New Amateurs and Tricksters: A manifesto for music and sound creation

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This article considers some of the potential advantages that creators without formal training – Barthes's 'amateurs' – have employed in collaborative processes to make sound art and also considers ways in which the approach may open fresh forms of social engagement. Drawing on the author's collaborative practice in sound creation, Maria Lind's classification of types of collaboration is extended to develop the notion of a 'quadruple' variant. This is based on the relationship between human and non-human collaborators. The role of the 'Trickster' is developed as a means of supporting and facilitating amateurs operating in a radical context. I propose, and provide a manifesto for, a category of the 'New Amateur' who addresses social engagement in sound practices in at least two ways. First, via structural dependence on a notion of collaboration significantly expanded to include not only other humans but also materials, ideas and both non- and post-human entities. Second, by drawing upon the anarchist ethics and concepts of the Trickster to democratise artistic potential through collaborative and distributed authorship. Thus, the manifesto reflects a political dimension rooted in the everyday and reveals a route to social engagement via personal creative awakening. The New Amateur offers fresh possibilities in music and organised sound and engages via an unleashing of individual capability to mirror the 'lines of flight' pursued by John Cage, La Monte Young and Alan Kaprow. The mechanism initiated in this way locates individual creativity in the context of mutual aid. Social engagement is driven by individual creativity and the explosive awareness of the potential this awakens.

1. INTRODUCTION

It goes without saying that not all music-making is professional music-making. Small's definition of 'musicking' has been deployed to describe and to value many amateur and non-professional music practices, such that it is commonly understood to encompass these by most musicologists (Small 1999). In addition to this, recognition and defence of amateur status is not hard to find. In music, Stebbins explores the 'dabbler', the 'serious amateur musician' and 'beyond' and celebrates the amateur on the grounds that most of the world's 'fine professional musicians' started as either 'dabblers' or 'neophyte amateurs' (Stebbins 2013: 145).

Amateur musicians have clearly been long recognized and appreciated – albeit with some derogatory implications. Ben Walters refers to a 'negative framing', 'the point-and-laugh' construction of the naive, incompetent amateur (Walters 2020a: 99) and Sarah Jane Bailes characterises the amateur as 'an often risible and endearing figure … always already bound up with the notion of failure' (Bailes 2011: 93). Colloquial use of the term 'amateur' as an insult is an extension of this type of usage. As Barthes noted, '[u]sually the amateur is defined as an immature state of the artist: someone who cannot – or will not – achieve the mastery of a profession' (Barthes 2000: 98–9).

In this article, I argue that the amateur is more than a rung on a ladder, an 'immature' and incomplete artist. I am not alone in such a view. In addition to Barthes's notion that it is the professional who must strive to imitate the amateur (Barthes 2000: 99), the role of amateur and professional intellectuals in knowledge production has been discussed and a tendency for professionals to operate within constraining bubbles identified (Heffernan 2014; Merrifield 2018). Svetlana Boym, writing of the 'off-modern', notes that for Barthes 'an amateur … is one who constantly unlearns the institutional games' (Boym 2010).

Following such critical views of the role of professionals in creative work, the claim I make in this article is that there is a role for a new type of creator, a fresh trajectory within music and sound production, as illustrated by the three examples from my practice outlined later. The aim is to by-pass the need to unlearn institutional games and to reject the status of professional as the only viable goal. This is a bold task. The aim instead is to open up additional possibilities: what Adam Harper calls 'n-dimensional modernism' in which there can be 'no one absolute foundation for music … no prior assumptions, no prior techniques and conventions – no restrictions whatsoever' (Harper 2011: 3).

These notions of politicising of the role and status of the amateur are applicable to the music and sound production that are the focus of this article. Indeed, Constanzo suggests that music has lessons to learn from visual art training where 'individual creativity

and exploration are foundational to how art is taught' in stark contrast to much of the training in music (Constanzo 2021).

At this point, the Trickster enters the scene to provide support for the New Amateur. Both are new-comers in a contested space where strong allies are key. The Trickster has the right approach for this adventure, he 'derives creative intelligence from appetite … [is] adept at creating and unmasking deceit … master at the kind of creative deception that … is a prerequisite of art … at once culture hero and fool' (Hyde 2017: 17–19). With these attributes he can help the New Amateur in negotiations with professional musicians and sound-makers over contested space.

