by placing more emphasis on it with an increase in volume. This is a way to create a rhythmic accent, where one note can be made more important than the other, and is a way to create a time tension. Cooke describes duple meter as having a controlled quality, and triple meter as having a quality of freedom. Contemporary music, like jazz often has a combination of these effects as triplets are played within a duple meter.

In addition to accent, duration is a way to create time tensions. Duration is the length of time a note is played. Duration of notes in succession creates movement. Movement can be uneven, when there are notes of uneven duration. This creates movement that Cooke describes as “jerky” (p. 37). Notes of equal duration create movement that is even. Time tensions of duration are created by

tempo as well- long tones in succession create a slower tempo. Shorter tones create a faster tempo.

Tempo is a vital element in terms of creating tensions of time. Cooke states that “the chief expressive power available in the time dimension is tempo- the speed at which a piece of music moves” (p. 99) Different tempos convey different levels of animation. This is important to consider in terms of emotional expression. Cooke points out that “every basic emotion can be experienced at different levels of animation” (p. 99). He gives the example of joyful music. If the tempo is extremely fast the joyful music may have a tumultuous quality. If the same music is played at a moderate tempo the music may have an easy-going quality. If played at a slow tempo, the music may be serene. If the other elements of music, particularly those of tone tensions, are different, and create a despairing quality, the music is also affected by the change of tempo. Cooke suggests that a despairing music played at a fast tempo may have a hysterical quality, and at a slow tempo a quality of resignation.

Time tensions of duration and tempo can combine to create an overall emotional quality. Cooke gives the example of a fast tempo, with a dotted rhythm (short and long tone grouped together). The notes of uneven duration add enormous tension and energy to the already animated emotional expression that is caused by the fast tempo. Again, depending on the other elements of musical tension such as pitch or volume, this can create excitement or anxiety.

Another time tension has to do with phrasing or articulation- the music can be played with staccato (short and abrupt) or legato (long and smooth). Cooke

believes that these elements give or withhold emphasis. In his analysis staccato naturally gives more emphasis than legato.

Volume refers to loud and soft and the shifts between one or the other. Loudness has to do with emphasis. But Cooke makes a point that soft dynamics can draw more attention than music that is loud, which he calls “the emphasis of understatement” (p. 95). He makes a broad generalization that “the *louder* a person speaks, the more *emphasis* he gives to what he is saying; the quicker he speaks, the more animated he is becoming; the *higher* his voice rises, the more he is *asserting* himself” (p.95). The texture of the music- how thick or thin, the amount of notes and in what range and articulation, also relates to emphasis. Thick texture relates to emotional emphasis and spare texture relates to emotional emptiness.

Of course, the tensions of pitch, time and volume occur simultaneously in music and interact one upon the other. Cooke points out that it is essential to discover “which of them is the fundamental one, on which the others merely act (however powerfully) as qualifying influences” (p. 38).

Though there are exceptions, particularly with music that is primarily rhythmic, Cooke identifies tonal tensions- the directions of tones and how they relate to each other within a tonal system-as the basis of the expressive language of music. Tonality forms the basis of music’s vocabulary. This vocabulary is “modified in countless ways by intervallic tensions, time-tensions, and volume-tensions, and characterized by tone color and texture” (p. 38). In his view, “tonal tensions, convey the basic emotional moods” (p. 40) of music. The elements that

modify the basic tonal vocabulary are vital, as they give a particular and vivid quality to the tones.

APPENDIX E

COOKE'S DESCRIPTION OF INTERVALS



Tonic: Emotionally neutral; context of finality

Minor second: Semitonal (1/2 step) tension down to the tonic. In a minor key, spiritless anguish, context of finality because it is resolving to the tonic

Major second: As a passing note, emotionally neutral. As a whole step tension down to the tonic, in a major context, pleasurable longing, context of finality.

Minor Third: Consonance, but a depression of natural third: stoic acceptance, tragedy. (being lower than the major third, a depressed sound). “In cases of unrelieved tragedy....the need to express the truth....led composers to have an ‘unhappy ending’ in the minor” (p. 57-58). Within the context of key, the minor third is a “dignifiedly tragic note, firmly looking on the dark side of things” (p.57-58).

Major Third: Consonance, natural third: joy, pleasure, looking for the bright side of things

Normal (Perfect) Fourth: As a passing note, emotionally neutral. As a semitonal tension down to the major third, pathos

Sharp Fourth (Tritone): As a modulating note to the dominant key, active aspiration. As ‘augmented fourth’, pure and simple, inimical forces.

Dominant (Perfect Fifth): Emotionally neutral; context of flux, intermediacy.

Minor sixth: Semitonal tension down to the dominant, in a minor context: active anguish in a context of flux. The effect of the dissonant minor sixth resolving in a minor key is “a burst of anguish” (p.68).

Major sixth: As a passing note, emotionally neutral. As a whole tone tension down to the dominant, in a major context, pleasurable longing in a context of flux. It creates a “pleasurable feeling of being unsatisfied, longing for pleasure” (p.68).

The sixths are similar to the thirds, but different in the context of the triad. They are not fixed in the triad like thirds are, and are thus in a state of flux. “The feeling is not one of possession or acceptance, like the third, but of non-possession, non-acceptance” (p. 69)

Minor seventh: Semitonal tension down to the major sixth, or whole-tone tension down to minor sixth, both unsatisfactory, resolving again down to the dominant: mournfulness.

Major Seventh: As a passing note, emotionally neutral. As a semitonal tension up to the tonic, violent longing, aspiration in the context of finality.