THUNDER IN THE VALLEY: ANCIENT FIFING AND DRUMMING AND THE
EMBODIMENT OF PLACE AND SOUNDSCAPE IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER
VALLEY

By

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To my wife Stacey – You are my everything.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF EXAMPLES</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Literature</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Focus and Methodology</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Significance</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Overview</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organology</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Military Use of the Fife and Drum</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repertory</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 THE MUSTER SOUNDSCAPE</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Order Keynote Sounds and their Effects: Echo, Reverberation,</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diffraction and Phasing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesthetic Contact, Intonation, and Proximity</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographic Description and Analysis of Four Muster Sound Events</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Event One: Moodus Drum and Fife Rehearsal</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Event Two: Community Jam</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Event III: Step off, Parade and F-Troop</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Event Four: Stand Performances</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF REFERENCES</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Fife and drum score for the *Reveille* camp duty.
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>Pirate-style theatrical scenes during a muster parade</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Wedding proposal during a muster performance 2014</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>The common range and fingerings for a Bb six-hole fife</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Components of a rope tuned snare drum</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Three common decorative designs: Moeller eagle, Eli Brown and Odell Chapman proprietary nail board tack patterns</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Camp and field signals</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>Towns of the Lower Connecticut River Valley</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>First generation of Connecticut fife and drum corps</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8</td>
<td>Hydraulic head tensioning press</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-1</td>
<td>The Tattoo and Muster Proper</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2</td>
<td>Google map image of the Deep River Muster parade route to Devitt’s Field</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-3</td>
<td>Satellite image of Devitt’s Field</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFD</td>
<td>Company of Fifers and Drummers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CF&amp;DA</td>
<td>Connecticut Fife and Drum Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRV</td>
<td>Connecticut River Valley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAM</td>
<td>Deep River Ancient Muster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Music

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By

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This thesis concerns a vernacular musical community located in a constellation of small towns along the lower Connecticut River Valley (CRV) that, for the better part of two centuries, has developed a performance tradition around the aesthetics of the pre-twentieth century military practice of using fifes and drums to organize and control the movements and daily lives of pre-twentieth century soldiers. Today, this community exists as a braided network of thematically diverse, town-affiliated fife and drum corps that present an expansive picture of the nineteenth century imaginary. This thesis will show how, for CRV musicians, interactions of physical space, meaningful place and sound help contribute to a sounded rubric for having particular types of emplaced and communal experiences. I argue that, what is being repeated on an annual basis is not just the performance of a common repertory, but a shared, interactive experience with place, identity, and musical embodiment that now stands as a blueprint for shared liminality. This thesis argues that for this cohort, Ancient musters are, in essence, a kind of renewable template for experiencing layered sets of identities that link the disparate elements of this community to an emplaced sense of self that connects at the local and translocal levels, but also to much broader notions of the nation-state itself. My intent is
to show how this occurs through shared moments of liminality, by which I mean the temporal disorientation that occurs within rituals, when participants may be said to exist between prior notions of selfhood/worldview and new ones that have yet to be created.
“What’s going on here?!” was my first thought as I sat, on a chilly October afternoon in 2013, watching one fife and drum corps after another turn to enter the Moodus muster field. Each corps would be announced and begin playing, but then the group behind would catch up, still playing taps or a drum cadence, while the group ahead would be just wrapping up their selection. Groups seemed to be playing over one another with little regard for whose turn it was to perform in an endless succession of entropic sound – it all seemed like one big breach of performance protocol after another. It never occurred to me that this might just be business as usual…

This thesis concerns a vernacular musical community located in a constellation of small towns along the lower Connecticut River Valley (CRV) that, for the better part of two centuries, has developed a performance tradition around the aesthetics of the pre-twentieth century military practice of using fifes and drums to organize and control the movements and daily lives of pre-twentieth century soldiers. Today, this community exists as a braided network of thematically diverse, town-affiliated fife and drum corps that present an expansive picture of the eighteenth and nineteenth century imaginary: Colonial and Civil War units, state militias, light infantry brigades, nineteenth century Naval officers, and Swiss carnival groups to name but a few. These musicians self-identify as “Ancients,” after a “vernacularism” that commonly linked romanticized notions of the period around the American Revolution to a swell of nationalistic sentiment in the mid-nineteenth century (Cifaldi 2015). CRV fife and drum corps may be roughly divided into two categories: corps which emphasize historical “authenticity,” understood here as a kind of aesthetic accuracy and attention to historical detail (of repertory and uniform), and corps that are more concerned with the continuation of regional CRV performance...
tradition rather than exact historical detail (Cifaldi 2015). While the Ancient community often subsumes both types of groups, this study concerns itself with the latter, or what Mark Slobin describes as “bonding ensembles” (Slobin 1993:104-105). Although historically informed, these groups maintain localized, socio-musical traditions and tend to be family-oriented organizations that retain close ties to the localities and townships in which they dwell. Slobin suggests that these musicians are “aware of history, but not overly so; they are more interested in the excitement and immediacy of creating their own heritage from week to week” (ibid). For Slobin, Ancients constitute a “subculture” that “often bears more of a relationship to the high school marching band model than to any eighteenth-century concept.” Quoting an undergraduate honors thesis, he further offers: “town and family ties, romance, drinking, and fun, combine in...‘acceptable exhibitionism,’ as important here as history and that “in this simulated society, ‘babies teethe on drum sticks, and when the child is old enough, joins a junior unit. Romances among teenagers often culminate in marriage, a practice that is ‘vehemently encouraged by other Ancients’” (Slobin 1993,104 quoting Pearce1984). There is some truth to this statement. For example, one Ancient corps does, in fact, stage “pirate-style theatrical scenes during muster parades along with their music-making” (Slobin 1993:104). (See figure 1-1), and while I did not see any “babies teething on drumsticks” during the course of my research, children are often outfitted with smaller instruments and encouraged to participate from a very early age. It was also clear that young men and women often meet future spouses while taking part in drum corps activities, and I did witness at least one public wedding proposal during a muster performance (Figure 1-2). In a sense, Slobin’s characterization of this cohort is accurate – the social fabric of
this community is remarkably tight-knit. That these communities are good examples of “subcultures” that neatly fit into Slobin’s theoretical model of “subculture, interculture and superculture” (1993), is of some question however. As Viet Erlmann contends, such an “attempt to systematize something so resolutely unsystematic as the new micromusics, is doomed to reproduce only the paranoiac effect caused by a system unleashed of its own logic” (1993:264). In its imposition of the vernacular (the “subcultures”) onto a totalizing theoretical model (subculture, interculture and superculture), Slobin’s statements are made all the more curious because, as Erlmann puts it, they appear to be, on a broader scale, “devoid of any reference to human agency [leaving] practically no space for the popular arts to articulate some kind of creativity and authentic truth” (ibid:266). My sense is that on a smaller scale, these statements assume that such “subcultural” communities are somehow less “authentic” for identifying more with place than with an observation of “historically accurate” dress or performance practices. Historically contextualized, vernacular performances like those of Ancient musters may be indicative of what Roger Abrahams identified as “the ideal of the organic community [that is] kept alive through the operation of practices apparently situated in one place and among one people over time” (2005: 148). Slobin’s comments focus exclusively on this cohort’s creative, hybridized sense of historicity, which touches on their interpretive relationship with military tropes, but misses one of the most noteworthy features of this social field, which is that seemingly everything about it – its identity, relationships artistic aesthetic and performance practices – all closely network layers of identity to town, region and ultimately the nation-state. How might they do this? The most obvious examples involve the ways in which CRV
musicians identify with referential place-names that anchor individual corps to their locality: Moodus Drum and Fife, Stony Creek, or Deep River Drum and Fife. Some corps highlight specific material relationships to specific instruments associated with local Connecticut craftsmen that resonate with feelings of loyalty and tradition (Ferarri or Peeler fifes, Cooperman or Brown drums). Groups may be known for specific pieces of music or a particular arrangement, like “Connecticut Halftime” or “Yankee Doodle.” In some cases, corps are connected to specific, technical styles that may also index a steadfast adherence to local traditions, such as the “Moodus” style of drumming. Place is closely connected to a sense of community, which becomes apparent when one considers how expensive and labor-intensive large gatherings like musters are to stage. Why invest the time, money, and physical effort to keep a tradition such as Ancient fifing and drumming relevant in people’s lives, when it clearly consumes a great deal more material resources than it generates? In my conversations with CRV musicians, informants often returned to the high cost of this activity for both groups and individuals. As William, a longtime Moodus drummer put it, “a lot of sweat equity goes into this that people don’t see.” (Murray 2014-a). For two years now, I have helped William and a small crew set up the Moodus Muster, which is the smallest muster of its kind. Small or large, musters require substantial amounts of money, hard work, and logistical planning and are often set up by relatively small groups of people, which the following ethnographic scene suggests:

**Thursday Set-Up.**

Anticipating an early start, I am up and ready by 9:00 a.m. to help the Moodus set-up crew begin preparations for “Thunder in the Valley,” their annual muster. I should have gotten up earlier, since William set out at 6:30 a.m. to pick up the large beer order from two breweries located several towns away. He is clearly agitated from the hassle of an hour-long
drive to and from the pickup, followed by the additional hassles that often seem to pop up when dealing with local businesses. Who will be dispensing the beer? How will it be monitored and dispensed? These questions create yet another snarl of last minute, red tape that must be carefully negotiated. At 9:30 a.m., we climb up into the U-Haul and drive to the Grange Hall where the muster will take place.

When we arrive, I see that people from different corps have already begun staking out their campsites, positioning older pull-along campers atop the rim of the muster field and leveling them off with stacks of pre-cut two by fours. I recognize them from last year: two older men, both longtime and active members of the drum corps community. Technically, they are not supposed to be set up until tomorrow, but even this seems part of the tradition. I know what the answer will be but ask the questions anyway: “Set up isn’t until this evening, right? Are they supposed to set up this early?” As expected, William dusts the question, and confirming the importance of this particular relationship, he replies, “They’re good people. They’ve helped me out a lot over the years.”

William, Pete, and I begin unloading the U-Haul rented for moving the muster gear: a large, blue vinyl, tent canopy, iron poles, stakes, and strap ratchets from Williams’s garage, and an upright freezer Pete has converted into a triple faucet “kegerator,” with taps built into its retrofitted wood facing. At 11:00 a.m., we begin putting up the canopy that serves as a central meeting place for musicians after stand performances and which will also house a large wooden bar, barstools, and the keg cooler for serving beer and hard cider to literally hundreds of participating individuals. The canopy is new this year and looks complicated. So new, in fact, that William has only pitched it three times this season and he confides that he had to practice setting it up in his back yard before using it at a muster. He tells me that some folks from Deep River, a much larger corps, (and used to much larger tents) were a big help. This is the second year I have volunteered to help and I note again how considerate everyone is. Pete, William’s friend, is a quiet man, and I have discovered an effective rhythm for working offering my help without seeming overly anxious: keep quiet, go with the flow, offer helpful suggestions sparingly, and jump in with muscle without being asked. The canopy is laid out and positioned, and stakes are pounded into the ground with a sledge hammer – (a mistake, William later realized – you need to put the poles in place before you do this).

The rest of the day is spent on various errands that are equally time and labor intensive. William repeatedly stops to take calls in order to deal with issues that have popped up at the last minute. At the moment, he looks anxious. “What’s up?” I ask. “One of the corps is pissed they didn’t get their invitation,” he replies. “We sent one, so I don’t know what happened – they went out months ago.” He further explains: “The accepted practice
is to assign performance positions based on when your acceptance was received. Once the order is set, you have to space out the more popular corps so that the entire parade line up is evenly filled.” Keeping things equal and fair like this is something that I suspect has developed over time as an adaptive way of quelling arguments – building in transparency in order to avoid hard feelings. He continued, “I told him we would find a place for them. It happens – no big deal.”

We pick up the bar on the second U-Haul trip. This normally resides on Williams’s patio, inherited from his wife’s sister. I note its construction and age as we lift it. It is a true artifact of the 1970s and is constructed, literally, like a house– framed in two-by-fours, sided with sheet-rock, finished with 1970s era wood paneling, and topped in half-inch plywood. We load it with some difficulty, not only because it is heavy, but also because much of its awkward weight distribution that comes from its L-shaped geometry. When we get back to the Grange Hall, it is unloaded and positioned at the base of a sloping field behind the building and then leveled with several wooden planks. All work is finished as the temperature starts dropping off around 7:00 p.m. By tradition, the night before a Moodus Muster is reserved for corps members, their families and a few close friends. The kegs are tapped… (Murray 2014-a)

Muster organizers go great lengths to set up these events for the community, which the scene above suggests. It illustrates the “sweat equity” mentioned earlier, but I include it here because it also underscores how this community in a sense maintains itself outside of performing together and illustrates how some kinds of work seem almost programed into the traditions of this community. For the set up crew, the shared yearly act of setting up this event went hand in hand with a heightened sense of social cooperation – getting them “in the groove,” so to speak, for the event to come. Lastly, this scene is a good example of how older objects are often the unconscious pivot points around which much of this activity is focused.

Following Steven Feld’s suggestion that, “the experience of place potentially can always be grounded in an acoustic dimension” (1996:97), this thesis will show how, for CRV musicians, interactions of physical space, meaningful place and sound help contribute to a sounded rubric for having particular types of communal experiences. I
argue that, what is being repeated on an annual basis is not just the performance of a common repertory, but a shared, interactive experience with place, identity, and music that has been embodied over time to serve as a common blueprint for shared liminality. This thesis also argues that for this cohort, Ancient musters are, in essence, a kind of renewable template for experiencing layered sets of identities that link the disparate elements of this community to an emplaced sense of self that connects at the local and translocal levels, but also to much broader notions of the nation-state itself. My intent is to show how this occurs through shared moments of liminality, by which I mean the temporal disorientation that occurs within rituals, when participants may be said to exist between prior notions of selfhood/worldview and new ones that have yet to be created.

**Review of Literature**

Although this study is not intended as a historiography of either early American military field music or its revival in the CRV, my discussion of this community’s structure, traditions, and soundscape will require some historical context. Raoul F. Camus’ book, *Military Music of the American Revolution* (1975) is, as of yet, the most entailed historical account of early American military music and performance practice. In addition, Camus also traces the history of fifes and drums from their earliest common ancestor – the single-player pipe and tabor – to their adoption in militaries throughout continental Europe.

Two scholars address the CRV field music tradition as a specifically Connecticut phenomenon. Sue Cifaldi’s work (1990, 2014, 2015) traces the formation of many of the earliest fife and drum bands in Connecticut to the Moodus section of East Haddam, a small town in the lower, central river valley, circa 1820. Similarly, James Clark’s book,
Connecticut's Fife and Drum Tradition (2011) presents an overview of this community's history while giving an account of its early competitive practices and social memory.

As Tony Perman has suggested, ethnomusicology is, perhaps, uniquely equipped to integrate a wide spectrum of disciplines without necessarily subscribing to any particular one (2010). Following this line of thought, this project freely combines different strains of phenomenology (Husserl 1900; Peirce 1901; 1955; Heidegger 1953), psychology, (Csikszentmihalyi 1990), soundscape theory (Schafer 1977), and acoustemology (Feld 1982, 1988, 1996). It also resonates with of recent literature on the intersections of human emotion, music, meaning, and identity (Turino 1993, 1999, 2008, 2012, 2014; Perman 2010; Friedson 1996; Reddy 2001). The bedrock for many of my assumptions, however, is based on Thomas Turino's adaptation of Charles Sanders Peirce's phenomenological project and general theory of signs.

While Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel perhaps coined the term, “phenomenology” as an inductive, qualitative research tradition, it was perhaps Edmund Husserl’s abrupt shift away from Cartesian ideas about mind/body duality that effectively shifted its emphasis to lived human experience. As Gina Reiners points out, for Husserl, phenomenology was a largely descriptive enterprise in which conscious experience was “re-bracketed,” or set apart, to be characterized by three characteristics: 1) a removal from empirical fact; 2) reflectiveness or relationship to intuitive experience; and 3) “intentionality,” marked by “one’s directed awareness or consciousness of an object or event” all of which implied a larger epistemological question for Husserl: “What do we know as persons” (Reiners 2012:2)?
It was Husserl’s student, Martin Heidegger, who placed an emphasis on ontological experience, which reframed human existence as a product of “being-in-the-world” rather than the conceptual knowledge of it. Also important, is Heidegger’s understanding of how “time and being” necessarily intersect with place, or what he called “dwelling.” Keith Basso examines this idea as a contact point between landscape and lived experience in his own ethnographic work with the Apache Indians, suggesting,

The concept of dwelling assigns importance to the forms of consciousness with which individuals perceive and apprehend geographical space. More precisely, dwelling is said to consist in multiple “lived relationships” that people maintain with places, for it is solely by virtue of these relationships that space acquires meaning...Places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed, and the movements of this process – inward toward facets of the self, outward toward aspects of the external world...thus through a vigorous conflation of attentive subject and geographical object, places come to generate their own fields of meaning. (1996:54-56)

Following theorists like Edward Giddens and Edward Soja, Basso is describing intersections of “interanimation” (ibid:55), or points of integration between consciousness, places, ideas and feelings. Basso describes the process by which Apache Indians have inscribed ancestral knowledge directly onto the landscape, integrating it into everyday lived experience, and ensuring its replication. Apache social life is thus formed and informed by a phenomenological relationship with the land inside a time-space that helps condense and transmit specific cultural information.

Husserl and Heidegger’s ideas represent two streams of continental European phenomenological thinking – that is, phenomenology is either epistemologically or ontologically driven. A third was proposed in 1902 by the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, who reconciles the epistemological and ontological streams by emphasizing the role these forms of subjectivity play in shaping our own inner and
subjective lived experiences. At the core of Peirce’s phenomenological system, sits his general theory of signs organized into three general categories. For Peirce, a sign is “an object which stands for another to some mind” (1955:66-68). As Thomas Turino explains,

A sign can be anything that is perceived by an observer, which stands for or calls to mind something else and by doing so creates an effect in the observer. Thus, any sign situation has three aspects: (1) the sign or sign vehicle, (2) the object or idea indicated by the sign, and (3) the effect or meaning of the sign-object relation in the perceiver (2008:5).

Although Peirce outlined nine basic sign types, the most relevant to this study are the three basic categories of sign/object relations that describe how representamens (things that stand for other things) relate to what they stand for: icons, which signify via resemblance; indices, which signify via co-occurrence with something else; and symbols, which signify via language. These three sign/object relation types also reflect perceptual “states of mind” – Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness (Peirce 1955:995). In Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic (1991), James Hooper explains that: “All three categories are objectively real. Firstness is the sheer “this-ness,” or existence, of things. Secondness is dyadic, or reactive, relation between two things, and Thirdness is triadic, or representational, relations among things” (1991:10). Following Peirce, Turino identifies the two types of sign/object relations (Peirce’s second sign trichotomy) – the icon and index– as the most common in music. As I suggested earlier, Peirce’s phenomenological project delineates a middle way between Husserl’s and Heidegger’s for its ability to function as both epistemology and ontology. Paraphrasing Turino, Peircean theory outlines both, because his categories are ontological and deal with the nature of being and existence, while the categories in combination with their sign types are also utilities for thinking about knowledge production. (Personal correspondence
My intent is not to overly theorize this into academic abstraction, but to use these concepts as “conceptual tools” that connect to the actual lived experiences of Connecticut River Valley fifers and drummers – tools that underscore the complexity of these experiences. Understood in this way, these categories outline a semiotic continuum where the datum taken in through sense perception is processed and evaluated to become motional, emotional and linguistic interpretants – in other words, actual things in the world experienced in both synchronic and linear ways. As scholars, like David Samuels and Tony Perman, remind us, the most important parts of this process are not categories and their taxonomy of signs, but rather how actual people in the world experience them.

As valuable as these categories (Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness) are, it is important to remember that Peirce’s typology is grounded in a sophisticated phenomenology. The categorization of signs matters less than the experience of them. Signs trigger emotions when they are interpreted as connecting to objects of value (of importance) in real, unquestioned ways. The signs that trigger emotional responses can be seen, heard, felt, tasted, or smelled out in the world, but they can be memories and thoughts mediating past experiences of the world (Perman 2008:437).

Peirce’s ontological category of Secondness outlines two distinct kinds of liminal experience important to this discussion: autotelic flow states experienced on an individual level first described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, that occur on an individual level, and flow states that occur on a group or communal level, described initially by Victor Turner as “Communitás” (1969). For Csikszentmihalyi, flow is an individualized state of liminality or “optimal experience” that merges “action and awareness [such that] a person’s attention is completely absorbed by an autotelic activity. When experienced in groups, such as in the massed performances at musters, flow may be thought of as Turner’s “communitás.” Pointing to Walter Van Gennep’s work on liminal rites of
passage (1960), Turner outlines three operative phases in a ritual: 1.) Separation, 2.) Marginality and 3.) Aggregation (Turner 1969:94). The second phase he refers to as communitás, a mediating state that is neither fully bound nor unbound by societal norms and expectations. Such states of being, whether individual or group-oriented, can have a profound impact on the production of social identity and wellbeing as Csikszentmihalyi suggested:

In our studies, we found that every flow activity, whether it involved competition, chance or any other dimension of experience, had this in common: It provided a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new reality. It pushed the person to higher levels of performance, and led to previously undreamed of states of consciousness. In short it transformed the self by making it more complex. In this growth of the self lies the key to flow activities (Csikszentmihalyi 1990:74).

Turner defines communitás as the liminal state in ritual ceremony that exists in opposition to “societas,” or “society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of ‘more’ or ‘less’” (Turner 1969:96). For Turner, communitás represented a second mode of human relation, which Jeff Rubenstein further develops in the following way:

Communitás is characterized by equality, immediacy, and the lack of social ranks and roles. A leveling process brings about the dissolution of structure, the absence of social distinctions, a homogenization of roles, the disappearance of political allegiance, the breakdown of regular borders and barriers. With the suspension of status distinctions, human beings recognize the core humanity they share. Relationships are immediate and spontaneous. Communitás strives for release from daily obligations and requirements, and seeks universalism and openness. Where societas functions to define the differences between individuals, limit their interaction, and pull them apart, communitás serves to unify, bond, and transcend structural relationships. By doing so, communitás reminds society that at a deeper level all of its members are human and equal, despite the accepted social and hierarchal differences (1992:251).
The communal liminality described above may – and usually is – bound up with strong emotion, something many anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have begun acknowledging for its usefulness in linking the arts, like music, with identity formation. Leonard Meyer (1956), Charles Keil (1966) Steven Friedson, (1996), Judith Becker (2004), and Thomas Turino have all made key contributions to in this area, a recent synthesis of which highlights semiotic and emotional theory as tools for ethnography. Perman’s work, like Turino’s, pulls from many disciplinary directions. He suggests that ethnomusicology is in the “unique positon to lead the way in a cross-disciplinary synthesis of emotion studies because of the clear ways that music and dance serve and are served by people’s emotional lives.” (ibid:435). In *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, (2008), Turino lays the groundwork for analyzing musical experience and identity using intersections between Peircean semiotics, phenomenology and optimal experience and emotion. Turino further cultivates Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory inside of Peirce’s notion of Secondness, underscoring its ontological nature, and positioning it as a cognitive state of “timelessness, or being out of normal time, and feelings of transcending one’s normal self” (Turino 1996:4):

We make the connection between indexical signs and their objects by experiencing them together in our actual lives. Consequently, indices have a particularly direct impact; we typically do not reflect on the reality of the object that the sign calls forth, but we simply assume its reality as commonsense because it is part of our experience. We may go on to reflect about whatever it was that the index brought to mind, but the initial indexical sign-object connection is perceived as fact. Thus, just as icons open us to the realm of possibility and imagination, indices have a kind of reality function and are of the realm of direct connection (ibid 2008:9).