To be clear here, the New Amateur in Trickster's clothing directly challenges professionals, appropriating those aspects that can be co-opted and asking how professionals can be of use. This behaviour can be seen in the examples from practice provided in this article. While Tricksters expect to learn from professional musicians and sound-makers and have a strong appetite for what Adam Harper refers to as the 'non-sonic variables' in music (Harper 2011: 29–32), they also expect professionals to learn from the relationship. For example, I suggest that professionals have much to learn from the way in which New Amateurs embrace extended forms of collaboration exactly because of their lack of formal training and experience. In particular, Tricksters are unapologetic, they are brave in their challenge to professionals in this field and provide the New Amateur with the 'strut' or 'bravado' required to move beyond the perceptions of inferior status discussed earlier. The Trickster struts through the practice examples I outline later in the article.

2. POLITICISING THE AMATEUR

The model of amateurs and professionals in music and sound production is one notion of 'what the world could be like', which implies 'what it cannot be like' at the same time. David Bell, writing about participatory art, discusses the danger of such unhelpful binaries. He looks critically at the well known and 'rather ferocious' exchange between Grant Kester and Claire Bishop about 'participatory art'. They clash over a perceived boundary, a contested space, between 'aesthetic projects' and 'activist works' that is easily found in sound production and music. Bell helpfully suggests that through 'a productive synthesis of their arguments' these binaries may be challenged (Bell 2017: 73–4). In the current context it is more useful to replace binaries that draw on the distinct identity of each side – professional and

amateur musician – with the idea of 'a circuit which implies a more reflexive and transformative union' (Hayles 1999: 115). The language of cybernetics seems particularly suited to this work since the idea of multiple feedback loops is also involved.

Such a challenge can usefully be made for the amateur/professional binary in creative practice in general and in sound production in particular. Naming as 'amateur' or 'professional' is a political act, it involves 'a will to power' wherever it occurs (Hassan 1987; Lochhead 2009). Issues of terminology are equally central for Salomé Voegelin and Claire Bishop because choices about terms are never politically neutral and have an impact on the type of activity deemed appropriate for areas of creative practice. (Bishop 2012: 8; Voegelin 2015: 142). It is this 'will to power in nomenclature' that is concealed within use of the term 'amateur' in the creation of sound and music. In all areas of creative practice, naming is 'central to the development of identity and to the appropriation and exercise of power' (Hayes-Brady 2017). However, to merely identify a term, here the amateur, as political is insufficient. What, after all, is not political? In music and sound production, in the hierarchy identified, the 'amateur' is perceived as inferior in terms of both market worth (where the amateur is excluded) and aesthetic value (where the professional sets the acceptable standards).

Yet there are a number of possible responses to a labelling or naming that carries the potential for stigmatisation. Politicisation is only one of these. It can be distinguished from the other ways of avoiding the stigma of the amateur label ('capitulating', 'accommodating', 'capitalising' and 'normalising') in that the individual involved is 'proudly assertive' and will appear more 'militant' or 'positive' than others; the person is able to view his or her 'problem' as being a public and political issue rather than a personal 'failing', 'deficiency' or 'offence'. It is also more likely to be a collective rather than individual response and 'involvement in organised politicizing with one's fellow deviators is … bound to enhance self-respect and afford a new sense of purpose' (Schur 1979: 322–3). This provides a hint of the way in which such individual 'patterns of adjustment' impact on modes of social engagement.

The manifesto proposed is an opening tactic in a campaign to politicise the amateur in music and sound production. It is a response to this 'will to power in nomenclature' and may be applied in all areas of creative and artistic activity with implications for agency within the practice of everyday life. These principles are the starting point for my own research in sound production and through interdisciplinary practice across other artforms that will be proposed later.

3. THE NEW AMATEUR AT WORK: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PRACTICE IN ORGANISING SOUND

As a practitioner pleased to self-identify as a New Amateur and Trickster, my hybrid practice includes making sound. It also includes photomontage and sculpture, writing, and creating still and moving images. Inevitably these practices often cut across forms to include sound dimensions – hence I work in sonic sculptures, the spoken word, soundtracks for video (or video tracks for soundscapes) and experiments with the sounds of paint and other forms of mark-making or of landscapes and buildings. The examples of my practice offered here also illustrate a reflective practice cycle in which conceptualisation, development, presentation, reception and reflection move in both directions as each process informs the others. I am indebted in this to Roberta Mock for her adaptation of a Schön's reflective cycle (Schön 1995; Mock 2000: 5). Here the development of the notion of the New Amateur, the manifesto and the development of associated practice move side by side in ongoing negotiation with each other.

