Abstract
This paper develops a methodology for understanding how relations between people and place are co-constituted through music and sounds. Using the case of Four Winds Festival Bermagui, New South Wales, the paper discusses our use of “sound diaries” as a means to better understand the role of sound in participants’ understanding of place. Highlighted within our discussion is how our experimental methodology overcomes some of the inherent problems of researching so-called “sound geographies.” Sound diaries provide a possible technique to provide partial insights into the embodied knowledge triggered by sounds and music. Woven within these personal interpretations and their attributed meanings are more general themes concerning the concept of soundscapes, practices of listening, the role of sound in the mutual constitution of place and identities, and the embodied underpinnings of place-making practices in relation to sound and music.

Introduction
Only in the last decade or so have geographers started to explicitly consider the importance of sonic qualities in their analysis of society and space (Smith 2000). Geographers could no longer ignore the experience of music and sounds given the growing attention in the discipline to the sensual body to help understand everyday spaces. Listening practices demands thinking not just in terms of representing places but as a practice that forges places through bodies (Smith 2000). Yet, to investigate this is difficult, because our responses to sound are transient and difficult to articulate in words. How to research the sonic qualities of place? This paper addresses the
methodological challenges presented when listening is conceived as way of taking part in the world.

The overall goal of this paper is to develop and assess the potential of the use of “sound diaries” to gain, albeit partial, insights into the practice of listening in place-making. This overall objective brings together three interrelated aims. The first is to briefly outline why sound and music is fundamental to geographical research. The second is to consider critically what it means to listen. The final aim is to reflect on sound diaries as a geographical research practice. This paper contributes to recent geographical discussions on the methodological implications of the “performative turn” in geography (Harrison 2000; Pratt 2000; McCormack 2002; Crouch 2003; Dewsbury 2003; Morton 2005).

In this paper we first offer a brief discussion of the geographies of sound and music, giving particular attention to the concepts of sound, music, and soundscape, and the implications of conceiving listening as a place-making practice. Secondly, we provide background to the project’s case study site. This leads to a discussion of music methodologies followed by a consideration of the implications, benefits, and limits of sound diaries. Finally we conclude by reflecting on the applications of sound diaries in future qualitative research.

**Sound, music, listening, and place**

Geographers have adopted different approaches to examine the relationship between people, music, sound and place. Positivist approaches enable mapping the spatial diffusion of styles and genres (e.g. Lomax 1976; Carney 1997). Alternatively, one obvious starting point to explore sound geographies is via the meanings of music as text. Social constructionism became the conceptual tool of choice to illustrate how the role of music helps constitute social realities by deconstructing song lyrics, instrumentation, and melodic structure (e.g. Cohen 1993; Kong 1996; Connell and Gibson 2003). By and large, however, by overshadowing phenomena of embodiment or experiences of the “lived body,” such studies of sound geographies largely avoid the very qualities that make music music. What these approaches lack is a focus on the qualities of sound and music such as timbre, rhythm, and tone. Positivist and representational approaches overlooked the material and flesh of the body: in the other words the intuitive, emotional, psychoanalytical processes of subjectivity (Thrift 2008). This paper builds upon work in geography that challenges us to think more closely on the ways that places are constituted through bodies (Nast and Pile 1998; Dewsbury 2003; Morton 2005; Anderson 2006; Rose and Wylie 2006; Merriman et al. 2008; Thrift 2008). Concepts of performativity and embodiment outlined by non-representational theory (or even more-than-representational, as offered by Merriman et al. 2008) draw our attention to the ways in which subjectivities are not separate entities situated in place, but rather are co-constituted through place. These studies continue geographers’ critical interest in the empirical possibilities of an experiential account of place, commencing with the work of
humanist geographers such as Tuan (1977) and Butttimer and Seamon (1979), through to those geographers responding to the discipline’s cultural turn in the 1990s (Ley 1988; Philo 1992; Gregory 1994; Mitchell 1995; Soja 1996). A focus of non-representational theory, and emotional geographies in particular, foregrounds the non-cognitive and non-linguistic aspects of becoming and being-in-the-world. In other words, sound, music, place and bodies are not completely culturally constructed.

