

# Rhythms and Resonances of Notebooking

Steve Lamos

Steve Lamos explores how notebooking (a regular writing practice focused on routine life events) can capture both interesting rhythmic patterns of literate activity and interesting resonances (that is, transformative connections) between and beyond these rhythmic patterns. Lamos further analyzes the specific rhythms and resonances of literate activity that they experienced as a professor who also drums in the band, American Football.

## Introduction: Notebooking, Drumming, and Professing

I recently turned 50 years old, which means I've been playing music for about 45 years: my parents had me take up the violin at age 5; I then asked to start on trumpet at about age 8; later, around age 21, I took up the drums. Turning 50 also means that I've been notebooking about (and with) music for more than 40 years: that is, for more than four decades now, I've been both engaging in regular rhythmic writing processes about and producing various kinds of writing about how music feels. I recently ran across one of my earliest examples of paper-based notebooking from age 8 that mentions my very first gig with my dad back in late December 1981 (Figure 1).

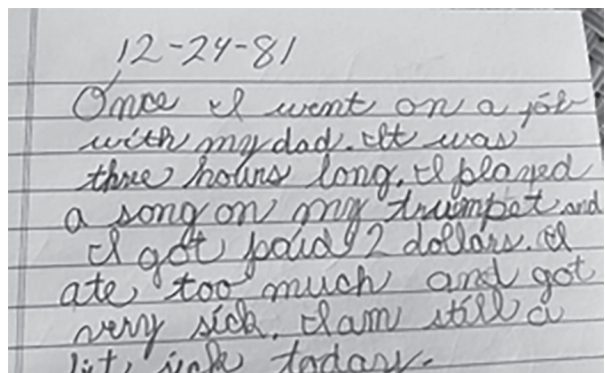


Figure 1: A childhood notebooking entry from late 1981.

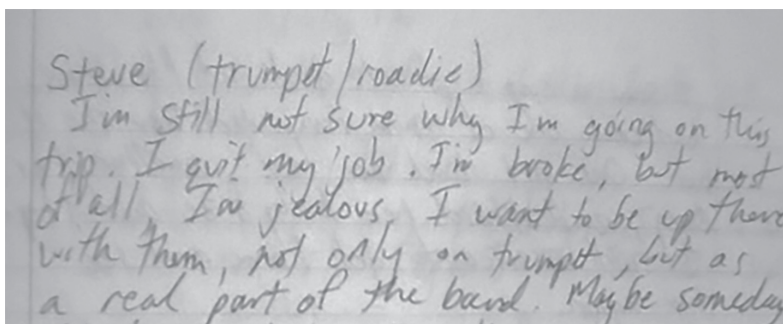
After stumbling onto this example in a notebook earlier this year, I wrote the following on Instagram:

**3-2-2023**

I vividly remember that I played one song, sat at the bar for the rest of the three hours, and ate a whole jar of maraschino cherries as the poor bartender tried to keep me occupied somehow. Needless to say, those cherries re-emerged all over the front seat of my dad's 1980 Toyota wagon as we drove home about 2 a.m. I suppose there's a lesson here about music and family and life, but I've clearly been ignoring it during the 40+ years since I wrote this ...

I've also recently run across paper-based notebooking entries from college, including my first rock tour ever with a group of my friends as their roadie/trumpet player in 1995. (I had recently started playing drums by this time, but I wasn't in a band yet.) Figure 2 is part of an entry where I describe my role on that tour. As I look back at this particular entry almost 30 years later, I notice that I had just quit my first job—a minimum wage gig at a restaurant that was filling the summer between my last semester of undergraduate work and my first semester in an MEd program that was designed to prepare me to teach high-school-level language arts. I also notice here that I'm wishing that I could be a real full-time member of the kind of band with which I was touring.

A third example is typical of the recent extensive notebooking that I've performed in my role as the drummer in a band called American Football—a Midwest emo band that I started with two college friends in 1997, that broke up in 1999, and that was resuscitated in 2014 with the help of the internet fan culture. Since 2014, I've played as the drummer of this part-time band even while also working full-time as a professor in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Colorado-Boulder. Since about 2016, I



**Figure 2:** A college-age notebooking entry from mid-1995.

have notebooked literally hundreds of (word-processed) pages in the style of the following entry, which is taken from a recent trip over a long weekend in September 2023. This trip required me to both jump on a red-eye flight after my first-year writing class to get me to Asheville, NC and then catch an early morning flight from Nashville, TN back to Denver, CO before my next face-to-face class session (scheduled for 3:30 p.m. MST) a few days later:

**Midwest emo** refers to a genre of independent music that features odd time signatures, angular rhythms, and heart-on-the-sleeve lyrics. The Wikipedia entry for this term offers a summary of its history and present use (“Midwest emo” para. 5).

### 9-11-2023

Woof. On a plane, midflight, at 11:30 MST [after two flight delays]. Scheduled to teach at 3:30 MST. Not sure whether it’s gonna happen. Not my usual [situation], but here we are.