To illustrate my role, I will briefly consider three examples from my practice. All are examples of practice research rather than practice in and for itself: the intent being to use practice 'as a mode of knowledge production' (Barrett 2010: 2). The first involves the collaborative creation of *The Red Symphony*, originally conceived for an exhibition held in July 2019: *Bodies of Work* by the Red6 Collective at the Brewery Tap in Folkestone, Kent. The second is an ongoing extension of that project that involves an experiment with a combination of professional musicians and New Amateurs responding in sound to visual images used in the fourth movement of the symphony. The third is a collaborative project performed at Free Range, an alternative and experimental music venue in Canterbury, Kent in February 2019.

3.1. *The Red Symphony*: Mr Fox and Doctor Jane

A piece of sculpture titled *Libretto Concreto* (Figure 1) accompanied this symphony in four movements, sending spirals of wire and the lyrics of the first and second movement on paper chains into the paths of the gallery visitors.

Three of the four movements were accessed by visitors to the gallery via headphones linked to a 'white cube' within the overall 'white cube' of the gallery (O'Doherty 1986). The fourth was a soundscape played in the gallery via a studio monitor mounted on a further white cube. Exhibiting artists were all graduates of established British Art Schools apart from this New Amateur and his principal human co-creator. For varying reasons, all the exhibitors

Figure 1. *Libretto Concreto*, Mr Fox and Dr Jane, 2019 (steel wire, paper, music stand).

wanted the gallery to be a 'proper' white cube. For the New Amateur it was particularly important that the gallery looked 'right' (part of his trick). The fact that the gallery was owned, run and curated by a formal art establishment (the University of the Creative Arts) meant the exhibition and the work were to a certain extent validated by it and this was also part of the Trickster's trickery.

The Red Symphony had two primary human collaborators who were responsible both for the initial conception and the realisation of the work. Thus far this work would be described by Maria Lind as 'double collaboration' (Lind 2007: 26–7) and by Alan Taylor as full 'collaborative working' in which 'the participants share both the tasks themselves and the decisions on the contributions' (Taylor 2016: 570). The work becomes a 'triple collaboration' in Lind's terms because collaboration is itself the theme but I am suggesting an extension of these categories on the grounds that the particular collaboration in sound production engages non-human partners, thus necessitating an extension of Lind's categories to include a new 'quadruple collaboration'.

The human collaborators wish to identify an indebtedness:

1. To the materials and tools involved and to some ideas related to sound and composition; for example, notation was used in at least two ways and notions of amplitude, timbre, duration and morphology were considered. With the exception of a few sound effects (from Logic Pro X samples), the sound is made by conventional musical instruments: a mandolin, a violin, a guitar, various percussion instruments and a keyboard (albeit manipulated by instrument software) and human voices.

2. To some post-human or at least non-human entities. For example, the 'information' within the 'Christy backing vocal' sample used in the fourth movement titled 'Anything, Anything You Got' and in the work of Mr Fox, an alter ego of the author who represents an alternative method to escape the limitations of that ego, cut off from the 'big Mind' that John Cage refers to. The New Amateur can view an alter ego as what Lewis Hyde calls 'a net to catch contingency' (Hyde 2017: 141). The Trickster is, of course, also a non-human entity.

The main human collaborators acknowledge a co-responsibility with these non-human collaborators, whose absence would have prevented the creation of the work in the same way as the absence of the human collaborators (Bolt 2004: 74).

The first movement, 'Are You Copying?' (Sound Example 1), played on a continuous loop as a soundscape for the whole exhibition, consists of sounds created by the other members of the collective in the studio in which they regularly met and engaged in practice. Thus, the sounds are the sounds of the studio, manipulated (composed) by both main human collaborators. The palette knives and paint brushes, sanding, scraping and paint mixing of the other artists working together in the same physical space are interspersed with the sound of coffee making, biscuit and lunch eating, joking, sounds from laptops and phones, shared reflections on each other's work and formed to produce an MP3 loop that foregrounds the process of collaborative art work in sound. The studio sounds were recorded on a Zoom H2N and mixed using Logic Pro X in another studio. The track was then exported in MP3 format to be played on old iPhones used as simple MP3 players and blue-toothed to studio monitors in the gallery.

