

**As Skylarks 'climb high above': The 17- Call that Music?**

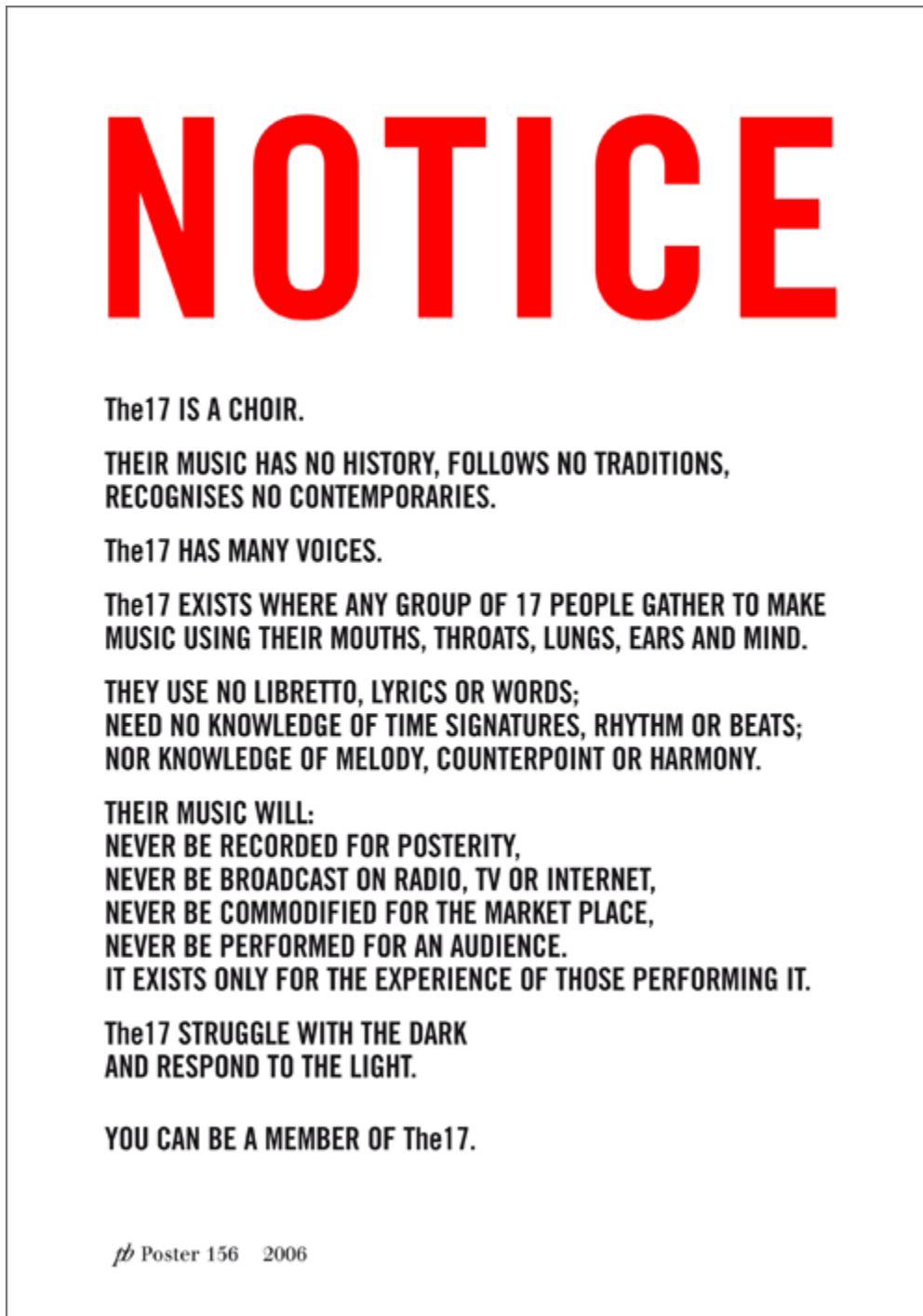
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**Abstract**

This paper discusses ethnographic research that wants to elucidate what musical entrepreneurship in North West England could be. It concentrates on one, possible, 'musical entrepreneur' who has a history in Liverpool, Bill Drummond, and narrates some images of an encounter with his core project, The17, which is a choir that only performs for itself, does not record or broadcast anything, and makes what Drummond calls 'year zero' music. To meet and talk to Drummond and learn about The17, the only way was to take part: "to hear The17, you must become a member". That meant sitting under a stone circle on an island in the Outer Hebrides and listening to Skylarks singing at 7am, for 17 minutes. The trip involved the track, the performance, the venue, and the audience. The way in which The17 operates and how it was encountered in research practice are presented as 'images of being-in-business'. The paper draws from Edith Penrose (1959) to outline what these 'images of being-in-business' are and considers the different phenomena expressed to get a feel of Drummond's life within and outside of what is usually thought of as musical entrepreneurship. For Bill, The17 is oriented by artistic, spiritual, and emotional interest with the musical experience, rather than competitive advantage or traditional commercial interest, arresting us with images and ways of operating that are in stark contrast to the wider blanket of musical enterprise, expressing a curiosity and attentiveness to more common images and memories of musical entrepreneurship and the nature and value of music. The paper calls what The17 does an act of 're-presentation', and draws on G.L.S. Shackle (1979), and Michel de Certeau (1984) to re-frame Penrose and hang the image of The17 as an act of re-presentation. The paper concludes by suggesting that, in the case of The17, 'musical entrepreneurship' involves a kind of pedagogical attentiveness to shared histories, memories, images and values of musical entrepreneurship and that it is through re-presenting those common images that unique 'services' able to question the very nature and values of musical entrepreneurship and express possible and impossible economic realities are imagined and brought into being.