In any case, flying back from Nashville ... after a really busy [time]. If I make it to teach, it’ll be one for the record books. If not, it’ll still be one for the record books, but I’ll have a strike against me [for having to cancel class] ...

[Yesterday] was mostly van time: I worked some on my class, I journaled a bit, and I snoozed with music on. On this trip, I did finish writing some thoughts on an overall conclusion for Chapter 4, and so I think that it was reasonably successful. I also managed to get some grading done this morning, which is a bonus ...

[The room] was one of those really, really dry[-sounding] ones: [another dry-sounding hall] is the closest comparison that I can think of—and I think that the other fellas agreed with me. During check, it felt fine. During our performance, though, it felt really sterile and exposed. Each tiny little blip feels amplified in that context—and I’d say that it takes the fun out of things. My sense is that it might have sounded pretty good out front, and I say this in part because [the opening band on this trip] sounded so good out front ... and because [our sound engineer] mentioned that he was glad that the trip ended in Nashville rather than [in Durham]. Funnily enough, [Durham] felt pretty incredible on stage: except for [one problem in one song], I felt very confident and comfortable and in control. Here, I felt very vulnerable and exposed.

This entry is fairly representative of my usual notebooking work since 2016: it includes a bit about where I am at the moment of writing (a plane); a bit about my most recent experiences with travel (a van trip from Durham to Nashville, followed by a delayed flight home that threatened my ability to teach in person—although I did end up making it back for class with about 20 minutes to spare); a bit about what happened on route (I worked on teaching materials; I notebooked; I snoozed; I worked a bit on a book chapter; I worried about possibly missing class); also, a fair amount about the embodied feelings and sensations that I associated with playing the night

before (the last gig of this trip was at a venue that felt a bit more sterile—and therefore much less fun than other places we’d played on this short trip).

I’ll be spending a great deal of time in this piece talking about how and why these examples of notebooking have proven increasingly important for me as a literate person, especially in the context of my rather unusual musical/academic experience as a drumming professor during the last ten years or so. Specifically, I’ll be arguing that such notebooking has long allowed me to participate in a number of simultaneous rhythms of musical and written literacy. Philosophers and theorists of rhythm Henri LeFebvre and Catherine Regulier characterize **rhythm** as a kind of difference that occurs cyclically across time—what they describe as “long and short times, recurring in a recognizable way, stops, silences, blanks, resumptions, and intervals in accordance with regularity” (87). At the same time, LeFebvre insists that rhythm involves the inherent capacity for change: “there is no identical absolute repetition, indefinitely ... there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference .... Differences induced or produced by repetitions constitute the thread of time” (16-17). Rhythms (including literate rhythms) thereby bring about change in ways that make it possible for new and interesting things to emerge.

Furthermore, I’ll be arguing in this piece that the rhythms that I’ve performed, gathered, documented, and considered through notebooking have at times come into a kind of interesting resonance. Sociologist Hartmut Rosa defines **resonance** in a general sense as the state whereby the rhythm of

In this GWRJ article, **rhythms** are best understood as cyclical and repeated activities encompassing music, personal writing, and academic writing that possess the capacity for change.

**Resonance** is a state in which rhythms interact and transform into new and unexpected forms that seemingly exceed the sum of their parts.

“one body prompts the other to ... vibrate [rhythmically] in turn” (165) such that these rhythms “mutually reinforce each other, their amplitudes growing ever larger” (167). Rosa thereby suggests that resonance can serve as a connective and additive relation—a relation in which rhythms occur separately but nonetheless in a kind of unison. Importantly, however, Rosa also emphasizes that resonance can, under certain circumstances, enable a more transformative relation: it can enable a kind of cascading rhythm-in-concert across distinct bodies in ways that create newness. He writes that, during such transformational resonance, “one body stimulates the other to produce *its own frequency*” (165, emphasis in original) such that “bodies in a resonant relationship each speak ‘with their own voice’” (165). Transformational resonance of this type can create a state in which two bodies begin acting in a new, expanded, and novel relationship through rhythm in ways that ultimately exceed either of them individually.

I'll be spending a great deal of time throughout this piece talking about what rhythms and resonances of notebooking this American Football experience as a writing studies professor have done for, through, with, and beyond me. But before I can get into more specific arguments, I need to spend a bit of time outlining two (rhythmic) histories of sorts. The first will provide a quick overview of my journey with the band American Football itself. The second, meanwhile, will sketch my work as a musical notebooker throughout the course of my life, including my time with this particular band.