Turino’s overarching point is that music and movement-based arts, such as dance, become seed houses for developing a sense of self-identity because they
integrate parts of the self that are not always active during the mundane reality of day to day existence:

The arts are frequently fulcrums of identity, allowing people to intimately feel themselves part of the community through the realization of shared cultural knowledge and style through the very act of participating together in performance. Music and dance are key to identity formation because they are often public presentations of the deepest feelings and qualities that make a group unique. (Turino 1996:2)

For Turino, liminal states of Secondness enable this identity via the experience of “heightened concentration” that arts, such as music, can foster, enabling a “melding of the self with a Second – one’s instrument, or the sound, or one’s partners – such that all other thoughts, distractions, and entities in the world disappear” (2012:6). Although indexical, iconic, and symbolic signs of performance may all be perceived in the course of a muster, only indexical signs are perceived as unmediated, and with habit become powerfully generative of one’s reality. As Turino suggests:

The concept of index refers to the connecting of a sign and object by a perceiver through co-occurrence; i.e. the perceiver has experienced the sign and object together, often repeatedly and so their connection is simply true or a fact. Because indices are totally based in individual experience, their effects are highly unpredictable even among different individuals within the same context – they are particularly reliant on the internal contexts of perceivers. When based in repeated individual experiences, which may also be redundant social and even mass experiences, indexical connections become fundamental to the basic habits of the self. As indexical connections become habitual, they come to be perceived as natural – part of one’s common sense conceptions of reality. When deeply grounded in habit, this reality function of indexical signs often creates particularly direct, un-reflected upon effects at a variety of levels of focal awareness. (Turino 2012:3).

That muster music is functioning in this way for CRV musicians is taken as a given here. What I want to emphasize is what these signs overwhelmingly seem to represent for the CRV community, which is a sense of identity that is at once linked with notions of local translocal and national belonging.
To unpack how various types of music stimulate these liminal states, Turino distinguishes participatory and presentational forms of music based on their intended social purpose. This study engages directly at both participatory and presentational music. In Turino’s model, participatory music is described as “music making as social intercourse and activity among face-to-face participants with an emphasis on the doing among all present” (2008:90). For Turino, participatory socio-musical values are “judged by the degree and intensity of participation rather than by some abstracted assessment of the musical sound quality” (ibid:33). He contrasts this with music performed in a more presentational way – that is, to convey a sense of self-expression that defines the musical result more by its artistic import, than its capacity for self-integration or potential for sharing a communal experience. Turino’s music typology is important here because Ancient musters feature music that, although presentational in appearance (performed as art for an audience), may still function as participatory (performed for the community). Therefore, it may be perceived as either in different proportions to suit the needs of the both the fife and drum corps and extended community at various points during a muster. This will also be later discussed in further detail, but it bears mentioning that throughout the festival-like atmosphere of musters, different phases may simultaneously contain qualities of both musical fields.

Chapter 3 identifies ways in which sound and music contribute to an overall acoustemology at musters, which allows them to function as sounded templates for flow and communitás. Here, I also focus on how they help recreate and meter out these states in concert within the respective sounds spaces each muster segment occurs. Understanding CRV musters this way – as sounded acts designed to experience
specific intersubjective habits – underscores the salience of community for CRV musicians, as it points yet again, to music’s centrality as a tool for realizing oneself as a whole person.

Also central to this thesis, are two interrelated theoretical concerns used to parse some of the ways this community has mapped their sonic landscape onto individual, lived reality: R. Murray Schafer’s concept of soundscape (1977) and Steven Feld’s acoustemology (1996). For Schafer, who understood the soundscape as “a sonic environment regarded as a field of study” (1977:274) – essentially a sonic backdrop that made the interface between the listener and the outside world possible – soundscapes represent the “middle ground between science, society and the arts” (ibid: 4). But as Stefan Helmreich points out, “for the soundscape concept to function, it must presuppose a listener with a distinct attitude toward spatiality...such a listener must have an acoustemology that imagines persons as emplaced in space, possessed of interior subjectivities that process outside objectivities” (Helmreich 2010). In his book, The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World (1977), Schafer describes soundscapes as “an indicator of a society that can be read as an indicator of social conditions which produce it and may tell us much about the trending evolution of that society,” as it can be used to identify “types of sounds in a given aural environment and how people could be shaped by them” (Schafer 1977:274-275). To make the case that analyzing musters as soundscapes helps us to see how they function as communal blueprints for experiencing collections of ideas about identity, shared histories, traditions, and senses of unity, I will discuss the acoustic properties of musters and their sites of performance using Schafer’s terminology. The term soundscape refers to “the
sonic environment” (1977:274) in its most aggregate form including all of its constituent phases. This suggests attention to musical sounds as well as sounds of the natural and built environment. However, to describe and delineate individual phases, I use the term, “sound event” to denote a socio-acoustic event that may be divided further into smaller events. For example, both parades and jams may be sound events because they mark specific and sequential phases in a muster and take place in varying acoustic settings. Sound events often coincide with specific and distinct acoustic environments. To underscore this, I use Schafer’s term, “acoustic space” to describe the acoustic environments of specific sound events. The term, “sound signals,” as discussed in Chapter 2, are “foreground sounds [that are] listened to consciously” (1977:273) and suggest symbolic mediation. As we shall see, during a muster, sound signals function as consciously registered signs of performance. They may be drum cues or even loud speech used to start, stop, or otherwise direct physical group movement or cue a specific musical selection.

In traditional soundscape studies, keynote sounds indicate fundamental sounds that are “heard by a particular society continuously or frequently enough to form a background against which other sounds are perceived…often, keynote sounds are not consciously perceived, but they act as conditioning agents in the perception of other sound signals” (1977:272). In this study, I identify and work with two kinds of keynote sounds. To avoid confusion, I refer to Schafer’s original description of keynote sounds as “first order keynotes.” Examples of this include easily recognizable timbral qualities of fifes and drums. In order to discuss social impact of a particular sound spaces, I identify “second order keynotes” as those sounds that still iconically resemble their original
timbral qualities, but have also been effectively delayed by either their acoustical interactions with the physical environment – like sounds that are delayed and colored by echo, reverberation – or obscured by diffraction. Understanding musters as socio-musical soundscapes, I suggest, helps us to think of them structurally – as multi-sequenced, multi-environment sound events that have great potential for generating social and emotional outcomes that are necessary for outlining this community’s “acoustemology.”