Fig. 1



## Introduction

Musical entrepreneurship involves notions like 'independence' (Hesmondalgh 1999) and distinct 'tensions' between commercial interest and musical creativity (Stratton 1982; Caves 2000) assumed to be experienced by musical entrepreneurs. These ideas can be used as metaphors in a research context. This paper does just that. While policy researchers (Oakley and Leadbeater 1999) value 'independents' based in the creative industries, though, 'independence' and associated tensions, themselves, are perplexing notions if entrepreneurship is not properly contextualized. Music, 'independent' or otherwise, can only develop and become valuable in a social context. The literature has 'independent' musical entrepreneurship involving a happy interest in producing high quality pop music (Hesmondalgh 1999), as well as a set of puritan values, rituals, and relationships between musicians and audiences (Fonnarow 2006) that express more spiritual desire than any commercial interest. At the same time, authors like Pierre Guillet de Monthoux (2004) suggest that arts-oriented firms often express aesthetic values very different than anything purely commercial or competitive. Business can be art too. Early observers (Peterson & Berger 1971; Stratton 1982) also recognised that 'independent' business practices often express knowledge of being embedded in a business context and are often perceived as valuable because they are related to other business phenomena. These are paradoxes (Beech and Townsley 2009) that need to attending to. Musical entrepreneurship, then assumed to involve the social value of music and of musical entrepreneurship, apart from their commercial worth, orients attention to the socially embedded nature of the experience.

The paper imagines 'musical entrepreneurship' as an embedded experience involving forms of value other than commercial or competitive gain, yet still being expressive of business phenomena, and still becoming valuable. It also suggests people can feel 'independence' through attending to different kinds of business experience, not ignoring them. This is expressed through describing becoming a member in a choir, The17, which narrates a possible longitudinal narrative for, possible, musical entrepreneur, Bill Drummond. Some blame for the format of the paper should be appointed to Laurel Richardson (1999, 2003), and her inspiring tales of research told as stories; a recent workshop, 'Building Capacity in the New School of European Entrepreneurship', held at Newcastle University Business School, in May 2010, in which calls were made to wrench the 'subject' away from perspectives predisposed to identify particular images; Daniel Hjorth and Chris Steyaert's (2009) book, 'The Politics and Aesthetics of Entrepreneurship', in which the authors question what modes of presenting and re-presenting entrepreneurial experiences have become marginal or that are invisible; and Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (2005), in which Thompson takes a trip and describes imagined hallucinations and feelings, and Thompson's associated 'Gonzo' style reportage. Observational, theoretical, and personal field notes (Richardson 2004: 382) help in remembering the experience and Drummond's talk was noted by messy short hand, also mnemonic in nature, along with ongoing reflections being recorded. Some license has been taken with the transcript and it is presented in the main body of text, that also involves background field work, observation, 2 unstructured

interviews, along with readings of Drummond's book, 17 (2008). The intent, as such, is not so much to express a neutral or generalistic text, as if representing 'reality' in this time of mass industrial and personal change is possible (Thrift 2008), or as if theory and real experience are commensurable (de Certeau 1984). Instead, the paper relies deeply on considering the social value to Drummond's core project, The17, and understands the kind of experience-based separation, or 'independence', that Drummond might feel in a way that evokes a 'pedagogical attentiveness' to 'images of being-in-business' in which assumed tensions and distinct interests dissolve away. The paper then opens more a back water, or an 'imaginary narrative space' (Stewart 1996: 117), by attending to the wider blanket of musical entrepreneurship and musical experiences. Kathleen Stewart (1996) talks about 'a space on the side of the road' - a small town in Virginia that, through enduring a history of exploitation from heavy capitalist industry, lead to narrative spaces and invented gaps in meaning being found within an order circumscribed by other forces. Stewart describes how, that 'space on the side of the road', forgotten by the rest of a progress obsessed, 'Big' America, of rapidly progressing, clean towns and quiet engines, where people drink espressos, not beer, that played it's part in shaping the possibilities people back in the imagined 'space' might experience, expresses and re-presents that wider picture. The particularity of living there and living 'it', reifies the bigger, more commonplace picture, assembling memories and intense images usually invisible or marginal. In the same way, this paper emphasises the socially embedded nature to Drummond and his core project, The17, and the significance of the experience he and others might have endured, through which it reorients and develops possibilities for imagining and re-presenting a bigger picture of musical experience and musical entrepreneurship. Drummond's narrative space and the image presented by The17 is re-presented within the 'bigger picture', like a space made within the established order through which sovereignty, and an embedded kind of 'independence', can be felt through attending to experience, not ignoring it. Drummond's experience and The17 tells something about the wider context, the social imagination being able to massage and develop deep, personal, understanding of being in society (Mills 1959).

### **Images of Being-in-Business**

Management scholar, Edith Penrose (1959/1995), meditated on 'incentives' and 'constraints' to the rate and direction of firm growth. Penrose suggests that imagination determines entrepreneurs' actions (1995: 5), not objectified resource bundles or an objective business environment, and emphasizes that entrepreneurs experience reality, not as objective fact, but as mental 'image' (1995: 42). Uncertainty and potential, for her, are the same: 'expectations' of the image. Enlarged to epistemology, Penrose also disrupts notions of subjectivity and objectivity to being. The 'image' involves an experience based movement, that Penrose calls 'learning'. Learning endures between personal resource bundles and knowledge, experiences and memories people develop over time, and the local, more commonplace, milieu of cultural, industrial and market-based phenomena. The play between different resources people develop and phenomena they encounter, more or less personal, develops potential, their 'image' being of possible 'services' to be brought into being in a business sense. Reality and potential 'services', as people know them, express overflowing expressions of people's own embedded history, the image being an 'image of being-in-business', neither subjective nor objective. That suggests people imagine unique experiences of shared, commonplace phenomena, and that people need to be embedded to learn about themselves and others and have the potential to imagine. Penrose emphasizes that it is through people's temporal experience of 'being-in-business', as

well as ongoing learning processes, that images become more unique and develop potential during processes of learning and imagination. With that, musical entrepreneurship, makes no sense as an isolate, static, phenomenon: resources, knowledge, images, and services, instead, express embedded experience, of being-in-business, only becoming valuable, socially. 'Being-in-business' like that and the image's movement between personal history and memory of being-in-business and commonplace business phenomena, characterises Penrose's epistemology. She suggests the experience feels like 'disequilibrium' (1959). In a research context, 'disequilibrium' operates as a metaphor for 'being-in-business' – for experiencing an environment with commonplace cultural and business phenomena, being able to imagine socially valuable services, and to develop a unique entrepreneurial experience. It emphasizes the embedded nature and potency to the entrepreneurial function, imagination, and images to create possibilities and challenge perceived limitations, and emphasises Penrose's preoccupation with the creation of social value.