The second movement, 'Are We Going on 1 or 2?' (Sound Example 2), takes these 'collaboration sounds' and works them into multiple iterations. The two composers listened to the original recordings and then selected the key practice words each of them had heard in the recordings. These were written on standard manuscript paper so that one word or phrase appeared
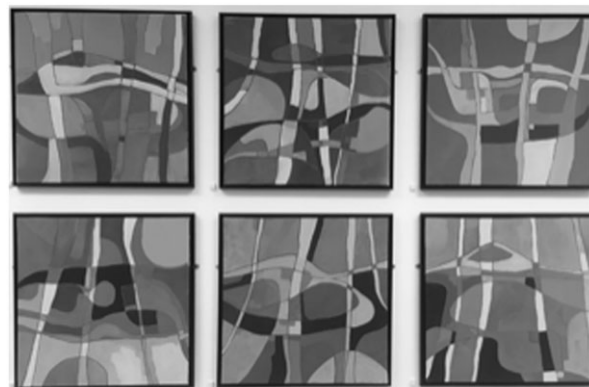

Figure 2. Untitled (Body Prints): Mic Blake, 2019, acrylic on canvas. Photo in monochrome by Mr Fox by permission of the artist.

as one bar. The two composers discussed and made decisions together on the overall procedure. They selected the words as individuals and, in several iterations, re-recorded these as (a) separate texts (iterations one and two), (b) texts read back and forth, call and response (iteration three) and then (c) with the words spoken simultaneously against each other (iteration four). The final track represented the fifth iteration as the four previous ones were mixed together as one track for the finished movement. At no stage was there any attempt to synchronise the four iterations, embracing the sound effects of the aleatory approach.

The third movement, 'A Curious Life' (Sound Example 3), used the spoken word with one of the two primary human collaborators using her voice to read her own words against a soundscape jointly created with the other. The voice tells the listener that 'this artwork is a collaborative and performative act with the ability to transform another into a composition that belongs to neither'. It has no specific predicted outcome but is, instead, in the words of the speaker, 'a transformative plurality of becomings'. Thus, the movement has the creative process in general and collaboration specifically as its theme.

Finally, the fourth movement is titled 'Anything, Anything You Got' (Sound Example 4). While there is little of the formal structure implied in the overall title (*The Red Symphony*), four movements are present as might be anticipated. While this hardly qualifies as a 'highly sophisticated habit', there is experimentation with notation in this fourth movement that was exciting for the main human collaborators. There was also a further extension of the collaboration. One of the other artists planned to exhibit six paintings based on body prints made following a major operation (Figure 2). The paintings had the appearance of some forms of non-conventional notation appearing in an academic article written by an experienced, formally

trained and well-established musician (Redhead 2017: 104–5). The painter gave permission for the paintings to be used as a form of notation for the fourth movement, which took form as an experiment about how visual images sounded.

Part of the process for the collaborators now was to engage with the painter and she was asked to talk about how she thought her paintings sounded. She provided text and some directions. For example, she saw the sound of static and the noise of a needle stuck on a vinyl record as part of the sound of her sequence of paintings. These are incorporated in the movement as are some of her words, spoken by the composers.

3.2. Sound and Vision Experiments

The creation of the fourth movement in the *Red Symphony* prompted further reflections and developments. In a new series of iterations, I worked with three professional musicians – a violinist, a flautist and a bass player – and asked them to undertake the task I had previously worked on: the sounds produced by the same six paintings. These were recorded using Logic Pro X. The musicians were provided only with the unconventional notation of the paintings and a time limit for each of the six 'movements', set by the choices of the first one of them to play – the violinist. None of them heard any of the other contributions. No instruction was provided about pitch, amplitude, timbre and morphology – to use Cage's five determinants of 'the position of a particular sound in … space' (Cage 1961: 9). Each of the three professionals made one recording in which each painting became a separate movement and one as a response to all six paintings at once. The flautist provided an additional iteration using a different flute for each movement and I provided one more by producing a recording on a Zoom HN2. I then added a 'voice machine' track and a mandolin track resulting in a total of ten separate responses to the 'notation' of the paintings.

As a neophyte New Amateur with the inclinations of a Trickster and knowing little of where to start in curating and editing processes, I moved all the tracks to the first bar and played them together. The result remains in the form of a Logic Pro X track approximately 230 bars in length, composed, curated and edited with aleatory factors as major collaborators: a distortion of a cut-up that William Burroughs and Brion Gysin might have appreciated. The piece is designed for live performance rather than recording; the mix is recreated on each occasion by using mute and volume buttons, looping endlessly, if wished, to produce versions with a common starting point but no fixed duration. Additional tracks may be added by professional musicians and sound-makers of all sorts, conventional amateurs of various types and

New Amateurs endlessly. Professional musicians were used as a starting point and a base on which New Amateurs could expand. In some performances, the professional tracks can be muted if wished.