Acoustemology means that as a sensual space-time, the experience of place potentially can always be grounded in an acoustic dimension. This is so because space indexes the distribution of sounds and time indexes the motion of sounds. Yet, acoustic time is always spatialized; sounds are sensed as connecting points up and down, in and out, echo and reverb, point-source and diffuse. And acoustic space is likewise temporalized; sounds are heard moving, locating, placing points in time. The placing of an auditory time is the sonic envelope created from the layered attack, sustain, decay, and resonance of sounds. . . What these rather abstract formulations suggest, in simple terms, is that experiencing and knowing place – the idea of place as sensed, place as sensation – can proceed through a complex interplay of the auditory and the visual, as well as through other intersensory perceptual processes. (Feld 1996:97-98)

The originator of this idea, Steven Feld, is perhaps most famous for his work in Papua New Guinea and subsequent analysis of the ways in which Kaluli rainforest dwellers process their immediate, sensorial environments through a spatial, aural, and synesthetic epistemology or “acoustemology.” His ethnography, Sound and Sentiment (1982) combined elements from both ends of the structuralist/hermeneutic divide that characterized much of the 1970s and 1980s. As an ethnomusicologist and structural anthropologist, Feld’s work revealed how seemingly opposed approaches to the study of cultural could be unified under the rubric of sounded acoustemology. Sound and Sentiment was a solid step toward a satisfactory integration of the two research philosophies occupying either end of the materialist/interpretive split that plagued
Anthropology and ethnomusicology. Feld’s work is an outgrowth of the structural linguistics of Claude Levi-Strauss, and the hermeneutic approach favored by Clifford Geertz. The resulting backlash from these camps defined much of the 1970s and 1980s, dividing social research into either “scientist” or “humanist” explanations for how humans develop in a societal context. Feld writes:

“These two positions, the structural and hermeneutic, are considered by many to be clearly opposed: In one instance the anthropologist is thought of as decoder and translator and in the other as experiencer and interpreter. It appears to me, however, that it is necessary to integrate the study of how symbols are logically connected with the study of how they are formulated and performed in cultural experience.” (1982:14)

Feld proposed that the Kaluli musical system could be read in a structuralist manner, that is, in terms of the naturalized cultural structures that underlie the production of meaning in Kaluli society. In Sound and Sentiment, he posits that ‘becoming a bird’ is the core metaphor of Kaluli aesthetics, mediating social sentiments, and sound forms” (ibid:17).

Kaluli expressive modalities of weeping, poetics, and song, in their musical and textual structure, are mirror representations of the symbolic circle constructed by the myth, “the boy who became a muni bird. The argument is that this myth is a crystallization of relations between Kaluli sentimentality and its expression in weeping, poetics, and song. (ibid:14)

For the Kaluli, the rainforest is both internalized and externalized through dulugu ganalan or “lift-up-over-sounding,” which is a “spatial-acoustic metaphor” for the overlapping quality of Kaluli music that embodies the sounded qualities of the rainforest they live in, described by Feld as “continuous layers, sequential but not linear; non-gapped multiple presences and densities; overlapping chunks without internal breaks” (1988:78). Without naming Peircean semiotics per se, Feld’s monograph had several implications for the study of music and emotions. The first is, as I mentioned earlier, that
it linked the physical and sonic environment of the Bosavi rain forest to Kaluli language, mythology, and music. The second, is that thinking in terms of this iconic similarity allowed Feld to shift the discussion from a purely structuralist discussion of a Kaluli musical generative grammar – that is, a discussion based on the taxonomy of signs, to one of sign processes – which, in this case, is actually thinking iconically. As Perman suggests, this drift toward iconicity was marked by an emphasis in Feld’s analysis that centered on “mimesis and imitation,” and in this case of birds, bird song, and natural sounds like falling water (2010:437). This approach would become more solidified by the late 1980s with *Aesthetics as Iconicity of Style, or 'Lift-up-over Sounding': Getting into the Kaluli Groove* (1988). By 1988, Peircean influence is more visible in Feld’s work: “Pierce’s semiotics of similarity talked of three kinds of icons – image, diagram, and metaphor. Using his dubs, Kaluli 'lift-up-over-sounding moves from a metaphor of the Kaluli groove to an icon of…culture as a whole (ibid:26). Feld’s first monograph (1982) discusses the Kaluli metaphor of overlapping quality or “lift-up-over-sounding” of sound in Kaluli musical expression:

*Lift-up-over-sounding’ is the metaphoric construct that prescribes and describes natural sonic form for Kaluli people. Calling attention to both the spatial (lift-up-over) and temporal (sounding) axes of experience the term evokes the way all sounds necessarily coexist in fields of prior and contiguous sounds. When applied to the sound world of the rain forest, “lift-up-over-sounding” highlights the observation that there are no single discrete sounds to be heard. Everything is mixed into an interlocking soundscape. (Feld 1996:100)

His suggestion here is that the sensorial aspects of place can be known, sensed, and perceived through auditory and tactile channels and made socially manifest through music and sound. Musical vibration marks the point at which place is sensed, created, and embodied, because it indicates a very physical connection at which one’s outer,
objective environments – be they natural or man-made – begin to shape one’s inner emotional contexts. Musters held in the Connecticut River Valley are far removed from the jungles of Papua New Guinea and on the surface, there is little to connect these to two musics. What I would like to stress here, is that in both situations, music making outlines an interactive event that connects music to the immediate environment in physical ways. The spatial world, in this case, in the form of buildings, streets, and muster fields, all provide very different acoustic responses that have implications for different kinds of social interactions. The second, is that sonic and musical information may be processed visually, aurally as sound waves, or synesthetically through direct contact and soundwave vibration. The third concept is Feld’s idea that participatory music may be, at once, “in sync and out of phase” (Feld 1988:74-113). As he points out, jungles are places where sounds happen in imbricated layers that almost never occur in unison, which clearly manifests in Kaluli music as a kind of polyphony. This has several important implications for the social impact of music in the CRV. First, it shows us how, from a cognitive perspective, people embody their environments as they move through them. Second, the Kaluli notion of lift-up-over-sounding gets at the idea that music and place always intersect physically when at the moment of embodiment.

Also useful for considering geographical place as something which shapes both music and society is the field of literature that surrounds the idea of scene studies, introduced by Barry Shank, who defines it as “an over productive signifying community” (Shank 1994:122). The concept was further developed by Will Straw (2004) and others as a productive way for factoring sets of regionally perceived, musical sensibilities onto larger, more interactive, regionally or globally connected networks. While more common
to studies of popular music in urban and inter-urban environments, within the context of this study, the concept of scenes provided a useful way for conceptualizing about the myriad intersections of identity, music, and place.

In *Soundtracks: Popular Music, Identity, and Place* (2003), John Connell and Chris Gibson also foreground these kinds of musical collectivities as “an integral component of processes through which cultural identities are formed, both at personal and collective levels” (2003:117). Specifically, they interrogate ways in which regional musical cultures are expressed through the interplay of local consumption, popularity, industrial influence, and other forces, to become branded templates of a geographically-based identity. They also discuss the music’s geographical and spatial characteristics in terms of “multiple layers of networks…and discourses” that link up in the human sphere (ibid:1). One such discourse is the tense dialectical relationship that exists between music as a commodified corporate product, and “an arena of cultural meaning…disseminated through a series of “complicated trajectories” (ibid:6). Such tensions are conceptualized by Connell and Gibson in terms of fixity and fluidity – umbrella terms common to the study of globalization that reflect cultural, geographic, and economic interaction. Fluidity or spatial mobility refer to “flows” of music, money, and people across spaces, for example, the specialized knowledges of technical style and performance practices that characterized CRV culture. Fixity, on the other hand, refers to qualities that have to do with production, territorialism, and production infrastructure in the manufacturing and distribution of music. For the authors, both fixed and fluid elements of music have contributed to the creation of a “global popular matrix,” and both are clearly visible throughout the CRV community in the form of cottage industries and
local businesses supporting it from the inside out. Connell and Gibson problematize the issue of delineating musical styles that are localized to region – an issue that, while not apparent at first glance, came up with surprising frequency in various ways throughout discussions with CRV musicians in ways that could be both nuanced and overt. The most explicit example of this is that most of the CRV fife and drum corps self-identify with a local or regional geographic location. While this will be discussed in a later section, regional identification is noteworthy here because it has potential for bringing to light flows of information that span local, translocal, and also much wider global spaces – for example, the emergence of transnational “sibling corps” in Basel, Switzerland that are formed around a particular CRV corps’ themed aesthetic like the “Swiss Mariners,” a group in Basel that intentionally replicates the maritime-themed Ancient Mariners corps and “Americlique,” a Connecticut corps centering on the Swiss Basel fife and drum tradition.