Images that do become valuable, still remain, not necessarily commercially oriented, or ever being so, as businesses exist for a good many reasons other than commercial intent or competitive gain. As Penrose did, more generally, people may also devalue (the culture of) competitive or profit oriented practices in favour of different cultural or personal values in the context of musical entrepreneurship. The validity of tensions between the interests of management, the practical mind, and the entrepreneurial function, imagination, is yet to be understood and need not be automatically attributed to people's experiences, although it is likely people will have to attend to the social value of their services, answering serious questions about what they do, in a business, cultural, and personal sense.

While some memories fade, others endure due to their 'practical' worth (Bergson 2002). Business strategies have shaped how music business is experienced today. Most of 'Big America' Penrosean entrepreneurship scholarship concentrates on competitive strategies (Barney 1991) assumed to operate through efficiency savings and isolating mechanisms. The literature is preoccupied with the 'Penrose effect' (e.g. Marris 1963; Hay and Morris, 1991; Gander, 1991; Orser, Hogarth-Scott and Riding, 2000; Shane, 1996; Shen 1970; Slater 1980:xi Thompson, 1994), which prescribes adapting resources in light of discovered opportunities; and 'path dependencies', as if resource bundles are "cognitive drivers" (Mahoney 1995), that determine the 'discovery' of competitive opportunities (Mahoney and Pandian, 1992; Mahoney, 1995; Kor and Mahoney, 2004; Mahoney and Michael, 2005; Foss *et al*, 2006; Lockett and Thompson, 2004; Lockett, 2005). With some exceptions (i.e. Spender 1998, albeit strategic in nature; Baker *et al* 2005), the role of imagination in Penrose's work, being closely related to history, has been replaced with determinism and competitive interest oriented by commercial gain. Penrose was interested with commonplace, competitive and profit oriented ways of operating assumed to be predictive, like business strategies, but only insofar as they worked as analytical tools: 'incentives' and constraints' could express a multiplicity of characteristics that will show up against their wealth preoccupied cousins. That, more commercial and competitive oriented background 'imagery, remains fatalistic, meaningless, and unable to deal with imagination and social values possible in musical entrepreneurship, until transposed into experience. At that point, they might highlight imaginative departures, 'intense' and emotional images, and narrative spaces of 'social imaginary' possible with musical entrepreneurship. Penrose's distinction between equilibrium oriented analyses and disequilibrium oriented analyses, moreover, the former being preoccupied with appropriating value through competitive strategy, and the latter

being preoccupied with the human experience of creating social value, suggests those two 'analyses' to be incommensurable (Penrose and Pitelis 1999). Still, some recent infusions of the two approaches (Spender 1998; Foss *et al* 2004; Mahoney and Michael 2005) have betrayed Penrose's preoccupation with value creation for social good. Most (Kor and Mahoney 2004; Lockett and Thompson, 2005; Mahoney and Michael 2005; Foss *et al* 2004; Lockett 2005) still affirm earlier misrepresentative remarks that suggest 'history matters' because resource bundles determine firm growth through enabling strategic management and entrepreneurship, oriented towards competitive gain. This fatalistic nature of resource bundles is carried through to imagined possibilities in more recent entrepreneurship strategy theory (Hitt *et al* 2001), in which envisioning and discovering opportunities are tied closely into how resource bundles and capabilities perform in light of competition. Imagination, if considered, is oriented in one direction: the competition. Penrose (1995: 32) suggests that imagination comes before practical acts, like commerce, that bring images into being. Imagination "may or may not be practical" (Penrose 1995: 32), imagination not being determined by resource bundles, nor by competitive gain, nor by commercial interest, nor by established modes of operation. Yet, images, may or may not still express business phenomena from an embedded experience and may or may not become socially valuable. Value, as Penrose knew, involved other social issues (Rugman and Verbeke 2004), such as business ethics, and suggested competitive intent and appropriating value, for themselves, are unethical, and described the kind of feelings and emotions firms develop within them, amongst people, and the significance of industrial culture within the wider business context, others now attend to (e.g. Fletcher 2010; Cope 2001; Glynn and Lounsbury 2001). Sometimes, though, even when 'culture' is considered (Glynn and Lounsbury 2001), the predisposition is to identify entrepreneurs turning to cultural stocks of knowledge and social values to engender legitimate strategies and ease the transfer of resources. Culture is a static phenomenon, turned to for competitive gain. This is a commonplace image of entrepreneurship: the most visible, 'practical' and well fondled, although unable to deal with the intensity of novel images and values possible with 'musical entrepreneurship'. These waves of thought have not perceived that, maybe, 'history matters' (Penrose 1995: xiii) because people learn about other forms of social value, rather than becoming interested in efficiency savings or isolating mechanisms, and can imagine enjoying business life. Still, even if images become valuable social services, commercially or otherwise, commercial intent may not be an incentive or strategy. Successful enterprise, as others have described (e.g. Sarasvathy 2008), can begin and continue developing without much commercial or competitive intent and, instead, through more everyday motivations and experiences that are easier to relate to in the context of musical entrepreneurship. Those 'backwaters' come and go, some endure time, and some develop into powerful environmental forces (e.g. Fox Broadcasting, Creation Records, Hesmondalgh 1999). Being social, value is, often, very different than the value some managers might have in mind. Musical entrepreneurship perhaps more so, and people can attribute their own values, cultural and personal, to modes of business. Phenomena like the industrial and local culture, different forms of social value, and how people relate to and experience business life and personal experience, as well as the traditional focus on the resources and other market-based characters, then, provide some of the infrastructure to images, to imagination, and can play roles in their becoming valuable.