Nancy (2007) provides a helpful definition of listening as a practice that requires a physical stillness and awareness of something beyond our selves. There are at least two key reasons why geographers should pay attention to listening. First, listening to sounds and music renders place quite differently than does vision. Research suggests listening occurs around and through our bodies (Carter 1992; Smith 1994, 2000; Cohen 1995; DeNora 2000; Duffy 2000, 2005; Back 2003; Wood et al. 2007). As Douglas Kahn (1999, 27) argues, listening is crucial to “dislocating the frontal and conceptual associations of vision with an all-round corporeality and spatiality.” Under this listening rationale, Cartesian notions of place are displaced by elements of the immediate embodied soundscape. Schafer (1994) first introduced the term soundscape as a means to encapsulate how people inhabit and understand the sonic environment in which they live (see also Tuan 1977; Smith 1994; Truax 2001). Therefore one importance of listening for geographers emerges from problematising any definitions of the relationship between people and place through hierarchical oppositions such as Self/Other, subject/object, same/different, and mind/body. Listening points to a theorization of place and people as intertwined (albeit often partial and fragmented) as sound passes through and into the body. Filmmaker David Lynch explains, “sound is a great ‘pull’ into a different world” (quoted in Henley 2007, 55). Listening also asks us to become aware of what we understand as music and sound, and hence positions us within certain discourses and ideological frameworks. As Attali (1992) argues, music is the organization of sound, and as such is “a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, a totality” (1992, 6).

In short, sonic geographical knowledge is conceived as offering insights into a different mode of becoming and being-in-the-world.

Second, listening is always spatially and temporally contingent. Hence, soundscapes are not conceived as a passive outcome of simply hearing sounds. Instead, following Barry Truax (2001), listening is a process of actively creating and attributing meaning to soundscapes. Truax conceptualises the soundscape as spatial, interactive, and dynamic; an outcome of simultaneously encountering, listening, giving meaning to, responding to, and interacting with silence and rhythmic and tonal qualities of music and sound. In other words, individuals and groups may intervene, obstruct, resist, and enter into the soundscape, while simultaneously the soundscape may intervene, obstruct, enter, and offer resistance to particular individuals and social groups (Shepherd 1991; Smith 1994). People are constantly bombarded with sound, yet individuals are selective in what they choose to hear (and attribute meaning). Further, how individuals each respond...
to particular sounds is informed by life histories and what they value. For example, sounds can trigger memories of past events or far away locations. In other instances, certain sounds may stir emotions that help bring into sharp relief a sense of self or that of a community. The embodied listeners in this framework provide a conceptual tool to examine how hegemonic socio-cultural knowledge may be subverted or reinforced. Listening provides an important theoretical context in which to explore the politics of community (Nancy 2007).

Even so, listening can be uncomfortable, even challenging and demanding. This is because Westerners are generally less familiar with practices of listening (Belfrage 2007). As one musician related during an interview, listening is a learnt practice:

> I think sometimes with children unless they’re particularly good at listening, which is not natural to a lot of children, unless there’s a way in for children then they’re never going to know, why people sit still for a whole day and listening [sic] to things. Comments I’m overhearing as I come back to my car, people are saying, oh, it went on for a bit, didn’t it? And I thought no! What that’s about is they’re not practiced or, don’t feel that they’re skilled for listening for a longer length of time, and being ok with that, and that’s where that starts, in that children’s tent (23 March 2008).

Listening is a practice skill that helps forge places through bodies. Hence listening is clearly different from hearing because it is conceived as an active rather than passive form of engaging with sounds and music. The methodological challenge is to capture and present the inarticulate (even, perhaps, beyond articulate) experiences of listening to sounds and music in meaningful ways. In the following section we outline why the unique qualities of the Four Winds Festival make this festival particularly interesting for a study of sound geographies.