## A (Rhythmic) Micro-History of American Football

American Football (or AF, as I'll call it moving forward) started in 1997 when I was in the first year of my PhD program in Writing Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). I had been playing drums and occasional guest trumpet in a number of bands in the Champaign-Urbana area since about 1994, engaging in the rhythmic work inherent to playing in indie bands: meeting other musicians, writing material, playing gigs, recording music, and so on. However, in early 1997, I also started playing with two third-year undergraduate guitar players. One of these guys, Mike Kinsella, was already somewhat famous for his work as a drummer in a band called Cap'n Jazz, but was now playing guitar and singing a bit; the other, Steve Holmes, was his longtime friend, roommate, and a one-time creative writing classmate of my girlfriend (and now partner of 28 years) Tracy Pearce. Mike, Steve, and I wrote songs and practiced together regularly—indeed, rhythmically—for the next two years in the tiny rental house that Tracy and I would later come to share. We also played live 10 or 12 times around the UIUC campus, in Chicago, and in a few other places across the Midwest during this time. As we engaged in these rhythms of writing and performing music, we also started to resonate more and more as friends and bandmates. This resonance led to our recording two records together: a three-song EP that came out in 1998 and a nine-song LP that got recorded and released in 1999. (EP stands for extended play single, which usually means two or three songs on a single physical release. LP stands for long-playing record, which is usually regarded as a full-length album. Our AF EP had three songs; our first LP1 had nine songs; our later LP2 and LP3 releases had nine and eight songs, respectively.)

Unfortunately, AF broke up in 1999 immediately after our full-length LP was recorded: the guys had graduated and wanted to move back to Chicago to start new lives and jobs and families; I, meanwhile, was committed to staying at UIUC and completing PhD coursework, research, and dissertation writing. I was quite upset about AF's breakup at first, as the American

Football LP had (somewhat amazingly) gotten a bit of initial favorable press in *Spin* magazine and *College Music Journal*, despite the fact that the band didn't exist to support the album. But that initial press quickly faded—and the rhythms of our lives each continued. Tracy and I got married in 2001. I also worked (very slowly) on my PhD while also holding a full-time job as the director of the writing center at UIUC from 1999 until 2004, a job that introduced its own rhythmic routine of a rather nine-to-five office environment into my otherwise academic life. After completing my degree, I then took my first Assistant Professor position at Illinois State University, where I stayed just a year. I resonated both with the institution and my colleagues at ISU—but I did not at all like the regular rhythms of driving to and from Champaign, IL where Tracy and I were living each day. (Tracy taught high school down the street from where we lived in Champaign, and so we did not want to move to Bloomington-Normal.) At the same time, to be totally honest, I was growing weary of the rhythms of midwestern life more generally: I increasingly disliked the overcast winters, the hot and humid summers, and the general feeling that I'd lived in the same area for too long. This dissatisfaction led me to seek out my current position at the University of Colorado-Boulder in 2005.

This job at CU, which I have held ever since 2005, offered very different life rhythms near the mountains, especially in terms of hiking, biking, skiing, and other outdoor activities. I found these new rhythms quite resonant with my life as an Assistant Professor from 2005-2011, with my life as an Associate Professor with tenure starting in 2012, and with my life as a dad for our son (born in 2011) and daughter (born in 2014). However, what I didn't find terribly resonant from 2005 until 2014 was music: while I did play drums for fun in Colorado in both original projects and cover bands (including writing music with new musical friends and bandmates), I never really found sustained musical activity of the sort that I had experienced with AF at any point in Colorado. I resigned myself to playing drums for fun as just one of many life rhythms here near Boulder.

Apparently, though, while each of us former members of AF was busy making other plans, the AF LP record was busy making a new life of its own with the help of the kinds of rhythmic activities that are common to internet chat boards, file-sharing arrangements, and even CD burning culture. Specifically, between 1999 and the early 2010s, fans of Midwest emo were evidently circulating our LP, rhythmically and widely, without any real notice on the part of us original AF members.<sup>1</sup> Around late-2013, however,

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1. I did have a couple of students during the later 2000s mention to me that they knew of and liked American Football, but these kind words didn't prompt me to investigate the status of the record at that time.

we members did start to notice that this LP was clearly resonating with a fanbase that we did not know existed. Specifically, Steve Holmes reached out to tell me that the American Football LP had drawn enough online attention such that it would be reissued in an expanded format by our original label, Polyvinyl Records; he also informed me that we had been asked to celebrate this reissue with two reunion shows the following year—one at a festival in Champaign-Urbana, home of the band and the label, and one more show in New York City at a place called Webster Hall.

Needless to say, I was excited for what would amount to the first actual AF shows in support of this record, now 15 years later: we'd be re-entering the rhythms of playing live together—and we'd be experiencing the rhythms of an album release and press cycle once again for this reissue. But I was not yet as excited as I would soon become: circulating news of the AF reissue crashed the Polyvinyl website; tickets for our two reunion shows went on sale soon thereafter only to sell out in moments; two more shows were added to Webster Hall as a result, which sold out almost instantly as well. All of this excitement eventually led us to reform as a reunion band (with a new fourth member, Nate Kinsella, on bass) for a two-year run from 2014 until 2016 of 30+ shows across the US, Europe, and Japan. The rhythms of playing live grew stronger and louder over these two years as we squeezed in shows on weekends, over holiday breaks, and during short stretches during summers. Performing also enabled us to reactivate rhythms and resonances of writing and recording together: we recorded enough new material for two new records—now known as LP2 and LP3<sup>2</sup>—that further enabled us to play about 70 additional shows across five continents from 2016-2020, to take an extended hiatus from 2020-2023, and then to return to writing and touring again in mid-2023 with a dozen or so more shows.<sup>3</sup>