History, then, might matter because it means people learn, as beings-in-business, get to know themselves, the business context, different kinds of social value, and can imagine. Learning in the context of the creative industries means understanding other forms of value, apart from scarcity, or competitive and commercial gain, some being more

interested with what things mean and service's local impact. 'Learning', then, could evoke a management-like attentiveness to knowledge of being-in-business, to the experience of learning itself, different commonplace phenomena and to different forms of social value, as well as a curiosity to the uncertainty and possibility to bring images into being in a business sense. That might express more a 'pedagogical attentiveness' to commonplace phenomena, different relations, memories, traditions, spaces and feelings be experience, than any real profit or competitive intent. Management (*manus*~ hands + *mens*~ knowledge, result on the hands) neither need be something abstract or involve presumed intent. 'Other' sovereign figures attentive to experience for different purposes and with different values in mind 'manage' too. Commercial interest and management could express a curiosity and attentiveness to how things have felt in the past, to how others have felt or might feel, to commonplace ways of operating and their social consequences. People might want to share experiences or create memories, or they might want to prevent others from feeling what they might have felt, along with a will to bring images into being. Value and meaning attributed to a service, as with those of the independent movement in music associated with Britain in the 1980s (Stratton 1982), might also express attentiveness to the wider business context- and that relationship is likely involve social values, more or less commercial, cultural and personal in nature. Memories of being-in-business and sharing a cultural, personal, business context, local and beyond, will matter then too. Images, as it were, can express the felt, cultural, temporal, and embedded nature to business life, and people's feelings of independence and novel images of, possible, 'musical entrepreneurship' could be understood, in attendance to, to that experience.

Turning to the research context, Penrose's legacy endures through an interest in the thing itself: the embedded experience of musical entrepreneurship, involving an attentiveness to different characteristics of experience, entrepreneurial 'incentives', and other forms of social value. Penrose orients research toward, not only entrepreneurial life, but also toward how images become socially valuable in the context of music business. Music, definitely, involves a lot more than commercial or competitive intent: it might even be less valuable if explicitly so. The conflation of interests in Penrose's legacy, today, though, and the inability of that body of work to deal with the embedded human experience of value creation and musical entrepreneurship, means it is probably best to turn to other authors first, before addressing a bigger image. E.F.S. Shackle (1979) expresses some processes potentially significant during entrepreneurial imagination. Meditating deeply on the "most direct, inescapable and imperious intuitions" (1979:vii) of imagination and choice, Shackle suggests that entrepreneurs make a sort of 'incision' in time, attending to their own temporal experience of being embedded in a business context in order to imagine entrepreneurial possibilities- 'choices'. Imagining the incision, the uncertainty of history is exploited as a 'skein of possibilities' that, imagined, can then be chosen and brought into being through choosing further imagined possibilities. For Shackle, people experience time as thought and as imagination (1979:7). Time becomes a 'resource of undeterminism' (1979:7), through which, imagining possibilities, entrepreneurs make a 'beginning', an 'uncaused cause' (1979:5). Temporal experience of being embedded in a business context is expressed in the form of possible choices, particular in nature, and 'imagined, deemed possible', will fill the 'emptiness' of time-to-come. That expresses something of the potency of imagination, being able to alter the run of things so that, in time-to-come, a different history will be 'originated' (Shackle 1979: 49), and questions the validity of business strategy based on probabilistic calculations. Far from one state of affairs being objective reality, Shackle suggests entrepreneurs can the imagine the virtual opposite to some potential choice. Neither materiality, logic, or assumed



values determine their actions. Shackle describes the inception, or image, in terms of a 'mosaic' (1979:24), formed of different business 'elements' and knowledge of the wider context, shaped by a practical conscience making choices as to what possibilities might be brought into being. In the same way Penrose's image endures, the mosaic of Shackle is developed as entrepreneurs learn the 'news' (1979:27) of industrial change and attend to more personal changes in experience. The 'mosaic' image is in constant change- expressing people's embedded experience of time. Being embedded, though, Shackle also affirms that there is no 'objective' way to value 'choices', and that, different values' "effect on the chooser depends as much on his own nature as on that of the history itself" (1979:63), the mosaic being coloured by personal as well as embedded values. Sometimes, for instance, business imagination is massaged by concerns for greater 'enjoyment' or fulfilment, along with a concern for survival. Business images brought into being then express different ways of imagining and valuing that temporal experience of being embedded in a business context.

Bringing that down to everyday life, Michel de Certeau (1984; Certeau *et al* 1998) writes about juxtaposing everyday experience and creativity against a background painted with common brush strokes. Certeau *et al* (1998) describe an order that habituates citizens, at the same time providing interstices and possibilities for imaginative 'gestures' and 'speech' through which people develop narrative spaces and ellipses in the fabric of urban experience. A grandmother from Lyons walks around Lyon city centre and enriches her families experience as she retells memories of walking the same streets as a child and describes the kind of feelings she felt and evokes how busy and preoccupied people now seem to be to her. It was that kind of interest in everyday experience, and how people operate in the world, that preoccupied Certeau and Certeau *et al* most: how people furnish their house, how they develop the neighbourhood, and how they conjure complex pedagogical relations with the world through which personal meaning, values and intense emotional and aesthetic landscapes are projected. Kathleen Stewart (1996) expresses affection for de Certeau too (1984). 'A space on the side of the road' (Stewart 1996) describes gaps in meaning and interstices in a social fabric pervaded by 'other' forces that emerge through a social imagination, presenting possibilities of a different, forgotten, marginal, or invisible, America. Using the language and inheritances of Americanism, small town Virginians manage some sense of sovereignty in a complex and chaotic environment at odds with the clean streets of city centre districts. Stewart (1996), Certeau (1984), Thrift (2008), and Hjorth and Steyaert (2009) are interested in the intensity and particular nature of everyday experience so as to narrate and re-present a bigger picture, at times when the meaning and significance of modern values and social relationships are uncertain and complicated with political, economic, social and cultural changes that can make it easy to forget that change is lived, felt, imagined, dreamt, remembered, forgotten, deleted.