**The Four Winds Festival, Bermagui**

We studied the ways that self, place, sound, and music shape each other at the Four Winds Festival, Bermagui. Bermagui is a coastal town of around 2,000 people, located about 400 kilometres south of Sydney. The population of Bermagui is characterised by socio-economic diversity. This variety is due to successive waves of in-migration, from the initial European settlers displacing the Aboriginal people of the Yuin Nation in the late nineteenth century, to the arrival of fishers, loggers and farmers in early twentieth century, and later groups characterised as hippies in the 1960s. More recently, Bermagui has been redefined as a “sea-change” town, with an influx of particularly older residents from Canberra, Melbourne, and Sydney. Sea-change in-migration relies on understandings of Bermagui as both small and remote. These socially constituted attributes are closely linked to ideas that such towns offer less stressful lifestyles and a stronger sense of community than found in metropolitan centres. According to the last census, around twenty three percent of the population has “down-shifted” in order
to re-address work-life balances, such as spending more time with family and friends (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006).

The Four Winds began in 1991. Possibilities for such an event arose for a number of reasons, including the support of local lovers of classical and contemporary music who made available private land for the festival venue. The framing of Bermagui in terms of paradise contributed to the specialness of the festival site, and excellent networks within the Australian classical music scene ensured strong attendance figures. The main festival venue is approximately nine kilometres outside of Bermagui in a natural amphitheatre. Far from the handful of friends that attended the first festival, since 2002 the biannual weekend festival draws around 1,000 attendees each day to the ticketed program from primarily the hinterland of Bega Valley Shire (30 percent), as well as Canberra (30 percent), and Sydney (30 percent). Attendees are predominantly people aged over forty years. In addition, in 2008 the festival organisers, cherishing social diversity, held a free-opening concert in a public park in Bermagui. The free concert brought together friends and families from surrounding towns, and included performers from the festival program, the local children’s choir, as well as a Welcome to Country performed by a local Indigenous person from the Yuin Nation. Hosting a classical music festival and bringing musicians of international standing to a small regional town works against dominant metropolitan narratives that often locate culture and the arts solely in Australian capital cities: including Sydney, Canberra, or Melbourne.

At one level, the Four Winds Festival exemplifies how throughout regional Australia, tourism is now part of everyday lives. The regeneration of regional economies relies in part upon place marketing. For Bermagui this re-branding is associated with a range of consumption spaces to attract middle-class tourists and sea-changers, including art spaces, heritage attractions, restaurants, and festival spaces. In this framework, the Four Winds Festival is just one of a sequence of festivals held at the end of summer in the Bega Valley Shire. Yet, at another level, organizers of the Four Winds do not conceive the festival as a moneymaking tourist attraction, but rather as a pleasurable community-based event. These distinctive characteristics of the Four Winds Festival highlight the importance of place-based differences in the emergence of events. But, how do the sounds and music of this festival operate to forge an individual and collective sense of self through place? In the following section we discuss our approach to capturing the social and individual processes of music. As ethnomusicologist Timothy Cooley (1997, 14) warns, this is a difficult task because of the qualities of sound and music generate a “presence that conveys immediately experienced meaning, but whose meaning resists description.”

**Music methodologies**

Shifting the focus of those who participated from the visual to that of sound and music enables engaging with the materiality and flesh of the body in considering what
place might be. As John-David Dewsbury states, the significance to geography of non-
representational approaches such as the soundscape is that they allow geographers to
theorise place not as purely cultural, social, and signifying effect, but in addition to
contemplate “what is also possible” (Dewsbury 2003, 1911). Yet, this poses the crucial
methodological question: can we make sense of the affective or innate biological
responses aroused by music in a meaningful way?