Ultimately, then, this last decade has found the little and seemingly insignificant LP record we did back in 1999 just before breaking up—now known as LP1 as a way to distinguish it from our two more recent records—routinely included in a kind of canon of Midwest emo music. LP1 has been increasingly mentioned among the most influential records of this genre by the likes of Rolling Stone, Spin, NME, Kerrang!, Vulture, Stereogum, The Guardian, Alternative Press, Pitchfork, NPR, Brooklyn Vegan, and many others. It has also been publicly cited as a strong influence by a range of

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2. Each of the band's albums is technically self-titled as American Football, but they're usually distinguished by band and fans alike as LP1, LP2, and LP3.

3. I had actually quit AF from 2020 until 2023 so that I could deal simultaneously with the death of a family member, a new administrative position, and some other life issues. The other members had talked about carrying on with a new drummer, but ultimately did not choose to do so. In early 2023, after I had been able to spend some time dealing with issues that I just mentioned, I asked to rejoin the band. Happily, the other members agreed—and we've started up a new round of writing and performing since then.

contemporary artists including the 1975, Hayley Williams, Phoebe Bridgers, Barteaux Strange, Ethel Cain, Yvette Young, San Holo, and more. We're now approaching the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of this record in 2024, and it seems more resonant than ever. This resonance still feels quite strange to me, especially given both the odd history of this band and my own continued involvement in it as a middle-aged professor.

## A (Rhythmic) Micro-History of My Notebooking Practices

While my time in AF dates back to college, my work as a notebooker dates back much earlier than that. I first started notebooking around age 8 at the encouragement—the insistence, really—of my parents. Every week or two, my folks would insist that I practice writing, using cursive, by describing things we had done together as a family. To facilitate this, they bought me something called *The Gnome Notebook*, a blank journal with a picture of—you guessed it—a gnome lost in written contemplation on its cover. My earliest notebooking (gnotebooking?) entries were focused mostly on the rhythms of family activities: a trip to baseball game, a game of Nerf Hoop indoor basketball with my brother, accounts of playdates and activities and arguments with neighbor kids, and so on. But my notebooking at the time also included references to playing music, including the maraschino cherry incident with which I started this piece as well as a few other references to playing trumpet with my dad or playing violin at various recitals. I notebooked at least somewhat regularly in this rhythmic way until middle school, aided by the fact that my other friends also kept notebooks through this time: we occasionally even shared what we were writing with one another. Once high school hit, though, I actually stopped notebooking for a long while: I must have felt too busy to notebook about music (or about anything else, for that matter) on a regular basis.

I did return to notebooking once again toward the end of college, mostly as a way to write about the rhythms of playing music with the many pre-AF indie bands in Champaign in which I had become involved by the mid-1990s. I would write regularly and rhythmically about whom I was playing with; about how things were going in terms of writing and playing and performing and recording; about how much or little I was practicing; about how well or how poorly I was getting on with various bandmates. I would also increasingly write about my growing relationship with Tracy, both its joys and challenges, at that time. (Feel free to insert your favorite college-kid emo diary joke here.) As I got further and further into my MA (and then later my PhD), however, my notebooking waned once again: I felt too tired and worn out to notebook on top of all of my other academic writing each day.



Finally, my third and by far most prolific stint with notebooking began in early 2016, about a year-and-a-half into the first AF reunion shows. Since 2016, I've found myself writing and reflecting on music, academics, and life regularly to the tune of 500+ single-spaced typed pages and counting. (Feel free to insert your favorite middle-aged guy emo diary joke here.) I initially started notebooking because I wanted to start keeping a rhythmic record—in the verb sense—and preserving some sort of record—in the noun sense—of what was happening on these AF trips. Notebooking like this connected me to my past history with this activity even as it also gave me a great sense of pleasure in the present: I loved the idea of keeping track of what was happening as it happened, and I loved the idea that I might end up re-reading these entries later, even years later. I suppose that the rhythms of notebooking as a practice resonated in some way with my own sense of full literate personhood: as writing studies scholars Kevin Roozen and Joe Erikson argue, “We don’t become who we are, write how we write, represent how we represent, by cutting ourselves off from all other domains of our lives .... [Instead,] [w]e become who we are and engage in disciplinary activity by tying together and connecting all the resources we have developed in ever surer and richer ways” (1.05).