The nature of the collaboration is different here but it can be seen that the New Amateur is pushed towards such variably shaped collaborations by virtue of both his/her lack of formal training and experience and by a wish to work in an energetic trans-disciplinary manner.

3.3. Sound and Performance: Left Bank to Free Range – Delores Newton and les Mecs des Étoiles

This was a short performance piece by two alter egos – Mr Fox and Delores Newton – featuring Delores reading from her own recently published book of poetry, supported by members of her band with videos and soundtrack created by Mr Fox. The book of poetry was also illustrated by Mr Fox.[1]

This piece is included as a further illustration of the trickster element of the New Amateur. Following the fabrication of a lavish book by Ernest Kilgore-Jones complete with illustrations, a publisher and reviewing comments – the Trickster had previously become a writer (Kilgore-Jones 2017) – I started this collaboration as an attempt to use similar tricks to become a sound artist: working in a popular public venue with an established performance artist, commissioning a local DJ to donate a track for the third reading, begging favours from a film maker and two professional bass players, and having copies of the poetry books on sale contributed to the 'trick'. Mr Fox also played keyboards.

4. DEVELOPING A MANIFESTO

Practice research involves praxis, a sought-after link between practice and theory, practice and knowledge. The reflective cycle I have made use of (Mock 2000) tends to foreground a 'processual relationship' with the object that is to be understood, an ongoing negotiation of practitioner or performer with that object, emphasising 'knowing' as much as 'knowledge' (Nelson 2013: 20). The manifesto presented here was developed via the 'knowing' of the practice examples provided and will continue to be modified as practice continues.

The New Amateur has a greater tendency to play and experiment with the tools and instruments involved in sound production, and less of a need to use them appropriately, follow rules, comply with expectations or follow accepted notions of 'music' or 'sound' that s/he may be unaware of. This can be

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[1]The sound element of the performance can be heard on Soundcloud at https://soundcloud.com/free-range (item 184 items 1, 2 and 3).

seen in the 'sound stripes' in the fourth movement of *The Red Symphony* (where experiments were conducted with cutting vertical slices a bar wide through nine or ten tracks to see and hear how a slice of sound might be used) and the synthesised chords from the introduction to David Bowie's *Space Oddity* used in the earlier Free Range example.

The techniques avoid and are, of necessity, ignorant of what Allan Kaprow termed the 'highly sophisticated habits' of the 'known arts'. The latter 'artistic attachments' are seen by Kaprow as 'so many window dressings, unconsciously held on to to legitimate an art that might otherwise go unrecognized' (Kaprow 2012: 833). It is not unusual for established artists to identify these 'highly sophisticated habits' acquired during formal training and while accumulating experience as hampering their ability to create or make work. In fact, the 'midi keyboard' is a cheap Casio model that can be linked, following instructions on a YouTube video, to a laptop and free software (Garageband, although the collaborators used Logic Pro X, which could be described as the 'professional' version of the free software). The software identifies the keyboard for the untrained user as a 'software instrument' on which anyone can experiment with sophisticated synthesised sounds of the type used in the preceding fourth movement. Issues of quality of outcome or of aesthetics inevitably arise here as indicated in statement seven of the Manifesto.

Concerns about letting amateurs work without foregrounding accepted professional standards in music and sound creation mirror Claire Bishop's concerns about the impact on aesthetic standards of 'participatory' art and 'relational aesthetics'. However, I argue there is nothing about this approach that would necessarily rule out the 'provocative', 'uncomfortable' or 'multi-layered' characteristics of 'aesthetic' projects (Bell 2017: 73). Indeed, defined in this way, the approach of the New Amateur will serve to enhance such characteristics. Perhaps serious intent and the approach of the Trickster are sufficient even if merely as starting points. The identification by the software of the type of input, displayed on screen for the user, and the range of options offered for sound-making enables the software to act as an active collaborator for the untrained practitioner. It is an entity offering information just as a human entity can offer information that enables the Trickster to perform his/her trick in the role as New Amateur.

Without formal training, we New Amateurs have no choice but to engage in and be more dependent on what Barbara Bolt calls 'thinking without knowing' (Bolt 2004: 43), and what Derrida calls 'writing without seeing' but in this context applied to 'organised sound' (Derrida 1993: 3). Without the 'knowing' produced by formal training and 'sophisticated habits'

we are forced, if we wish to proceed, to engage in thinking without knowing. Is thinking 'with knowing' perhaps a disadvantage in practice?