While stressing the impossibility to ever fully articulate in the linguistic domain
the bodily experiences of music, Wood et al. (2007) offer a range of tools to help work
with the ephemeral, emotional, and sensual experiences of taking part in music. They
begin by exploring the limits and benefits of auto-ethnographical approaches, including
audio-video-recording and “participant-sensing” note-taking. Participant-sensing can
provide some evidence of how audience members and musicians are responding to
sound qualities—smiles, tapping feet, nodding heads, even dancing.

Figure 1.
Dancing to Omar
Faruk Tekbilek
ensemble.

Figure 2.
Concert drummers
amongst the audience.
These may tell us something of the corporeal pleasures of listening. Outwardly physical reactions, however, cannot translate deeper, more complex bodily responses (Wood and Smith 2004). Further, such an interpretation is ultimately too reductionist, because it assumes that all people respond to music in certain physical ways that are biologically unchangeable. In our case study these methods were deployed to gather additional descriptive material and assist in the interpretation of sound diaries.

Wood et al. (2007) also provide helpful directions to think through ways to enable audience members to articulate the “unspeakable geographies” of music. To engage with listening as a creative practice, they outline the necessity of musical methodologies designed to capture the tensions between being and becoming-in-the moment. The key musical methodological challenge is to resolve the raw emotions that lack clarity when interviews are conducted in the field with the lack of emotion often present in follow-up in-depth interviews. The experimental methodology of the sound diary was designed mindful of these limitations.

Sound diaries are designed to work specifically with sonic knowledge, experience, and affects. Affects are understood as innate biological responses to sound, often expressed in terms of “spine tingling” or as “goose bumps.” The sound diary involved two stages. First, each participant was equipped with a digital recorder the size of a mobile telephone and asked to record meaningful sounds as a record of the “now.” This method allowed people to think about the sonic qualities of place. A number of participants also included in these recordings their spontaneous bodily and emotional reactions to sounds. Participants were then asked to take part in an after-the-event conversation. These were normally conducted at a convenient public location, such as the local café. Researcher and participant listened to the recordings together, and questions were posed with regards to what was recorded and why. While reviewing each sound byte, participants recaptured both the performative—that is exuberance and/or despair of being in the moment—as well as the possibilities to articulate more measured, self-reflexive accounts about sounds and emotive experiences. These responses also opened up incredibly emotional narratives of the interconnections between place, self, and sound. From these conversations insights were sought into: (i) how participants understood and classified sound, (ii) how sound mobilized their bodies and, (iii) any potential relationships felt between sound and place.

Solicited diaries from participants are becoming an integral part of ethnographic techniques in human geography (Latham 2003; see also Harper 2002; Clark-Ibáñez 2004; Waitt et al. 2009). Solicited diaries conventionally include written, photographic, and video formats. Unlike personal diaries, solicited diaries, like interviews, are fashioned through the social relationships of research for an external audience (Meth 2003). However, unlike interviews, solicited diaries offer opportunities for longitudinal insights and discontinuous reflection that reveal the interplay of current and past experiences as well as the temporal dynamics of an individual’s changing thoughts and feelings. As
Latham (2003, 2002) argues, visually-based diaries do help contribute to a sense of “being with” the participants, and do facilitate “shifts to plugging into (and enabling) respondents’ existing narrative resources.” Further, as Rose (2007, 241) suggests, the use of photographs can prompt participants to talk about things that may not be raised in the course of an ordinary interview format, and even articulate “some of the taken-for-granted practical knowledges with which they negotiated public space.” However, these approaches mostly miss ways to explore the intuitive or affective aspects of sounds and music in our social life (Smith 1994; DeNora 2000; Ansdell 2004; Wood and Smith 2004; Duffy et al. 2007; Wood et al. 2007). In comparison to these conventional solicited diary methods, sound diaries offer similar benefits, but rely less upon visual senses and text-based source material and ask participants to attune themselves more directly to their emotional states.