I also found myself attracted to notebooking because it got me writing each and every day while on AF trips, regardless of circumstance or surroundings, in ways that enabled me to do my “real” professor job. You see, in my day-to-day professional life, I could generally count on some kind of consistently rhythmic work routine—that is, I could usually work and write similar times (say, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.) in regular places (say, my office on campus or my desk in the basement of our home) in somewhat controllable circumstances (say, while wearing headphones playing my favorite music to work to and while sitting near the fridge and coffee maker). On AF trips, in contrast, all of that routine—indeed, all of that regular rhythm—was gone. One tour day might find me arriving to an airport at 5 a.m., checking in a massive pile of gear and baggage for a 7:30 a.m. flight, and then alternating between dozing and working on academic stuff in an airport lounge, an airplane seat, a van seat, or the back of a club. A second day might find me not having to leave a hotel until late morning with just a couple hours’ drive such that I might work a bit longer and more consistently. A third day might find me not having to travel at all so that I might have more of a semi-normal workday before afternoon soundcheck—and maybe even a nice walk through a new city at some point after soundcheck. I thought to myself that, if I were to survive this experience, then I had to learn how to get work done even in the middle of this seemingly arrhythmic madness. Emails would keep coming. Student drafts would keep needing to get read and responded to. My

own reading and writing and thinking would need to keep getting done. I figured that notebooking might help to prime the pump in terms of my day-to-day productivity so that I might find productive work rhythms on the road.

Soon after I started notebooking regularly, though, I came to see it as important rhythmic and resonant work of its own. Notebooking each day quickly gave me a way to bring what used to feel like totally different aspects of my life—music, travel, writing assignments, grading, reading, writing, thinking—into interesting new kinds of contact. As I engaged in notebooking, I would see new rhythmic ideas and observations resonating frequently, and often unexpectedly: drumming and traveling and teaching and researching and writing would often combine and transform in some really wonderful and novel ways—so much so that my notebooking experiences in the context of AF and academic work quickly became some of the most enjoyable of my adult life.

## How Notebooking Works

Having sketched these rhythmic histories quickly, I want to spend the rest of this piece trying to say more about both how and why I think that notebooking works for me in the present day. I begin by offering three assertions about how I think this notebooking functions. I then provide one extended example of a time when the rhythmic activity of notebooking these AF and academic experiences simultaneously yielded some unexpectedly resonant results for me.

### Assertion #1: Notebooking Is Rhythmically Habitual

I have already suggested that notebooking about AF is very much a rhythmic practice—that is, it very much involves regular writing practice about regular routines of life while also acknowledging the potential that these practices and routines have to change in interesting ways over time. More specifically, though, I believe that such notebooking engenders important **rhythmic**

According to composition scholar Marilyn Cooper, notebooking involves **rhythmic writing habits** that include “observation” (noticing), “connection” (bringing together), and “wonder” (thinking deeply about new things to notice and connect) (94-95).

**writing habits**, especially what composition scholar Marilyn Cooper describes as the habits of “observation” (94), “connection” (94), and “wonder” (95). The habit of observation, Cooper argues, involves looking carefully at the surrounding world, or what she describes as “being attentive to the materials, to the subject matter of writing” (94). Connection, meanwhile, involves a kind of active consideration of how observed things might connect with each other to form new combinations, or what Cooper

characterizes as “connecting past and present with the subject material through memories and experiences of daily life” (96) in ways that allow a notebooker to “mak[e] a new thing from the old” (96). Finally, wonder relies on a kind of active consideration of how this newness might impact the world in interesting or unforeseen ways—what Cooper describes as some sort of “felt recognition that something matters in a particular way” (95). Notebooking thus enables us as notebookers to notice things using rhythmic observation practices, to connect them through rhythmic routines, and to use our sense of curiosity to drive further rhythmic observation and connection.

### Assertion #2: Notebooking Often Generates Resonance

As I’ve also implied already, notebooking about the AF experience can also become at times a resonant practice—that is, reflective of a state in which rhythmic vibrations initially appearing in one body come to cause vibrations in one or more other bodies through the transfer of energy in ways that end up being transformative. Rhetorician Casey Boyle explicitly stresses this important potential for resonance within notebooking through his discussion of transduction—which is the mechanism underlying resonance whereby “energy is transformed from one kind of signal to another” (79). Specifically, Boyle argues that notebooking is best understood as the “transductive practice of assembling multiple media fragments in one place” (139). Such transductively enabled resonance ultimately allows notebooking to function as a kind “multimedia assemblage” (139) that enables new kinds of rhythms to interact and potentially transform one another. Indeed, Boyle insists that notebooking’s operation as such a resonant multimedia assemblage allows for “structures and systems of information to make ‘sense’ and for its practitioner to become informed by events of circumstance” (138). Notebooking, in short, enables a kind of transductive energy exchange that allows new kinds of sense and new identities for notebooking practitioners to emerge from various (multimedia) entries.