There is a strong sense of the tools, primarily software, the keyboard deck, leads, the instruments and so on, having a dual life as material to be manipulated while also possessing qualities and suggesting ideas in practice in the same way as sentient collaborators.

5. A MANIFESTO FOR THE NEW AMATEUR

The New Amateur:

1. *Seeks space to create without specialised training*: of necessity operating without the 'highly sophisticated habits' that formal training and experience foreground and involving a particular interest in those aspects of music and sound creation which do not require specialised training (Kaprow 2012). S/he, incidentally, seeks out examples of such practice even among 'professional' and established artists, including musicians or organisers of sound.

2. *Pays attention to the productive power of play and adopts the role of The Trickster*: in defence against likely accusations of fraud and sleight of hand (Hyde 2017). New Amateurs as Tricksters not only dare to 'dabble' in areas of artistic practice and expertise in which it is widely accepted that only professionals and neophyte-amateurs excel but also dare to act as if they are 'real' artists. In 'pretending to be' a producer of sound, or a published writer or a visual artist, one such is created via the learning involved in the process.

3. *Recognises a politicised identity*: perceived as an ongoing claim for a politically contested space and rejects an amateur/professional binary and hierarchies that develop from such a binary (Gates 1991; Jorgensen 1993; Stebbins 2013) as limiting in terms of both analytical value and human potential, at individual and collective levels.

4. *Tends towards collaborative work and notions of group autonomy*: which has implications and opens possibilities for community-based creative and artistic work, for education and for co-authorship. Collaboration may well include some practitioners who have been formally trained. The only question will be: what can be achieved? This draws on the approach of Ben Walters who, writing about the Slaughterhouse Club, a drop-in performance arts project 'for people living with homelessness, addiction and mental health challenges' in South London, asks 'not what amateurs can do for professionals but what can

professionals do for amateurs?' (Walters 2020a: 97, 100).

5. *Acknowledges an indebtedness to anarchist ethics and political thought*: individual capability, mutualism and autonomy (Brown 2011: 203–6) and is aware of the significance of autonomous creative practice for wider social and political life and the production of 'potentially transformative ways of being' (Walters 2020a: 101). This view mirrors Edwin Schur's earlier suggestion that such agency 'enhance[s] self-respect and afford[s] a new sense of purpose' (Schur 1979: 323).

6. *Extends collaborative notions to give space to non-human partnerships*: acknowledging a co-responsibility with and indebtedness not only to materials, tools and machines, but also to alter egos and characters. Such 'couplings between organism and machine' are perceived as a 'border war' by Donna Haraway and suggests the post-human to be a fruitful area of ideas to be developed by the New Amateur, who is similarly seeking 'an argument for *pleasure* in the confusion of boundaries' (Haraway 2016: 7). Moreover, Haraway's concept of the 'material semiotic actor' suggests this is not an instrumental relationship. Rather these non-human collaborators are 'actor[s] independent of intentions and authors' (Haraway 1991: 200–1).

7. *Has a hybrid approach to practice*: operates across disciplines and forms. Within organised sound and music this entails a full range of ways of making sound, including musical instruments. Having missed out on the habits developed by formal training and lengthy experience along with any disadvantages that may result, that is, habits that permit the playing of instruments and/or composing, the New Amateur is open to playing any instruments (and 'playing' is an apposite term in this context), making any sounds and working across any forms and disciplines. This 'hybrid practitioner' approach is illustrated in the previous section. This might also be termed a multimodal or interdisciplinary approach.

8. *Holds a firm intention of concern with standards, including aesthetic standards*: a New Amateur does not require formal music training to access chance but will require a certain intent and have a certain idea what s/he wants to do unrestrained by conventional notions of what 'proper' sound is. Experience of experimental sound practice will help with that, as Lauren Redhead suggests (Redhead 2017: 110). New Amateurs only require this access to be in the game. By, amongst other tactics, observing and listening to professionals, alert New Amateurs will identify sections of

practice that are not dependent on training, expertise or innate talent (if that exists) and that are as open to amateurs with certain horizons and intent as they are to established professionals. Lewis Hyde provides an example of John Cage breaking free from the restraints of the ego to access the expanse of the rest of the mind by depending on chance. Cage says '[t]hat's why I decided to use chance operations. I used them to free myself from the ego.' You do not require formal musical training to decide whether at a certain point you want to use a 'silence … a sustained flute tone, the noise of traffic or car alarm' (Hyde 2017: 142). There is nothing in such tactics that necessarily undermines aesthetic standards.