Initial recruitment was either with people who were part of our own networks within the New South Wales South Coast or that of the Four Winds Festival Director. The six initial participants agreed to take part in our data collection before and during the Four Winds festival. During the festival, other participants were also recruited, including those who did not attend any festival events. A total of fifteen people took part in this project. The seven women and three men who consented to participate in this project ranged in age from their twenties, up to those in their sixties. Participants could be categorized as white and privileged insofar as they generally have Anglo-Celtic heritage, are tertiary education, have travelled the globe and chose to live on the South Coast of New South Wales. These individuals were motivated to take part in the project for a variety of reasons including their strong attachment to the South Coast, their enjoyment of the Four Winds Festivals as well as their valuing of research. Participants expressed a range of awareness in classical music, ranging from indifference to a leisure pursuit and even as part of the music profession.

In the following discussion of the implication, advantages and drawbacks of sound diaries, we have included deliberately extended quotes, edited as little as possible, as an attempt to convey the emotional and affective responses of our participants. In addition these extended quotes highlight the difficulty many participants often had in articulating their responses to sound.

**Sound diaries: implications, benefits and limits**

What are the implications of deploying sound diaries at a music festival? What insights are given to how festival attendees start to make sense of Bermagui through listening to the sounds and music? How do sounds and music act upon bodies so that they are mobilised, to act and respond? How do politics get translated through sounds and music into the festival space? Addressing these questions is challenging given the diverse reasons for attending the event, not to mention music and sound’s difficult qualities and “all manner of ontological meanings” (Paulin 2003, 36). The benefits and limits of
qualitative materials sourced from sound diaries offer a starting point to investigating these questions.

Benefits of sound diaries are at least twofold. As with other forms of diary methods, sound diaries enable the writing of geographies of everyday experiences often inhibited by the formalised interactions of interviews. One implication of sound diaries is that, unlike formal interviews, they do not disrupt the flow of everyday life. In contrast, sound diaries operate with the embodiment, spontaneity, contradictions, and messiness of everyday life. There is evidence of important differences between formal interviews and sound diaries to how respondents spoke about sound and music. During a formal interview sound and music often became spoken about as a backdrop to place. This understanding of music is illustrated in the following quotation from the Four Winds Festival Director explaining why people attend the festival:

The thing is that [in] feedback there's [sic] four reasons people came to Four Winds; and one of them was that it was, they love the sort of social, community feel. And then they like that it's a very nourishing physical environment, and they think the beauty of the place is extraordinary... And then, the third reason was that you didn't have to love all the music—you could be there and read the paper or do the crossword or go and have some oysters if you got a bit frustrated. And then—oh! oh! there's music! (4 February 2008).

This statement highlights how in the formal interview, set apart from the sounds of the festival, soundscapes are understood primarily as context. In contrast, in the conversations listening to the sound diaries the comment suggests the inherent value in considering theories of embodiment in musical geographies. For example, one attendee at the Four Winds Festival, Rosemary, described the music at festival in these terms:

Rose: One of the things that in your experiment, draws my attention to it like in the performance on Friday at the oval and here, getting moved by the music, and then I look around, I think this is my community, you know I look around and I, there is the women in the local corner shop and there is the people I know. And, I just think how lucky are we, how could we... and also this community has drawn this thing [together].

Gordon: You think it enhances that sense of belonging and community that you have just been talking about?

Rose: And pride in the community,

Gordon: A sense of pride

Rose: And a touch of awe, something like this happening in your own backyard (22 March 2008).
The music festival gave Rose a renewed focus on ways to express her sense of community as an emotive, rhythmic and sonorous experience. In this framework, belonging is an affective quality in and through which she orients herself within noise, silence, vibrations, and music. Consequently, Rose comes to feel “in place” through the very physiological responses of our bodies (see also Duffy et al. 2007). Sound diaries provide a technique to engage with processes of intimate connectedness—with all its possibilities and its (emotional) dangers, to foreground the impossibility of fixing subjectivities and territories, and to provide a technique to investigate the pleasure and politics lived through the bodies involved.