Certeau's narrative methodology operates through an epistemology that emphasises a 'pedagogical relation' between temporal experience and embedded, relational, experience. As people then encounter the world, confronting established ways of operating, the materiality of city life, and commonplace, 'enlarged' images of experience to abstract to convey any sense of experience, their memory, overflowing, enables a re-presentation of common images of a local, or wider, order. Certeau suggested the play between the commonplace and the particular, are useful in a research context because imagination and creativity is pronounced against the commonplace stereo-, or ideal, type. 'Strategies' is what Certeau termed commonplace images that are useful in a research context. Strategies are devoid

of experience, being formalized ways of operating commonly understandable and part of people's relational experience, being recognisable by their relationship to place, as a 'calculus of power' (Certeau 1984:36): meaningless and predisposed to identify certain values, precisely the stuff of 'Big America' management and entrepreneurship strategy. 'Tactics', on the other hand, express people's temporal experience, involving the intensity of people's embedded learning on an everyday basis. Tactics express the reality of strategies, being transposed and re-presented in experience, to express how people draw on ways of operating, memories, institutions, figures of different kind (i.e. people from the local area, the media and so on), and how they use their knowledge of places, shared traditions, and their tact, wit, and good timing, in order to make 'gestures' through their 'speech' and 'acts' (Certeau 1984; Certeau *et al* 1998). Tactics', are the 'other' to strategies too abstract and polished to convey any sense of embedded experience. The play between the two aid the researcher in expressing deviation, creativity, novelty, ruse, evasion, detournement, and different forms of value. 'Tactics' operate as a hanger for social imagination to be expressed. ' They become visible in memory form, gesturing back to a temporal experience of being amongst others, like an 'image of being-in-business'. That helps relate entrepreneurial imagination to a wider context and in recognising arresting possibilities and forms of value in contrast to ways of operating too abstract to convey any sense of experience. The specific predispositions of authors in Penrose's tradition, now, become provident in highlighting imaginative departures oriented by other incentives and values.

### **Bill Drummond and The 17**

Liverpool, June 1973, a young man, Bill Drummond realises the "total contradiction" "at the heart of human existence: that we are totally trapped and totally free at the same time... I was 20...in the library at Liverpool...when it dawned on me that if you viewed the world and everything else from a totally material point of view, if you knew everything that had ever happened, absolutely everything...then you could work out everything that was ever going to happen. This I found profoundly depressing. Some years later someone told me this was called causality. I stayed profoundly depressed for less than a minute. Luckily for me, another completely contradictory idea landed inside my head. It went something like this: I was completely free to do whatever I wanted and in accepting my freedom I had to accept its consequences—the brick walls, the hidden pitfalls, the (un)certainly of death and that of course everyone else is just as free as me even if they do not accept it. So from that moment...I decided to accept the total contradiction...that we are totally free to do whatever the fuck we want" (Drummond, 2008:311).

Don't believe the hype. Today, Drummond prefers not to talk about his career in the music business (that he says lasted between 1977 to 1992), and that involves stunts, success, failure, trips, working for a major record company, managing world touring and 'genre' shaping bands from Liverpool, starting a record label that wanted to change the world, being part of Liverpool's (second most?) significant era of pop music, simultaneous number one hits in 18 different countries, best selling singles, co-authoring a book describing how to get number one hits, multiple guises and organisations, hip hop, acid house, techno, ambient, guitar-oriented music, machine gunning audiences, dead animals in public places, and burning a million pounds... He 'retired' from music business in 1992 because he felt trapped, destroying all means of remuneration from previous work on the way out. But that didn't stop him asking serious questions: "Like, what is music for?...why do we listen to it the way we do?...what would it be like

if...? ...“Why am I so frustrated with it”...“Why do I want it to be something other than it is” and “Why do I want it to exist in some other sort of way than it already does?”” (Drummond, quoted in *Independent*, July 25, 2005).

Today, Drummond wants to forget the myth of who people think he is. This isn't about that either. Since 'leaving' the industry, he's been busy writing more books, producing, destroying, buying, and selling art work, travelling, composing, imagining, dreaming and asking “Is God a C\*\*T?” at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. His core project, The17, invites people to imagine music without music business. He runs Penkiln Burn, his own publishing firm, through which press, distribution, and marketing are administrated for a range of projects that often actively involve audiences in producing aesthetic value. Posters get printed with bold red font, pamphlets and books get produced, often narrating or closely related to Penkiln Burn's core projects. Pricey art work gets cut up, buried, and then sold. Cakes get given to random people. He also talks about his love for pop music, for his need to make art, and his need to support his family. That means the 'product' must stand on it's own for Drummond: people need to want to buy it. Competitive advantage or commercial intent, though, seem meaningless in relation to Drummond, and he wont call himself a 'musical entrepreneur'. Still, Penkiln Burn's core projects emphasise how much history, imagination, other people, and other forms of social value, do matter.

This paper is dedicated to becoming a member in Drummond's core project, The17. The17 is a musical non-entity: a choir that only performs for itself, records nothing, never broadcasts, and that has the ethos of bringing music back to 'body' and to 'place'. To hear the choir, “you must become a member”. Other than that, The17, involves Drummond giving talks and is narrated by Drummond's book, 17 (2008).

### **Score 8: Take**

Tuesday 16 June 2010, 11:14 am, an email from Bill Drummond invites potential members of The17 to Callanish Stones, on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. Until then, Drummond hadn't indicated he had received the email sent a few months prior and the invitation meant re-organising a week and halving the research fund.

Drummond was late for his talk at the arts centre in Stornoway. Upstairs in the bar area I asked him if I could record the talk. He gave a very definite “No”. Downstairs, the talk then began- a small and intimate affair as Drummond had promised. Placed strategically around the arts centre were the posters for 'Score 8: Take'. They read:

In June

Take 17 people to a place

Where the Skylarks Climb

High into the sky

Request The17 to lie on their backs

On the grass and listen

### To the Skylarks as they climb high into the sky

3 sub-plots in Drummond's talk were used to introduce our becoming members of The17. They describe memories of the musical product; the becoming of The17; and the Callanish Stones.

Drummond's talk began with memories of consuming the musical product. He began describing listening to Radio Caroline, at 7:21, on the 21<sup>st</sup> Febuary 1967, and that, overcoming his attitude that pop music was 'girly', to buy his first record, 'Penny Lane' by the Beatles. The picture sleeve impressed him. Listening, he says he asked himself "Which am I? Do I leap about or think about it?". Eventually turning the record over, and, then, listening to 'Let me take you there', he says he thought "I'd let them take me anywhere. It was like nothing I had heard before. A door was opening in my mind I had never been into".