Throughout, this study engaged with the possibility that musters, above and beyond their perception as simple, loud collections of concertized folk music, are for the many people who sculpt their calendars around them, perhaps the “critical interface” where “dual awareness becomes habitual” (Wong in Barz, 2008:81) and that they serve as replicable templates for experiencing flow and communitás. Given that the sensation of place factors so heavily into the aesthetics, traditions, and identity within this cohort, I develop a research methodology that specifically takes to account of how place might be perceived via socio-musical interaction.

**Research Focus and Methodology**

This study rests on several assumptions. The first is the widely held belief within ethnomusicology and anthropology that “identity is socially constructed.” The second is
that while any sign vehicle has the potential for being interpreted in numerous, meaningful ways, musical signs function as icons and indices that are experienced in conjunction with strong emotions, can and often do contribute to identity formation in powerful and immediate ways (Turino 1999, 2008, 2012, 2014; Perman 2008, 2010, 2011). The third is that indices are particularly useful for establishing feelings of connectedness through the balanced sensation of liminal states (Csikszentmihalyi 1990), due to the ways in which these signs relate to their objects through co-occurrence, that is, the emotions and indices are experienced together. The fourth, is that indexical associations greatly contribute to feelings of social integration, wholeness, and community because they are sensed during cultural and musical acts in unmediated ways, allowing for the subjective sensation of feelings that are more “grounded,” “immediate,” or “authentic.” The fifth is that heightened states of concentration and emotion resonate with musicians individually (as “flow”) and in groups (as “communitás”), allowing them to connect in meaningful ways with the people they make music with and places they make music in. The sixth is that emotion plays a vital link in connecting signs of performance to the environments in which they are perceived. Although this study draws liberally from multiple scholars of emotion (Turino, Perman, Reddy, and Friedson), it proceeds directly from Perman’s very useful definition of emotion as constituting:

Processes of evaluation and response to signs that alter important ideas and habits of the self. An emotional experience always begins with the simple awareness of a sign: an awareness that initiates a semiotic chain reaction. The public expressions of emotional experiences can subsequently trigger new emotional experiences (Perman 2010:434).

Emotions then, become the conduit through which a performer interacts with his or her objective world, and the deciding factors in how their subjective worlds are
shaped. While gauging human emotions is an inherently subjective proposition, it is useful to keep in mind that, as Perman himself indicates, it is also “an inherently semiotic one” (2010). Like Perman, I proceed from Reddy’s four-step model for assessing the ways in which emotion factors into semiosis (2001). Though not an impossibility, tracking each sequential step in this process in a muster and then correlating it with supportive ethnographic data is, for the moment, beyond the scope of this study. What Reddy’s model does here is provide, at least, a general understanding of some of the ways in which these musicians may be programmatically constructing their acoustemology through soundscaped performance. Perman describes this emotional semiosis in the following way:

1. Perception (the semiotic start).
2. Emotion appraisal.
3. Feeling (the moment [where] anthropologists highlight social construction and cultural variability).
4. Emotive (expression of emotional experience) (Perman 2010:435). This is the sign vehicle that communicates/is consumed as an index of the emotional experience.

Why look at emotives? From a phenomenological perspective, it is because they give us the clearest indication of what is happening with a person’s inner context in “real time,” which gives us important clues about the subjective worlds they live in. They are also clear indications of how musicians have learned to embody the music they play. It therefore made sense to center my ethnographic observations on body language, emotive gestures, and facial expressions during periods of musical interaction at various points within the muster soundscape. Below is a list of emotive types and their expressive modalities used I observed throughout my interactions with CRV musicians. I will be using them later to look at how and when they are used in the context of different muster phases.
List of Emotives:
- Happiness
- Excitement
- Nervous tension
- An absence of these things

Modality of Embodiment:
- Facial expressions
- Vocalization
- Motionalization

I argue, that these give us a great deal of information about the ways people use music and sound to inform their space-time relationships (their acoustemologies), and direct their life experience (their ontologies). This helps give us a better idea about why they – and by extension we – listen, play, and interact with one another the way that they do. As I have said, the purpose of this thesis is not to attain an exact representation of the semiotic chaining experienced at musters, as this would be impossible due to the limitless and unique ways in which individual human experiences are derived through semiosis. It is also not to create a taxonomy of the 'social lives of icons, indices, and symbols” (Turino 2008) present at musters. However, my sense is that it is useful at times to examine how particular signs contribute to, connect, and manifest as regular sets of behaviors. To do this helps us understand how emplaced social and musical interactions, for this cohort, have led to some deeply engrained ideas about who they are in relationship to locality, translocality, and ultimately, the nation-state. Thus, protocols for this study involved not only listening to what people had to say about their states of mind, which involved conscious thought and linguistic analysis, but also observing how musicians were reacting to the music in real time and in specific sound spaces and acoustic environments. I focused on emotives such as facial expression, posture, and eye contact, because I observed them to be co-occurring with
emotions the musicians were experiencing in real time. Although people can be self-aware that such emotive expressions can be faked or suppressed in specific parts of muster events, my sense was that here, it was unlikely, and that they were reliable indicators of inner emotional context because events they commonly occurred in were almost always preceded or followed by the contrasting situations where open emotional expressions were not openly displayed. When possible, I also used guided interviews to triangulate my observations, and found that doing so before and after muster sound events allowed me a general sense for how repertory, instruments, and sonic environments resonated with these musicians. While direct verbal engagement with CRV musicians provided a great deal of essential data for this study, I am of the mind that observing emotives during actual performances produced the most accurate read of how they were relating to their environments and the people around them.

Fieldwork for this study occurred between the summer and fall of 2014 and during the fall of 2015 and took place at three fife and drum musters, in locations along the Connecticut River Valley. Although I have attended many other musters, these three were the ones in which I took focused field notes, captured video and audio recording, made participant observations, and received informal lessons from individual informants. The specific settings for this type of theoretically grounded fieldwork included formal outdoor/indoor rehearsals, concerts, and muster sound events, such as parades, stand performances and “jams” (informal, semi-participatory performance settings). Archival research was conducted in person at two locations: The Company of Fifers and Drummers Museum in Essex and The East Haddam Historical Society.
Purpose and Significance

The CRV fife and drum community is understudied from a cultural perspective, and work that focuses on the contemporary social life of this music has been, for the most part, absent. There is a palpable discontent among informants I spoke with regarding how this music and culture are commonly perceived as a kind of folk music, which for many I spoke with was equivalent of being dismissed as unimportant or cliché. This viewpoint was expressed on several occasions when I asked questions about how they perceived their tradition? I responded that I thought it was interesting that nearly every culture has some form of fife and drum music and that both the social and musical world that surrounded this one fascinated me. The gentleman responded: “it’s about time this music was recognized as a ‘world music.’” By “world music, the informant highlights a sense of hope for being recognized in a much wider context. Broadly then, this study will hopefully draw attention to this understudied music while rendering a clearer understanding of the community that produces it, first by seeking to understand its most prominent social feature, which is the salience of community among its members and the sensate ways in which this is bound by place, identity, and lived reality in the Connecticut River Valley.

Chapter Overview

To create a context for the discussion that follows, Chapter 1 presents an overview of the thesis and charts a theoretical model for an investigation of the Ancient field music cohort, its music, performance practices and acoustemology. Chapter 2 covers historical and general background information regarding the emergence of fifing and drumming in the CRV as a revivalist practice. Following this will be an organological discussion about the construction of standard B-flat fifes and rope-tuned field drums. I
also describe the emergence of revivalist field music in the mid-nineteenth century from two common instrumental traditions. Lastly, I discuss how these instruments have become sign markers of dwelling, historicity, identity, and community and help mediate a sense of place for many of these musicians.