Second, sound diaries were also successful in facilitating access to some aspects of these more difficult-to-articulate, in-the-moment feelings and affects of participants as they recorded, listened attentively and let the festival space unfold around them. For example, many talked about the way certain sounds affected them physically, some referred to what they were hearing as “spine-tingling”. Others spoke of feeling sounds resonating in their chests, especially those of the didjeridu or the drums.

Audio 1: Adrian's response to Indian drums

One festival musician attempted to describe the affective qualities of music as a form of energy:

Oh! that's me coming off stage! Whistling! [laughs] When you come off stage, you have all this stuff in your head! And it, you're really in it still, long after you leave the stage and go behind stage, and...that sort of the energy—I don't know if it's going to capture it, but that energy coming off in that wash, coming out the back with all those people out the back, to pack your instruments and thinking what's next and getting rid of one piece of music and heading to the other (23 March 2008).

Audio 2: musician's response to performing

Even in these short recordings we can hear how physical and emotional effects of sound shape the participant's being in the event. From this starting point, follow-up conversations provided more detail about each recorded sound byte. This further layer of listening draws our attention to how people enter these music spaces with embodied histories of their subjectivities (Crang 2005). It is in these responses that the significance of music to spatial practice is located. Engagement with music, whether in activities of listening or performing, enables emotional connections between individuals. These connections “allow us to explore, affirm, and celebrate our diverse real and symbolic human relationships” (Ansdell 2004, 71; see also Small 1998; Turino 2008). As the interview material demonstrates below, the sonic space of the festival is always in part negotiated through such embodied histories. The self-reflexive listening body in music
brings about spatial-subjective interconnections, and does so in sensitive emotional ways. These listening practices also triggered intense responses, as well as periods of solitary detachment, contemplation, and remembering.

Crucially, such responses were not apparent simply through participant observation. The musical trigger unleashed memories hidden or kept close with regards to the participant’s personal narratives of self, at times quite unexpectedly to both researcher and participant. Such a highly emotional exchange is clearly heard in Suzie’s discussion of listening to Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons*:

**Suzie:** The *Four Seasons* music, funnily enough, is what was played, part of it was played at my sister’s wedding. So, of course it took me back to the whole scenario where we had a marquee, so sort of similar to that outside setting there, in the country, and so you know my whole sister’s wedding, but there is this whole other side to my sister’s wedding. They had a daughter [crying] they had a, sorry—

**Gordon:** no don’t—

**Suzie:** You’ve got to deal with respondents’ emotions—to too hard [laughing] too awful

**Gordon:** That is what we realized, it is really personal

**Suzie:** Yeah—

**Gordon:** So, if it is too hard—don’t—

**Suzie:** Yeah, and she had a beautiful little daughter, and the daughter died, so—

**Gordon:** Suzie don’t—

**Suzie:** So [crying] the *Four Seasons* music is very sad music for me, because I always make that connection but the next bit was, I think the next bit is Genevieve actually playing, and the music was just so beautiful, and first I was feeling really, really sad, then, you know I had a pair of binoculars and I started looking at the orchestra and they all looked so happy, they all had these big smiles on their faces, absolutely joyful in the music, with Genevieve [Lacey], which I think was partly to do with it, because the beautiful sound of that recorder and everything, so it changed, it became this really happy moment rather than a sad moment and I just thought “Get over it” [laughing] and then I just sat and listened to the music without being a miserable dope [laughing] (26 March 2008).

Sound diaries provide insights into how practice of remembering works across listening. Sound diaries suggest that memory is always more than a passive psychological filing
system of stories about past events. Instead, sound diaries suggest the importance of bodily remembering, in terms of how music triggers memory as always a highly socially contingent process through the body in situ. Sound diaries are one way to respond to the call by Rose and Wylie (2006, 477) to reintroduce in geography understanding of place informed by “perspective and contour; texture and feeling; perception and imagination.”