Skipping his industry career entirely, in 2001, Drummond says he was being "sucked back into pop music, even classical, jazz"- categories he was already disaffected with. He had "3000 records staring at" him and didn't know what to listen to. Being drawn to buying an album as he was when a child, Drummond felt that "By the time I get home, it will not be what I wanted. It wont open that door in my head. So I didn't buy it or go in [to the shop]. But I could still imagine those faces in the shop staring at me". Napster- the first real major web-based file-sharing network to disrupt established modes of consumption- although initially enthusing Drummond - became another source of disaffection: "Whatever I pick, by the time I get the file on my hard drive, it wont be what I want". That experience drew him up to his loft. Finding Penny Lane, he played it and described "the power of that record over me. I'm fighting off tears". Eyeing up cutting sheers, he cut through his previously most cherished record, Penny Lane, by the Beatles. "No record is going to mess with my emotions again". Drummond then turned to consuming contemporary pop music of no nostalgic significance, his words today affirming that "the best is always yet to come. Music of your youth isn't better... that's a lie". Still struggling with his relationship with the musical product, Drummond imagined listening regimes, determined by chance. That began with the letter 'B'- the Beach Boy's 'Pet Sounds', an album whose appeal he had found hard to forget. He felt "...suddenly music has worth again, I thought. Old regime out, new one in... ..I'd like to say it resolved the problems, but it hasn't".

That sub-plot about Drummond's changing relationship with the musical product, and the way in which he tried to make it more meaningful, lead on to his memories of imagining The17 from a young age. Drummond started by describing "being recognised as having a good voice" and being asked to sing for the choir as a boy. These are his earliest memories of 'music' and 'performance'. He sang until his voice broke, questioning why he had leave. "Something" from that time "stayed with me" he says. "Every time I heard choral music, something would draw me in". Around then, 2001, Drummond meditated more deeply on what a choir could be like. But he was put off. "There is nothing as bad as someone who has done pop music that thinks they can do that". He made a deal with himself, not to attempt to make any choral music until he's 60. "By then, I will have got bored, once everybody has forgotten about me". Drummond, though, did not become bored with imagining The17. Instead:

"At 52, something happened. In my land drover, with no radio, I'm listening to the engine, it's nice rumble. I focus in... I started hearing these voices... In harmony... building up... like a hundred

Vikings... then angelic choir voices, to the wind... it was fantastic! Then, two weeks later, the same happened again. It was better than anything on radio, anywhere. But it's just in my imagination... but there's more than 17 voices... hundreds".

After that, Drummond had to tell people about The17, being shy at first, but feeling that he "had to make it a reality". He and Kev Reverb from Leicester rigged up Drummond's Land Drover with microphones, one around the belly of the beast to capture the deep groans and others placed strategically around the vehicle to capture more subtle and delicate, "angelic" voices. The imagined choir then performed between Hull and Liverpool, along the M62. Meanwhile, 17 strapping lads from Leicester were recruited and set to rehearse. Drummond had "delusions" after the first evening. He says he imagined "releasing it, having a world tour- everything". He awoke soberly the next morning, thinking "Who in their right mind is going to buy that? But it was something special so I wanted to try it again".

Drummond realised the first audiences to see The17 thought "What the fuck is this?" and that it wasn't happening". "Having an audience...it changed from being a purely communal experience...to becoming some form of entertainment where audience satisfaction had to be taken into consideration" (Drummond, *The Independent*, July 25, 2008). Meanwhile, his relationship to the musical product was still changing and he became fed up with his Ipod after just two weeks of flicking through the songs. Around then, he decided:

"This chorus thing should never be recorded. You have to be in it. Then I wanted a year zero.... instead of seeing the history of music... which seemed like everything wanted to be sucked into recording...as something that can be consumed... that people bow down to the genius of others, sit there and do nothing... The only music that was allowed to evolve was recorded music. I saw many other ways... I realise it's totally pretentious, but I still go along with that... ... then I started composing".

After that, things got going, one of the first real performances by The17 being constituted by a circle of differently aged people whose bodies formed variations in scale and pitch. Bill felt that was a real success. That score, he says: "just contains the soul of everybody that takes part... ..It's just not what you'd think of music. It's something about memory... 5,6 years later, it stays with you, much more than a piece of recorded music".

The third sub-plot described something of what the Callanish Stones mean to Drummond, as memories, and helps make sense of the other two. "When I was a 17 year old, I was over here on a family holiday and we went to the Callanish Stones. I remember lying on the grass, watching a skylark flying, listening to it. Then, in 83, I was managing the Bunnymen and I really wanted them to play here". He evoked a kind of aura to the stones, as if they are cathedral-like in his memory. So the Bunnymen came and went to the Callanish Stones. "I knew this was the place". "So what I plan to do is drive out there at 7am. I invite anyone who wants to come. That's it... .. I want you all to sign [this poster] so I have a record of it". Drummond then asked us to "imagine music has gone"- year zero - when we awake the next morning. A member of the audience says something about The17 and spirituality. "That's one of the reasons I wanted to come here", Bill replies. "As a youngster, that had a huge emotional impact. My father was a

preacher. For me, its one of the most emotional musics to come out of the British Isles, is choir music... but we weren't allowed- they're on stage... we have to worship at the alter of who is selling the product”.

This emergence of The17 is recounted in his book, 17. In Spring 2003, Drummond (2008:22-23) says he:

“realised it was over and recorded music was a dead art form, as dead as silent films were within months of the talkies coming on, only fit for the museum, [and] sat down and wrote the following words:

All recorded music has run its course.  
It has all been consumed, traded, downloaded,  
Understood, heard before, sampled, learned,  
Revised, judged, found wanting.  
Dispense with all previous forms of music and  
Music-making and start again.  
Year zero now.”