Chapter 3 examines structural elements of a muster soundscape and lays out basic terminology for their analysis. Here, I demonstrate how specific keynote sounds contribute to the way music is perceived and have functional potential for effecting both social and musical interaction. I argue that keynote sounds assist with connecting people to their acoustic environments by helping CRV musicians balance, regulate, and mediate the experience of liminal states such as flow and communitás. Here, I also illustrate how musters have become replicable templates for these states. In Chapter 3, I also analyze four distinct muster sound spaces that spanned the course of two days in order to show how each space influenced musical and social behavior. Lastly, Chapter 4 summarizes this study’s findings, and suggests that muster soundscapes are constructed to experience, and replicate flow and communitás.
Figure 1-1. Pirate-style theatrical scenes during a muster parade Photograph courtesy of Kim Tyler.

Figure 1-2. Wedding proposal during a muster performance 2014. Photograph by Tim Murray
CHAPTER 2
ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND

Organology

Today’s Connecticut fife and drum field music tradition has maintained an interpretive relationship with its history, which is informed by four musical traditions: pipe and tabor dance music of the Medieval and Renaissance periods, European military field music from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, military brass bands of the early nineteenth century, and most recently, modern drum and bugle corps. The oldest European forerunner of the fife and drum ensembles is the pipe and tabor (Clark 2011). This is an early music instrument pairing intended for use by one musician consisting of a diatonic fipple flute (end-blown, non-transverse) and a small, two-headed drum with one to three gut snares. The pipe and tabor can be found in European artist depictions as early as the ninth century, and was commonplace throughout Europe between the thirteenth to the late nineteenth centuries (drums could vary in size and pipe tunings could differ from region to region). Primarily used for playing vernacular secular music, the pipe utilized three tone holes (two top and one thumb hole), and was predominantly used to play simple diatonic melodies with a single hand, leaving the musician’s other hand free to play accompaniment parts on a rope-tuned drum. Figure 2-1 shows the manner in which the English pipe and tabor were played. Anthony C. Baines and Hélène La Rue suggest that the pipe and tabor were mostly used for performing both secular dance and military music:

Dance music was always the pipe and tabor’s principal function, as is shown by many old miniatures. It is also shown being used to provide music for jugglers and performing animals, and being played in the military bands of noblemen at tournaments and other occasions; the tabor is often clearly shown being beaten on the snare…both the main sources of information about instruments at that time – Praetorius and Mersenne –
suggest that the pipe and tabor was then specially well handled in
England. Three examples of tabor pipes were found in the excavations of
Henry VIII’s battleship, the Mary Rose (Palmer). Praetorius described the
three-hole pipe and said that it is played in conjunction with a tabor ‘by
some Englishmen’; it seems that in Germany the pipe and tabor had by
that time been replaced by fifes and drums at weddings and other
occasions (Oxfordmusiconline 2016).

Exactly when the fife and drum, as an ensemble of instruments, replaced the pipe and
tabor is unknown. What we do know is that fifes are known to be in use from around the
fifteenth century forward and were initially associated with Swiss and German
mercenaries, responsible for the dissemination of these instruments to the rest of
Western Europe (Howard Mayer Brown et al. 2016). The instruments used by field
musicians in the American Revolutionary and Civil Wars were very similar to European
models and feature six-hole cylindrical bodies with transverse mouth hole. Although
wooden fifes account for the vast majority of instruments used in the CRV, they may be
made out of nearly any stable material, from exotic species of hardwood to metal and
acrylic plastic. European fifes belong to the transverse family of flutes. They are
frequently tuned as Bb instruments with a three octave range and generally feature a
tapered body, straight bore, ferruled ends, and six hole configuration (with no thumb
hole on the underside). While it is capable of playing chromatically, the construction of a
Bb fife (the most common) facilitates playing in the keys of G Major, E minor, D major, B
minor, A major, and F# minor. Figure 2-2 illustrates the common range and fingerings
for a Bb six-hole fife. Fifes may also be built in the keys of Ab, D and C, although fifers
in the CRV tradition use the Bb fife to exclusion and most corps use instruments built by
a specific craftsman or modern replica of that craftsman’s work. Drums used in the CRV
are rope-tuned snare and bass drums, meaning that the top and bottom heads are
tightened by pushing down a leather thong, or tuning “ear,” squeezing the rope which is
laced between the top and bottom counterhoops. Two styles of drums are used in the CRV today- larger “square” sized drums (roughly equivalent in diameter and depth-seventeen to nineteen inches), which were common between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, and smaller sized drums, favored during the American Civil War. Figure 2-3 shows the components of a rope-tuned snare drum. Drums used by early to mid-nineteenth century drummers followed the look and design of common English military models often mass-produced in times of war. These instruments were steam bent out of single sheets of wood, which were joined by nails or tacks at a seam. The Drummers Handbook, published by the British military, indicates that this style of joinery was “normally to the drummer’s right…which assumed a most ornate appearance with the nails used to join the shell being arranged in elaborate patterns. This area became known as the “nail board” and still exists on bass and tenor drums today (Great Britain Ministry of Defense 1985). In newer drums, these may be solely ornamental due to the use of more modern materials and jointing techniques, and may be either tacked or painted on the left side of the drum. Figure 2-4 shows three common decorative designs: a painted Moeller eagle, and the Eli Brown and Odell Chapman proprietary nail board tack patterns.

**Early Military Use of the Fife and Drum**

The practice of using sound and music to direct, organize, and control the actions of soldiers on and off the battlefield has remained, at least in principle, unchanged since the time of antiquity. We know that Greeks used music to motivate their armies – a practice which further developed through the Middle Ages. Vernacular fife and drum music may be found throughout the world at various sites of European colonial influence such as the Caribbean basin, Africa, Brazil, and Peru. In the American colonies, the
practice of using fifes and drums was directly modeled after standard European practice: “a drum major and a fife major were assigned to each regiment; their job was to ensure that the music was correctly played whenever required, so they were in charge of the discipline as well as teaching of the fifers and drummers” (Clark 2011: 28-29). Camus suggests that by the eighteenth century, the dominant European countries were finding new ways to integrate and organize their military power:

The manner of warfare and the formal organization of the armies that had evolved by the dawn of the eighteenth century were quite different from the hand-to-hand combat practiced by the loosely organized armies of the middle Ages. The soldier now was required to function as a part of a team, almost as an automaton, obeying strictly whatever command was given him by his superiors and never acting independently without orders. As European armies, grew in size through centuries, the means of mobilizing, disciplining, organizing and motivating them became more sophisticated and standardized. (1975:5)

For Camus, the use of the drum was popularized during military activity directly following the crusades when European armies, “having observed the fine performance of the Saracens, brought the idea home” (Great Britain 1985:28). Swiss mercenaries are credited with the first institutionalized use of fifes and drums for military purposes and for helping to disseminate their use throughout the rest of the continent. By the sixteenth century, most of the European military powers had instituted fifes and drums as functional components of their day-to-day military operations. As subjects of the crown, the American colonies were strongly influenced by British military practices in the French and Indian War (Seven Years War in Europe) between the years of 1754 to 1763. During this period, Camus suggests:

Recruiting in the colonies for the two regiments Braddock had brought with him at first went so well that the British ministry decided to raise a completely American regiment, officered by British regulars. This unit was called the Royal American Regiment, later taken into the line as the 60th Foot and organized at Governor’s Island, New York, in 1756. (Ibid:44)
From this point forward, the fife and drum played a key role in preparing colonial militias. Each militia was assigned one drummer and one fifer per every one hundred men, and in cases where troop sizes exceeded that number, up to two drummers and two fifers became standard. Their purpose was one of functionality:

Between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, fifes and drums were to act as “conveyors of signals and orders. As armies increased in size, and particularly after the development of gunpowder, it became increasingly impossible to give oral commands. The development of techniques of mass unit warfare led to the need to move large bodies of men in a systematic and orderly manner…the drum and fife were quickly adopted for foot soldiers” (Camus1975:4).