### Assertion #3: Rhythmic Resonances of Notebooking Bring Together Musical and Academic Experience in Interesting New Ways

In a general sense, the rhythmic and resonant dimensions of notebooking seem especially well-suited to capturing some of the unique benefits of writing about embodied musical and academic experience. Indigenous sound studies scholar Dylan Robinson describes the general practice of writing about music as a kind of resonant theory that allows people to make new knowledge by writing with, through, and beyond their embodied experiences of musical engagement. For Robinson, writing about the bodily experience of music as it unfolds affords a kind of direct and potentially unique means to access how

**Why write about music?**

Indigenous sound studies scholar Dylan Robinson argues that writing with, through, and beyond our embodied experiences with music helps us make new knowledge in the world.

music makes a body feel: it operates “where writers’ and readers’ bodies move alongside music’s body” (78) in ways that promote “‘writing with’ a subject in contrast to ‘writing about’ [something]” (81). Such a “writing-with” approach sees body and knowledge as integrally connected rather than separate—and therefore ultimately views writing about the embodied experience of music as generating potentially unique and special insights.<sup>4</sup> Or, to blend Boyle’s language

with Robinson’s concepts here, I’d argue that notebooking about music enables a potentially unique and resonant multimedia assemblage, one directly entangling embodied musical experience with reading, writing, and thinking about such experience in new and interesting ways.

## Notebooking AF and Academics: An Extended Example

In order to best illustrate the potential rhythmic and especially resonant power of these notebooking processes in action, I want to turn now to one last set of extended notebooking examples. Both were written the day after a gig in Dublin, Ireland in September 2017 that came at the end of two-week AF trip:

### 9-5-2017 (part I)

Quick thoughts on last night:

We got to Dublin, where it was also cool and overcast with hints of rain. (It never really did start raining, though.) Things didn’t start out well: we arrived later than we thought, and I was worried that my trumpet was permanently damaged. So, right when we got to the club, I ran out to try and find a brass shop: supposedly, there was a guy two blocks away ...

The [gear] was also late, which made for a sweat to get things started. Sound on stage, meanwhile, wasn’t very good: I could hear, but things were distorting. By the time we got done checking—and very late at that—things seemed like they’d be a [mess] ...

[A few hours later,] we went on stage. It was [hot] right from the get-go, and muggy as well. But, from the first minute I sat down, [I actually] felt great. I could hear everything well enough, everyone was loose, and the lights made it feel special. Truly. The woman doing the lights kept everything dark and mellow, with lots of reds and oranges. There was an occasional spotlight (e.g., when I played

4. Robinson also insists that such a writing-with approach has at least two critical functions. First, it promotes longstanding Indigenous views of “nonhuman relations” (79) in ways that can “help move beyond the anthropocentrism that reinforces the subject’s mastery over an object” (79). Second, it queers normative ways of understanding music as “white, heterosexual, able-bodied, and middle class” (81) by stressing the “intersubjective pleasure of touch in writing” (93). Such a writing-with approach can thereby bring important new critical perspectives to the insights afforded by musical engagement.

the horn), but I felt like she got the point of the band. I felt right in the zone, and by song #3—“Instincts”—things started to feel special.

Gotta say, too, that the new setlist is pretty great: it does a nice job of ebbing and flowing, and I don’t feel like there are any flat spots. At the same time, I feel like it saves the best for last: “So Lost” into “Honestly” into “Never Meant” is a nice touch—and all of those went real well. I also decided to play the horn solo after “Honestly”: I was worried that doing so might kill the mood a bit, as we had just come out of something loud and fun. I had actually let loose on the drums a bit, and I even had XXX egging me on from about 3 feet away, as the guitar boat was right next to my hi-hats. Super fun, and one of the more energetic “Honestly” versions of the tour. Good times there.

[As well,] the horn solo felt special ... It was kind of magical. The crowd went dead silent, my tone was good, and everything felt very musical. After “Honestly,” and with the lights and vibe as it was—hot, but just the right amount of hot and sweat—I think that it made for a nice contrast and a fine penultimate number. After that, “Never Meant” was fun and inspired for the second or third night in a row: the sing-alongs make that song worth it. (Oh yea: I heard singing along on “So Lost” last night, too: clearly, these kids are listening to the new record.) ...

The night finished by catching a lift to the hotel with the backline guy and heading out for a piece of pizza to fill my stomach. The hotel itself sucked, with a big clocktower outside the window that rang, quite literally, every 15 f\*cking minutes. And the mattress was worse than no mattress at all. Glad to be going home in that sense ...

As I look back at this passage, I see quite a bit of what I think that Cooper would characterize as the rhythmic habit of observation. Indeed, I seem to be noticing here a range of interesting rhythms rooted in my embodied experience from this previous night in Dublin, noting in particular:

- rhythms of arrival and departure:
  - getting to the club late (par. 2);
  - trying to sleep in a terrible hotel before flying home the next morning (par. 7).
- rhythms of (or, perhaps more accurately, arhythmic sensations of) difficulty:
  - dealing with my damaged instrument (par. 2);
  - enduring a difficult sound check (par. 3).
- rhythms of environment:
  - “Dublin, where it was cool and overcast” (par. 1);
  - “it was hot from the get-go, and muggy as well” (par. 4);

- I felt “just the right amount of hot and sweat” (par. 6);
- “the lights made it feel special. The woman doing the lights kept everything dark and mellow, with lots of reds and oranges. There was an occasional spotlight (e.g., when I played the horn), but I felt like she got the point of the band” (par. 4).