#### **19.6.2010, Callanish Stone Circle, Isle of Lewis**

6:15, the next morning, Drummond and partner taxied The17 to the first annual performance at the Callanish Stones. The17 consisted of them, and people who had attended the night before: locals from Stornoway, others from across Scotland, an Irish researcher- the total being less than 17. I asked Drummond on the drive out why that day and why that morning, bearing in mind it was the nearest Saturday to the solstice. It was nothing to do with that. Drummond gave much more pragmatic reasons in his general introduction: June is when the Skylarks are about, a morning visit meant less tourists, and that was the only couple of days he had enough free time. The morning is also a time of awakening, preparing, and imagining the day ahead. But, Drummond said, things didn't need explaining (we were invited to forget music existed). I felt that too and restricted the questions. This was something much more intuitive, something that would be missed through observation and 'analysis'. As we stood around, Drummond did final checks, listening out for the Skylarks.

Set out on top a mounded hill, the Callanish Stones are 45 minutes away from the town of Stornoway by car. Over the expanse of rough and mostly uninhabited landscape, dark highlands were over cast. The stones themselves are angular and worn down by the weather over time. History can be seen in their form. Nobody was about, just the sounds of cockerels, Starlings, Skylarks and the wind blowing. Impressive 'venue' - very different to listening to music or making it in Liverpool city centre. We walked with Drummond up to the stones and he invited us to lie down. I laid

down close to a stone. There wasn't much instruction- it was pretty simple: we would sit, for 17 minutes, and watch and listen to the Skylarks 'climb high into the sky', imagining this to be our first experience of something called 'music'. In some sense isolated, I listened to the Skylarks and watched them, sometimes closing my eyes. It was cold and windy and I was tired from a late night. Their songs were complex and sharp, electronic sounding noises that skipped, higher, lower, faster, slower. The wind, the place, the time, the people I was with, why we were all there, and the cockerel in the distance and the Skylarks climbing high in the sky, were characters in an odd musical experience. I was struck: the place, the time, the nature of the event, the feelings evoked in me, and the novelty of just lying there and memories of the musical product, were difficult to reconcile, or forget. Where was the music? Where was the product? The skylarks became a focal point, if not for their beauty, but so as to concentrate the experience upon something more traditionally 'musical' and consumable. Listening on, memories of Aphex Twin's 'Braindance' music overflowed. It was difficult to 'imagine' that all recorded music was gone, and the experience remains tricky to describe. The17 forces members to imagine, not to consume or 'worship' a thing or person, and asks for separation, independence, from introspective phenomena that make it valuable, personally, and socially.

17 minutes passed and Drummond invited The17 to stand. He stood up with a big smile on his face and I thought that was probably where he sat at 17. Everybody stood up in their own time, and looked really happy. Some then started taking photos. Drummond invited us to sign a large poster, Score 8: Take, and to write our contact details on a clipboard, as initiated members of The17. We all signed it. People joked, but there was a definite sense of a struggle to narrate the experience, as well as a sense of being energized by a spiritual, albeit non-transcendental, experience. We walked back to the vehicles, Drummond invited us to stay, but he had a flight in less than an hour. We went our separate ways. Since then, it has since been decided that, the photos taken, if developed, will be burnt in a gesture to Drummond.



Image from Penkilnburn.com (Google Images)

### **An Image of Being-in-Business**

Drummond's image of The17 began with memory- being young and listening to the radio. He describes emotions felt when listening to The Beatles, remembering historical popular musical entrepreneurs from when he was young with his parents at home, in Scotland. That attends to his temporal experience of the musical product: having a desire for more, for challenging his attitude in order to purchase music he felt emotionally drawn to. Back then, music inspired him, shocked him, altered his being. Others can relate to this- the significance of the Beatles and their albums, the way they impacted popular culture and people's lives. The deep emotional responses Drummond then feels when recounting those memories endure in his experiences of the musical product, today, leading to 'creative destruction' of a cherished record. Significantly, Drummond emphasises these memories more than his career in the music industry. That, Drummond draws some separation around, expressing an anti-narrative (Boje 2001), that contrasts with management studies' preoccupation with business life.

Those memories also express relations that are significant for what The17 means for him and might mean to others. Drummond's memories express experiences of being a consumer of the musical product, over time, and to experience and try to come to terms with industrial change. The Ipod's perceived impact on the nature and value of music, for instance, pronounced against Drummond's memories of the musical product- as something being decided upon, reflected upon, and having specific ties to places, times, actions, feelings, and values, more or less everyday. That juxtaposition carries through into our own experience too, so that Drummond's memories contrast with our contemporary experiences and the wider context, presenting possibilities. When it came to purchasing musical



products, meaningless choice overwhelmed Drummond in HMV. The emotions and excitement he felt when young are lacking today, and, under its own logic, the music business has sullied some of his desire to purchase music. Saying that, Drummond gestures (de Certeau *et al* 1998) to the felt nature of relations in music business and the potential to develop more meaningful and less disaffecting relationships with the musical product. His memories act as a 'polemic' (Certeau *et al* 1998), to accentuate the gesture being made. It is through those memories and possibilities imagined that Drummond's personal temporal experience relates The17 to the wider business context others know, better orienting understanding of the emergence of The17 and alluding to forgotten, marginal, or invisible forms of value.

Other memories express potential ways of valuing The17, today, by properly contextualizing The17, too. Drummond's questioning of leaving choir as a young boy expresses some sense of disaffection for aesthetics, institutions and norms that might sully people's enthusiasm, as if he has felt 'disequilibrium' to be part of his musical experience for a long time. As it does the musical product, the emergence of The17, in part, challenges and reorients those memories and images of traditional choral music. Remembering that early choral experience invokes some images of what choir could be like, being related not to worship and institutional norms, but to a personal experience of one's body, place, time, and others. Music, as Drummond knows it, is spiritual, about important things, and is shared with others, usually in specific places and specific times. As the narrative then develops, The17 emerges as means by which he might redevelop a more meaningful experience of the musical product, and imagine possibilities, for himself, and others, in time-to-come, using up some of that disequilibrium.