In at least four respects sound diaries are necessarily limiting. There is an imposed focus on particular elements of the lived world. We are mindful that sound diaries provide insights into only one of many sensory registers that enable attendees to engage and make sense of the festival. Hence sound diaries must always be complemented by other methods, including participant observation. Illustrating how a range of sensory registers draw individuals into the music is illustrated through festival performative practices that retain strong elements of representation. For example, portrayal of nature-as-scenic landscape is a significant performed element in this festival. This was clearly demonstrated during the performance of Peter Sculthorpe’s 1998 composition, Cello Dreaming. When the piece was introduced, musicians were scattered around the top edges of the amphitheatre. Accompanied by the birdcalls in the surrounding trees, the piece started with each musician improvising birdcalls as they walked down towards the stage.

The musician William Barton, a Kalkadoon man from Mt Isa (Queensland) who has worked with Sculthorpe, improvised bird calls on a didjeridu. With the exception of Barton, musicians gradually halted their improvisation after moving onto or behind the stage. Barton continued playing as he sat himself near the cello soloist, Emma Jane Murphy. Barton’s mother, Delmae, herself an accomplished musician, moved onto the stage and performed a vocal improvisation accompanied by the didjeridu. Upon Barton’s
signal—blown overtones, a common cadential pattern for some traditional didjeridu performances—all became silent except for the cello, which opened with a slow, minor melody. However, this space is also deeply intersected with a range of criss-crossing relationships between settler, immigrant, and indigenous Australians. For example, Barton’s Australian Indigenous identity recognises a much older set of connections to place, while his performance on didjeridu reconfigures Sculthope’s composition *Cello Dreaming* with a reclaiming of what “Dreaming” conceptualises and expresses in Indigenous terms.

In representational terms, Barton’s mimicking of the birdcalls in the trees provided possibilities to remind the audience of discourses configuring Bermagui as paradise, timely reminders of Australian Aboriginal connections with Country and the possibilities of cross-cultural dialogue. The movement of the musicians through the audience helps draws attention to the focal point of the stage and the soundscape. This performative act encourages visual and sonic engagement in a process that helps in part to constitute the Four Winds Festival space by bringing together representations, birds, sounds, and composition (Smith 2000; Thrift 2000). Representational clues into the performance of the music are important because they are a means to direct people’s attention or mode of engagement (Shehan Campbell 2005). Festival attendees are offered this representational framing of the festival space.

Second, in conversation with participants, many still had difficulties explaining in words how they felt. For example, Anne finds it difficult to articulate the unpredictable qualities of attentive listening. This is illustrated in her attempt to recapture how she felt listening to Timothy Constable as he sang a Sephardic song accompanied by the Four Winds Philharmonia,

> I sit there with my eyes shut and I can see the type of environment, then I come back and I am looking at the environment out there—so that is very environmental that journey—[pause] Timothy leads me but you didn't know where it was going, so you followed along behind and that wasn't visual at all, it is just following along the sound and [pause] it was just that it has this peculiar aural journey where I don't know where we are going and you are taken along like the pied piper or whatever, [pause] it was very funny because, because usually I don't listen like that at all (23 March 2008).

Anne’s comments point to an unfolding of the self in place. Equally, Anne’s words illustrate Nancy’s (2007, 6) important point that “to listen is to be straining toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is not immediately accessible.” Listening to Timothy, Anne likens trying to make sense of the unfamiliar sounds as being taken on a “peculiar aural journey.”

Third, many participants associated ideas of recording with practices of spying, although this feeling of spying lessened as they became more at ease with recording. Hence, close attention must be given to clarifying the purpose of the technique in
the context of research and opportunities must be given to become familiar with the recording technology.