I also see myself starting to engage in a bit of Cooper’s habit connection here—as well as a bit of her habit of wonder—as I started to think about the larger rhythms and even resonances of my performance and how they began to create a kind of flow across a set list:

- rhythms of performance:
  - “the new setlist is pretty great: it does a nice job of ebbing and flowing, and I don’t feel like there are any flat spots” (par. 5);
  - “‘So Lost’ into ‘Honestly’ into ‘Never Meant’ is a nice touch” (par. 5);
  - “The horn solo felt special . . . it was kind of magical. The crowd went dead silent, my tone was good, and everything felt very musical” (par. 5).

Across this first journal entry, then, I see myself practicing the rhythmic habit of observation trained itself toward various rhythms: I tried to record, to the best of my ability, highlights related to what I had seen, heard, felt, and otherwise experienced the night before in ways reflective of what I try to do each and every time that I notebook about the embodied musical experience of AF. But I also notice certain ways in which habits of connection and wonder were starting to generate some level of new insight for me about that particular evening as well: indeed, I was beginning to notice how these individual rhythms were working in tandem to generate a larger sense of value of significance for this specific night. The set list was coming together. The trumpet solo was working. The night was starting to feel special to me.

Things become more interestingly resonant, however, in a later part of this same entry. Here, I start speculating about some of the ways in which this particular show in Dublin got me thinking in depth about some of the more general dynamics that make for a memorable show, aided by more overt examples of Cooper’s habits of connection and wonder:

9-5-2017 (part II)

I’m thinking [now] about some key ingredients at showtime: the crowd, both in terms of size and demeanor. Is the room full (e.g., T5; Dublin), semi-full (e.g., Brighton), or disastrously empty (e.g.,

Sasquatch or f\*cking Champaign)? Is it cold? Hot? dry? Humid? Can we hear the crowd or no? Are they watching or singing? Are they bored or checking their phones or even heckling (e.g., Berlin) Is there a group in front that's having enough fun in order to draw inspiration? Or are they yelling "you suck"? ... Those kinds of nights are sh\*t, no matter the preparation.

But [then] I think of last night, which I do believe was a top-5 (or at the very least top 10) all time, up against places like T5 or Reading or Pitchfork. In a case like that, things come together: the sound on stage is good and I can hear everything. The temperature is right: I'm sweating but not dying. The crowd is singing along when they're supposed to and quiet when they're supposed to be; people are paying attention and having fun and dancing, all of that kind of thing; the horn isn't giving me grief, nor are the drums. Those are the nights worth remembering—the ones that tend to stick with me. Last night was one of those nights, I think ...

On the right kind of night, there's a mutuality—a clear flow of vibes between and among the band and the crew; among the band and crew and the crowd; among the band and the crew and the crowd and the venue and the feel and the sights and the temperature, even. It all works together ...

For our part, we band members want to create that same kind of situation. We're the catalysts in an important way. (Or maybe, if I take [new materialist] work seriously enough, the songs are co-catalysts along with us—and it's clear that these songs and related images and memes have taken on a life of their own in some important ways that underscore the potential power of her arguments regarding circulation.) But we actually want the same thing as well: we want to be part of a communal positivity and communal sense of fun and good will. There's not real argument or explicit message in the way of a political rally or new speech (although, of course, music is part of such things). There's instead a sense of communal longing and participation. And I think that sense resonates awfully strongly with what Kevin Leander and Gail Boldt are talking about: participating in literacy for its own sake, because it's pleasurable, because there's a sense of connection and joy and circulation and amplification at stake. These are pretty important goals, so it seems to me.

As I look back at this second passage, I again see myself observing certain rhythms that might tend to make for a better experience than a worse one in general: how full is the room? (par. 8); how are the physical conditions in terms of temperature, humidity, access to water on stage? (par. 8); how is the crowd responding to and interacting with us and our music? (par. 8). But I actually spend much more time here engaging in connection and wonder to reveal deeper resonances. Specifically, I start to connect ways in which the

particular rhythms of a good night seem to begin interacting to generate the following:

- resonances of coming together:
  - “The temperature is right: I’m sweating but not dying” (par. 9);
  - the crowd is “singing along when they’re supposed to a quiet when they’re supposed to be” (par. 4);
  - such events create “nights worth remembering—the ones that tend to stick with me” (par. 9).
- resonances across band, crew, crowd, and environment:
  - “there’s ... a sense of communal longing and participation” (par. 8);
  - there exists “a mutuality—a clear flow of vibes ... among the band and the crew; among the band and the crew and the crowd; among the band and the crew and the crowd; among the band and the crew and the crowd and the venue and the sights and the sounds and the temperature, even. It all works together. (par. 10).
- resonances with scholarship and my own scholarly thinking:
  - “If I take [new material] work seriously enough, the songs are co-catalysts along with us” (par. 8);
  - there is an emerging sense here that “resonates awfully strongly with what Leander and Boldt are talking about: participating in literacy for its own sake, because it is pleasurable, because there’s a sense of connection and joy and circulation and amplification at stake” (par. 8).