9. *Aims to be disruptive*: in the way that the aleatory is disruptive, as a way of by-passing Alan Kaprow's highly sophisticated habits, thereby opening up fresh perceptions of what might be possible. In a political context, referring to both the music and the politics of the late twentieth century, Mark Fisher refers to these as 'lost futures' (Fisher 2014: 1–29). Lacking formal training, New Amateurs will move towards what Barbara Bolt, following Kathleen Fallon, calls 'working hot'. The intention is that 'they possess a force that enables movement and transformation' (Bolt 2004:159).

10. *Does not foreground the (art) market*: has no aversion to 'sales' of products and performances if appropriate. Thus, does not see the 'professional' as a role model nor the role of New Amateur as the first step on a ladder, a 'career contingency' nor as 'an immature state of the artist' (Barthes 2000: 98). However, sharing will be seen as more central than selling, as will direct experience through practice than instruction.

6. DISCUSSION

Several issues surface at this stage. The first involves an explanation of the need for a Trickster. The second concerns the connection to anarchist ethics and politics and the usefulness of this connection. Third is a brief examination of whether New Amateurs are better suited to collaboration or whether they should attempt to shine as individual artists. The last issue is a consideration of the implications for social engagement and community strategies.

First, the Trickster uses 'tactics' that de Certeau identifies as 'victories of the "weak" over the "strong" … clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things' (Certeau 1988: xix). Lacking formal training, experience and expertise but with a serious intent,

New Amateurs need to employ the role of the Trickster to bluff their way through while new forms of practice and orientations are being developed. As Lewis Hyde claims in the subtitle to his book *Trickster Makes this World*, 'disruptive imagination creates culture' (Hyde 2017). The tactic of 'pretending to be' (in de Certeau's terms surely a tactic rather than a strategy (Certeau 1988: xix)) can be seen as an 'attractor', something which 'has not yet happened, but is already effective in the virtual (. . . an anticipation shaping [the] current behaviour)' of the New Amateur (Fisher 2014: 19). Michel de Certeau might have been thinking of the Trickster when he commented that tactics, of necessity, include 'clever tricks . . . manoeuvres, polymorphic simulations, joyful discoveries' (Certeau 1988: xix).

Being forced to adopt tactics of the everyday, the New Amateur taps into the experience of others more seriously excluded from society. Music and organised sound without formal training is a variant of the sound that is heard and can be made in the everyday. In his discussion of 'musicking', Chris Small is explicit that 'all normally endowed human beings are born capable of taking part in it, not just of understanding the gestures but of making their own' (Small 1999: 9, 20). If by doing so they see their own potential, their own power in a politically contested space (e.g., about 'proper music', talents), they are learning something about their potential, their lost opportunities, in other areas of their lives that are more obviously political. In this way being a New Amateur might be transformed from a tactic to a strategy. The Trickster's role, which may be temporary, is to kick start and animate this process through sheer effrontery if necessary.

Second, there is a necessary link to anarchist ethics. Links between the amateur and anarchist ethics and politics have been examined in the last decade (Brown 2011; Walters 2020b). Brown identifies several that include valuing 'skill-sharing over professional specialisation: fluidity . . . over hierarchies . . . learning and personal growth away from . . . formal education: and . . . playful inefficiency over . . . alienated work' and that overlap with elements of the Manifesto (Brown 2011: 205–6). In terms of specific anarchist concepts, an emphasis on autonomy, essentially group autonomy, is central as are notions of mutualism and individual capability (Marshall 1989: 135). In terms of organised sound specifically, Sophie Stévance reviews works by Duchamp, Cage (*Not Wanting to Say Anything about Marcel* 1969), Christian Wolff (*Intersection III* 1953) and the Fluxus artists (La Monte Young *Composition 1960 #10*; Toschi Ichiyanagi *Sapporo* 1953) suggesting how highly subversive of musical convention these works are:

they underpin the destruction of hierarchies that delineate the roles of the performer and the composer, creator and performer, and amateur and professional . . . in his organ version of *Musical Erratum*, Duchamp underlined the abandon of 'virtuosity' and called for the removal of any 'musicianship' in his accompanying notes. (Stévance 2008: 154)

In colloquial terms, the argument is simply that if humans are universally capable of *this* in music and organised sound, then they are capable of many *other* things that they are normally told are beyond them.