Finally, the initial heightened self-consciousness when asked to record works against the technique. While this heightened self-conscious assisted with the recognition of the role of sound and music in comprising the social relationships of place, in the context of certain places recording was understood as inappropriate or simply impossible. During follow-up conversations, participants reported that the format of the free Friday afternoon concert on a sports oval in the centre of Bermagui was a more favourable venue for recording activities (although a few still felt a little conspicuous at first). Some participants not only recorded sounds, but also gave short comments on how they were feeling or responding. Participants in these short snippets captured the immediacy of being-in-the-moment and their heightened emotional and physical responses to particular sounds. This was very useful in later conversations. In contrast, recordings at the festival venue included much less of these spontaneous comments, participants commenting on the need to maintain more formal concert-going behaviour, such as quietly listening and remaining seated while performances are underway (Prue, interview, 24 March 2008). The sense of greater informality at the Friday concert could be attributed to the more relaxed attitude of audience members, who attended in family groups or with friends. At Friday concert, children were given more freedom to play and festival attendees wanted simply to stand back from the performance, drinking and talking with friends. Sound dairies draw attention to these place-based norms regulating recording practices.

Conclusion
Soundscapes bring our focus back to our selves and our place, not as separate and
autonomous entities, but as connected beings. Such connections are often articulated as feelings of belonging. Sound is therefore crucial in helping individuals make sense of everyday places. Listening redirects our attention to our connectivity to the people and place of our everyday lives. A study of soundscapes therefore demands methodologies able to focus on the contradictions, possibilities, and unpredictable nature of how places are lived through listening bodies. The innate biological responses, affective circuits, and personal memories triggered by sounds and music have a fundamental part to play in understanding the dynamics of social interaction through which people make sense of their place in the world. Wood and Smith (2004) argue it is not so much what is heard, but both our innate and personal responses to this listening that help forge a sense of belonging and the social bonds of community. Soundscapes therefore requires methodologies able to take on the lumpiness, transitoriness, and unexpectedness of understandings of places forged lived through listening.

Sound diaries, by recording in-the-moment sound bytes, offer a starting point to this challenge of gaining insights into the role of acoustic experiences in becoming and being in place. Within a geographical context, sound diaries offer a tool to access the aural aspects of social settings. Contributing to more traditional methods of formal interviews or participant observation, sound diaries offer a nuanced understanding of people and place in that they help gain access to embodied knowledge and intimacy. Rather than researchers relying on formal research contexts, focusing on what is in view of the researcher and attempting to “become the other” through immersion in the music festival, attendees are given an opportunity to participate directly in the data gathering in ways that give credence to emotional and difficult to articulate responses. Sound diaries facilitate access to the ways in which particular sounds and music become part of collective and individual geographies and histories. Hence, sounds and music can trigger individual expressions of collective histories of power relations. Equally, sound diaries have advantages over photographic and written diaries because they are recorded in the moment rather than the more reflexive processes of photography and diary writing, which are embedded within particular cultural practices for framing or representing the world. Follow-up conversations can be attentive to the emotionally nuanced details so as to more deeply understand the context of particular sounds to place and place making. Even so, there are limits to a sole reliance on sound diaries. These can be summarised in four points: the complementary benefits of mixed methods, recording as spying, the experience of sound as beyond words, and norms regulating recording practices in public spaces.

Even so, sound diaries facilitate the collection of material less driven by the cultural meaning of place and to focus more on place through the body. In this context, sound diaries can be an integral tool to investigate the possibilities generated by aural aspects of social settings, what Nigel Thrift has called “as-if” spaces (2000, 234).
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Endnotes
1 In fact, this is understood as the function of music; it enables us to experience emotions precisely because they cannot be expressed by any other medium (Langer 1942; Åhlberg 1994; Wood and Smith 2004).
2 However, his country in Aboriginal terms is not that of Bermagui, which raises complex issues around representation and place-relations in cross-cultural contexts. While members of the Yuin nation were present at the ticketed festival, there was no public acknowledgement of their presence, although a fire had been lit as part of a traditional smoking ceremony of welcome.

References