These last passages reference resonance quite explicitly as they describe new things coming together across seemingly disparate areas of my life: here, I notice how the rhythms of notebooking are interacting with rhythms of playing and experiencing and soundchecking over time; with rhythms of striking drums and sweating and getting excited or angry or frustrated; with still other rhythms of reading, writing, thinking, and reflecting. I even reference two theorists of literacy and affective pleasure—Leander and Boldt—whose work I was engaged with at this time. All of these things are coming together in ways that I had not expected but that I appreciated deeply nonetheless. In particular, these resonances helped to transform these combinations of rhythms into new things: new insights into the reasons that a particular Dublin show felt special; new insights into more general ways to distinguish especially good shows from the rest; new insights into how these musical experiences tie directly to reading and writing and thinking about literate practice (and vice-versa).



These resonances were much more emergent than planned or forced. That is, I didn't necessarily try to make these resonances happen—but they happened anyway. They also suggest that notebooking can, at least at times, bring about a kind of process that operates beyond human intention or volition in some of the ways that Boyle mentions. Indeed, I seem to chip away a bit more at these issues, rhythmically, each time that I return to them such that things start to come together, resonantly, on their own accord. Still further, these interesting resonances help me to see a bigger picture emerging in terms of how music, scholarship, and life co-create each other. Different forms of sound, music, and embodiment begin combining and interlacing through notebooking with other forms of reading, writing, and thinking in ways that clearly exceed the sum of their parts. These processes, in turn, generate new insights into connections between a particular trip and larger kinds of thinking; new insights into the power of ideas that span past experience, present thinking, and future aspirations; and even new insights that have ultimately enabled me to write the piece that you are now engaged with as readers.

## Conclusions and Suggestions

I hope that these particular excerpts, themselves just a few of dozens of resonant instances that I might have shared, usefully illustrate some of the ways that notebooking has yielded interesting rhythms and powerful resonances for me. These include some very practical outcomes, on the one hand:

- A means to navigate the AF experience for more than 8 years now since I started notebooking in 2016;
- A means to enable me to keep doing my professorial work throughout this entire experience;
- A means to generate new academic work at the intersection of these experiences (since beginning notebooking, I've written two articles, drafted much of a book in progress, and also written this piece that you're all reading now).

More interesting to me, however, is the way in which the rhythmic resonance that this notebooking has enabled has generated some new insights into burning questions that I wouldn't even have known to ask before starting on this particular journey:

- What is rhythmic and resonant about notebooking? about academic writing? about drumming? about all of them, all at once, when they function as a (multimedia) assemblage?

- What might musical rhythms and academic rhythms achieve in tandem that they can't otherwise?
- What new techniques for living and being through music and writing simultaneously might be cultivated through notebooking work like this?
- In what ways might notebooking come to comprise a “real” life work of its own worthy of time, attention, and analysis?

This last question even animates me as I write now. I'd say that, for me, the rhythmic resonances enabled by my notebooking AF has generated a new kind of hybrid of musical and written experience for me that actually exceeds either individually. I continue to appreciate both activities separately, of course, but I especially appreciate them now as they interact within notebooking practices and products: through notebooking, I get to re-experience the intensity of being on stage but while also (re-) writing and (re-) reading and (re-) thinking these intensities through theoretical and academic lenses. I also derive new energies and intensities from these sorts of writing, reading, and thinking activities that feed new energies into my playing. And even my teaching has been impacted: I've recently begun teaching Writing on Music in ways that reflect both my playing experiences and the research work that I've been doing. These rhythms now resonate with each other in wonderfully vibrant ways. I had not anticipated any of this, but I am deeply grateful for it.

I hope, finally, that my discussion here might encourage readers like you to experiment with notebooking embodied musical experience—or, if you'd prefer, other kinds of embodied rhythmic experiences instead—for yourselves:

1. If you love music, try notebooking about it regularly. If not, then try writing about something else that affects you deeply in some sort of rhythmic way: sport, yoga, video games, conversation, or anything else at all that brings you into some sort of mental and/or physical flow state. Jot down your thoughts about how, where, with whom, and why you experience this sort of rhythmic activity, and do so as consistently as you can: daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly. Using Cooper's habit of observation to help you, strive for a rhythm in your writing about rhythm.
2. When it makes sense to do so, try to set rhythmic experiences in relation through Cooper's habits of observation and wonder. Don't force things, of course. But do try to cultivate a situation in which these sorts of rhythmic experiences might come into some sort of potentially transformative resonant relation as naturally as possible.

3. See what transformative resonances you might be lucky enough to participate in if and when conditions line up just right. Enjoy them if they do, and see what sort of new sense they provide for you.
4. Don't overthink the whys of doing any of this. Just do the thing. Trust the process. Be open to the idea that things will happen if you let them.

I'm definitely not trying to offer prescriptions here for how the notebooking of experience must work. There is no "must" here. But I do hope that, with luck, these rhythmic practices and emergent resonances might do for you what they've done for me—that is, provide you with new ideas, new insights, and new sources of excitement across the many facets of your literate lives.

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