The third question about whether New Amateurs are better suited to collaboration follows from earlier. Kropotkin's argument was that, in contrast to what we now identify as neo-liberal notions of individualism, successful species are those which 'know best how to combine' with each other and with other species (Kropotkin 1919: 50). However, there are warnings about the term 'collaboration' because of its imprecision (Lind 2007: 17; Taylor 2016: 576), which Katharina Schlieben says leads artists to dislike the term on the grounds it tends to 'underplay the complexity of the work processes' involved (Schlieben 2007: 32). A consideration of the notion of authorship is therefore useful. Alan Taylor refuses to see all music as collaborative and concludes the view of 'the composer as a sovereign artist, creating music from their imagination alone' is still powerful, despite the fact that it clashes with the view that all artistic creation 'tak[es] place in dialogue with previous work and external influences' (Taylor 2016: 563). If art is of necessity the product of various degrees of collaboration, then is all art and all music co-authored? If, as Derrida suggests, there is no discrete text but 'a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself' then the strong implication is that collaboration, co-authorship and co-creativity are inevitable, even if not acknowledged (Derrida 2013: 69). The advantage the New Amateur holds here is that s/he embraces such a position, as can be seen from the Manifesto.

Finally, the sound practice used to illustrate the manifesto has implications for social engagement and community strategies. The latter are explored explicitly by Ben Walters in the research described in the following (Walters 2020a) and by Diedre Heddon in her documenting of the DiY movement (Heddon 2020). Heddon understands the power of human potential released by amateur creativity in group settings, 'it disrupts borders, resists definitions, asks awkward questions and activates audiences' (Heddon 2020: 146). Other variables are involved. Walters, for example, suggests that the vulnerabilities of the participants in the Slaughterhouse Club make collaboration difficult for these amateurs whereas other projects he examines, such as *The Posh Club* and the *Duckie Homosexualist Summer School*,

'provide plenty of evidence for the potential for amateur collaboration under less acutely challenging conditions' (Walters 2020b).

The connections between the awakening of awareness of capability at individual and collective levels form the crux of the contribution of the New Amateur to issues of social engagement. My contention is that the central mechanism involves a catharsis that derives from individual acts of creation set in the context of group autonomy and mutual aid. Audiences and markets become secondary as venues of social engagement to the rippling power of individual and group capability and autonomy that stems from the realisation of what everyone is capable of. If I, or if we, can do this, what else are we capable of? This is different from, although overlapping with, the sort of social engagement that Walters and Heddon are describing.

7. CONCLUSION

This manifesto intends to seek out and realise new possibilities in terms of both who will create sound and what they will create. The practice considered here set the collaborators in an extremely open-ended context. A truly experimental stage on which to walk and possibly more so than it can ever be for established musicians and creators of sound. They lacked clear notions of what might be possible, what degree of structure might be useful or unhelpful and what they might have heard or seen in previous work. What made them think it must be possible? They were inspired by John Cage (they could understand the conceptual significance of *4′33″* without requiring the virtuoso skills of a David Tudor), Nam June Paik (they could understand the aesthetics behind Charlotte Moorman performing the *Human Cello* variation on a cello made of Paik's back (Frieling 2019: 88) and they had read Yoko Ono's argument that 'art is not a special thing. Anyone can do it' (Guidi 2019: 28). These are ideas to inspire both New Amateurs and established professionals (as Cage, Tudor, Paik, Moorman and Ono were or still are) who wish to divest themselves of those 'highly sophisticated habits' Kaprow mentioned.

The activities of New Amateurs can produce 'desiring machines', evidence that 'art thrives where things don't work properly' because '[r]ather than producing helplessness, the unreadiness-to-hand produces possibility' (Bolt 2004: 68). The two words 'power' and 'possibility' encapsulate the intention. Set in the context of anarchist ethics concerning the essential link between individual capability and group autonomy, the manifesto aims to release the disruptive, productive and creative power of individuals working together within the field of music and sound creation.

This is not without dangers. For example, there is the issue of what can be termed the political economy of the New Amateur. Who can afford to take time from paid work to pursue such interests in sound creation? As Walters says 'normatively unaccountable amateurism is much more easily attainable for those with independent means than those without' (Walters 2020a: 99). However, the idea is not that the New Amateur will immediately find an independent income and thrive in a life filled with the creation of organised sound. It is rather that one step in that direction, with these new horizons, starts her/him on a path with others, which releases possibilities not only in terms of sound creation but also in terms of a realisation of potential and power currently denied in wider areas of life. In this sense this manifesto is essentially a political manifesto with its starting point in trickery, music and sound creation.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

For supplementary material accompanying this paper visit https://doi.org/10.1017/S1355771822000310

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