Drummond re-presents common images of strategies involved in experiences of the musical product and modes of musical entrepreneurship. To appreciate that value, it must be properly contextualized. Emerging from Drummond's everyday experience, the initial score of The17 then expresses something of the value of music to Drummond. It reconciles the product with body, place, time, action, feeling and meaning. The 'soul' that Drummond had previously felt tracks like 'Let me take you there' reach into, was, then, experienced somewhat by The17, silver-lining a long struggle with the musical product. The17, as such, only makes sense if considered in the terms of significance that betray its particularity: a reification of what is missing, altered, inverted, and questioned, must be made if The17 is perceived to be valuable. The17, then, only made sense in respect to what it was not: definitive strategies of the musical product becoming the counterproposal to The17. The most explicit acts of re-presentation, probably, involve the nature of the musical product itself. To experience The17, "you must become a member": The17, in itself, cannot become a musical product. That means distribution and remuneration strategies are out of place. Subtle combination instead means Drummond receives remuneration from talks given about The17 and from his book, 17, written about The17's emergence, and administrated by Penkiln Burn, at a time when, generally, the commercial value of music is uncertain. The output of The17 is also not recorded or broadcast. Against the wider history of music business Drummond believes to have been funnelled into recording formats, and the contemporary plain of the musical product consumers experience, The17 then emerges and counterpoises fundamental strategies that have altered the nature and value of the musical product. Drummond also needed to attend to market opinions and attitudes to him, as initial audiences struggled to make sense of The17 or imagine social value. A sense of separation was then emphasized through magnifying potential differences between strategies involved with the

musical product and musical entrepreneurship and tactics and combinations of The17. The strategy of performing at a private venue, through which remuneration can be made in various ways, is also out of place in this imagined tactic. At Callanish, The17 was open to all who could be there. The isolate Callanish Stones and the determination of time and date do make the performance a rare, inimitable, unique and meaningful experience that others are unlikely to repeat. Drummond's intent, though, was not for The17 to focus in on 'the act', the Skylarks, but to meditate on their experience- on coming to Callanish, hearing what this means to someone and what it means in the wider context of music, and then, forgetting all that, imagining 'year zero' music. Drummond affirmed coming to the stones and listening to the Skylarks was not the full gesture itself. That began when the emails arrived in people's inboxes. As ordinary people then involve themselves in creating value, the producer/consumer distinction falls away. The17 worships nothing: members do not consume a traditional musical product and, without them, The17 would not exist. Remembering the trip becomes the musical product, which is very different to traditional modes of distributing the musical product and receiving remuneration. Lying under the stones forces the audience to come to terms with the nature of music: that it is, inexplicably a social thing, not made by some and consumed by others, but part and parcel of an embedded experience that involves important decisions that will affect their own and others' experience.

Significantly, The17, as an image of being-in-business, expresses the entrepreneurial function: imagination (Penrose 1995). Drummond's continual re-presentation of personal memories, common images of popular musical entrepreneurship, and potentially common feelings and emotional associations, as he narrates the becoming of The17, expresses something of his embedded experience. Drummond is attentive to the history of recorded music and to a shared experience of the musical product, not fatalistically, but in order to imagine marginal or invisible forms of value. He evokes an ongoing curiosity, affection, and, at the same time, separation from, and disaffection with, the musical product associated with his imagining a novel way of experiencing music and of being a musical entrepreneur. The wider industry, strategies of consuming the musical product and of musical entrepreneurship, need to be there, but only insofar as some sense of independence can be felt or imagined between The17 and the wider music business. The business context is reified by Drummond's image of The17 in the form of memories and allusions- not there, yet the image lacking coherence without that attention.

Rather than commercial intent, Drummond hopes to create other forms of value: lasting, personal and inalienable, memories. That is done through attending to commonplace experiences, not ignoring them. He involves people with the creation of memories, some that relate to memories of what music might have been, some entirely novel. People's temporal experience is resource-like, and potential memories and their creation become valuable, inalienable services. Saying that, though, The17 also expresses a 'minor' kind of, imagination based, 'creative destruction'. Nostalgic reminiscence is not part of The17 as an image of being-in-business, nor as a re-presented strategy. Memories are only there as imagery, expressing a disaffection for experiences of the musical product that endures. Drummond asks The17 to forget those memories, drawing 'year zero', he 'originates' (Shackle 1979) a 'beginning' that reorients others' understanding of history and enlarges possibilities for time-to-come. That opens a 'narrative space' (Stewart 1996) of social imagination where reality is uncertain and experience is not fatalistic.

That sits uncomfortably with recent dedications (Kor and Mahoney 2004, Foss *et al* 2004; Lockett 2005) to

Penrose preoccupied with developing strategies through which more efficient use of resource bundles could be administrated so to gain rents on competition, and the strategic entrepreneurship of Glynn and Lounsbury (2001) that is predisposed to identify only certain forms of value, that perceives culture and embedded experience to be made instrumental for the sake of business, and which restricts imagination to predictive strategies oriented towards competitive gain. The17, if strategists were to be taken seriously, would either appear suicidal or, in contrast, a highly competitive counter move in a depersonalized music business. Drummond expresses a 'pedagogical attentiveness' to his 'image of being-in-business' and the temporal and social nature to that, with a will to bring images into being that can deeply affect his own and others' experience of music. The17, as a musical image and service, is not oriented by competitive gain, but more by curiosity and interest with the commerce for others and for shared experiences of the musical product. A sense of separation from the wider context and novel possibilities are imagined only through attending to those characteristics, not just ignoring them.

### **Conclusion**

The17 imagines re-presenting the very foundations upon which the music business is based- precisely those strategies which have already negatively impacted Drummond's experience. The17, could only develop, and become valuable in the context of music business. Drummond and others have to attend to that experience for The17 to make sense as what music could be. That commercial interest is already there, in the image, as personal memories, and curiosity and pedagogical attentiveness to potentially common experiences. The17 expresses that 'pedagogical attentiveness' can include a range of social values, spiritual interest, concerns of social well-being, as well as expressing commercial phenomena, while still lacking any commercial intent, apart from to bring imaginative 'services' into being. Within the image, assumed tensions and forces presumed to shape imagination dissolve away, being instead replaced with an attentiveness to the experience of being-in-business and for sharing an experience inescapably penetrated by economic forces. Imagining, The17 suggests 'other', possible and impossible, music business realities more attentive to lived musical experiences.

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