This meant that drummers were responsible for telegraphing very specific signals to soldiers while engaged in battle. This functionality also extended to the daily lives of soldiers, as drummers performed camp duties, calls to service and to regulate the speed at which units travelled. Both instruments were also used for entertainment and maintaining troop morale. For foot soldiers, calls, signals, and duties formed a specific collection of signals with pre-programed indexical and iconic meanings, that is, a level of mediated signification where language was used to clarify what these signals meant, which dictated most aspects of a soldier’s job from the functional to the ceremonial. In some cases, these calls were derivative of pre-existing music, such as the military signal, “To Go for Provisions,” consisting of a fragment of the melody to “In Praise of Old English Roast Beef,” written by eighteenth century English composer Richard Leveridge. As Camus explains, this was a widely-used tune by both English and American soldiers of the Revolutionary War and “still used as one of the ‘dinner calls’ of the British army” (1975:105). In other cases, signals were appropriated from English, Scottish, French, and German armies before and during the Revolutionary War. Drummers were trained using aural teaching methods until the publication of Army
teaching manuals, such as Charles Ashworth’s *A New, Useful and Complete System of Drum Beating* (1812). Example 1 shows fife and drum score for the Reveille camp duty. As Fred Johnson has suggested, “these manuals, augmented field drummers in learning by rote, onomatopoeia, numeric code, symbols, and applied local conventions. When drum manuals were first widely published, starting in the late 1770s, scores tended to serve as visual aids requiring instruction and notational interpretation” (Johnson 2014:5). Figure 2-5 shows a list of field calls and signals.

As early as the eighteenth century, New England had begun to experience surges of economic growth in response to the industrial revolution in the form of mills, shops, and factories that were built to support Connecticut’s growing textile industry. The Connecticut River was the first major American river developed for transportation of commercial goods.

The Connecticut River valley became more integrated into New England’s market systems. Advertisements in Windsor’s *Vermont Journal* reveal that by 1790 growing consumerism had reached the region. Stores and shops boasted of carrying English, West-Indian, European, and Irish goods in the form of spices and condiments, coffees and teas, housewares, books, and woven cloth. While the barter and work exchange economy still flourished, cash exchange became more common. Growing commercialism created greater inequality as farmers were stretched to pay cash for goods they had never had before, and new wage-earning laborers sought to make a living. (Flowofhistory.org 2015)

This period of early adjustment from a subsistence economy marked by agriculture, trading, and barter to one fueled by capital, was tended and funded by a handful of wealthy Calvinist land owners that were a mix of aristocracy, religious ideology, and farming class values. These merchants, known as “River Gods,” or “Mansion People,” controlled trade in the lower river valley, which solidified their power base in the CRV from around 1700 to the mid-nineteenth century.
In the early 1700s "River Gods" or "Mansion People" were names given to the wealthy families who lived in villages and towns along the Connecticut River Valley. The same seven names appear repeatedly in these communities: Ashley, Dwight, Partridge, Porter, Pynchon, Stoddard, Williams. The River Gods emphasis was on kinship, group cohesion, and cultural leadership. These families set the tone and indicated by their lifestyles what was fashionable and refined. Because of their location and the sources of their relatively limited income, the River Gods lacked some of the more obvious methods of displaying their wealth. Farming kept them close to the soil…like the wealthy in busy coastal cities, the rural elite in places like Deerfield (CT) imagined they were judged according to standards established abroad (Memorialhall.mass.edu 2016).

Cifaldi argues that any CRV musical activity in the mid-nineteenth century would have necessarily been a product of their socially conservative, hegemonic influence and suggests that their “values were mirrored in the Ancient fife and drum corps of the Valley Shore, which preserved their instrumentation, repertory, drill and dress long after other types of corps had abandoned them in favor of more progressive practices. (Cifaldi 2015: 24). In addition to fitting in well with a conservative and nationalist political environment, fifes and drums stayed on as important components of the state militias that multiplied between wars, due to a mandatory service requirement in Connecticut between 1738 to around 1845. Although not mandatory after 1845, Connecticut’s state militias were active until the Civil War. However, by the war’s end, fife and drum corps had become exclusively civilian enterprises, as the bugle eventually replaced both instruments in military contexts and the reviverist fife and drum tradition emerged as veteran musicians returned home from the Civil War:

Many of the musicians returned from the service to organize fife and drum units in their own towns and neighborhoods. Although a good number of these groups functioned without benefit of regulations or uniforms, they all fancied themselves participants in a military-type unit of “Martial Musick” and continued to play the type music they had learned in the Army and the organized Militia (Olson, Ed, The Company of Fifers and Drummers Website).
This revivalist movement began in the lower Connecticut River Valley with two groups: West Granby Fife and Drum Corps (1820 to approximately 1917) and Moodus Drum and Fife, founded in 1860. The latter has maintained a continuous presence in the Valley and is generally regarded as the progenitor of most of the Ancient corps that formed in the lower valley during the late nineteenth century. Figure 2-6 shows the towns of the lower Connecticut River Valley. According to Cifaldi, the corps that continued playing older, Revolutionary and pre-Revolutionary War repertoire were described as “Ancient” – a vernacular nineteenth-century term used to describe Revolutionary period aesthetics (2015). Figure 2-7 lists this first generation of Connecticut fife and drum corps that formed the nucleus of The Connecticut Fife and Drum Association (CF&DA), an organization formed in 1885 to organize competitive events between groups. Today, the term “Ancient” is used as a general term to describe any group in this tradition, from the most traditionally-minded to the most contemporary. However, this was not always the case, and as the popularity of fifing and drumming spread from the Connecticut countryside to its more populated urban areas, groups fell into three distinct categories: “Old-time” Ancient, Ancient, and Modern (Clark 2011:65-142). “Old-time Ancients,” such as Moodus Drum and Fife, held to a more traditional ideology and a distaste for competition, maintained more traditional instrumentation (larger drums and wooden fifes made by local manufacturers), and played older repertoire at slower tempi (around 80-90 beats per minute). Corps that did compete and were more amenable to modern influences (like new compositions and faster tempi) were simply referred to as “Ancients.” The third category, the so called “Modern” corps avidly competed, favored tempi upwards of 120 BPM, and were greatly influenced by
the rising popularity of brass bands in the late 1800s. These groups emphasized technical achievement and more complex arrangements featuring more sophisticated harmonies. Their drum sections used smaller instruments that took advantage of, industrial materials like metal tuning lugs made and two-piece fifes that addressed many of the intonation issues inherent in traditional models (ibid: 149). Although these categories were never officially defined or enforced by the CF&DA, they remained closely aligned with the industrial economics in the state, as Clark observes:

> The big city corps, relatively speaking tended to dominate the prizes in those formative years, and a corps that had a sponsoring organization was often more successful than the local groups that were just collections of local fellows. Factory workers, as a group, were particularly avid in drum corps competitions, often joining with coworkers to field a corps from their own shop…the Ancient corps were less likely to have this type of sponsorship, perhaps because the activity of drummers and fifers sometimes long predated the large factories and their organization of workers groups” (ibid:72).

For these three groups, marching tempo delineated not only three very different styles of groups, but three very different musical philosophies grounded in specific geographical region. Faster tempi became the hallmark of competitive Modern corps that took root in cities because, as the quote above suggests, funding provided by factory sponsorship made it possible for groups to afford modern instruments. For fifers, advancements in both design and manufacturing led to better intonation, richer tone, and more precise articulation, while drummers benefited from machined, metal tuning rods and rims, which increased head tensions and thus the rate at which the stick could be rebounded, allowing for faster and more precise articulation, technical execution, and faster tempi. Conversely, the slower tempi that were virtually guaranteed by larger, looser drum heads tensioned by rope, came to represent a more traditional musical
approach characterized by aural transmission, older performance practices, and dress. Between these two extremes were groups that competed but still identified with older, more traditional aesthetics. Today, competitions are still sponsored throughout New England, though have largely been replaced in Connecticut by a more community-centered model. Yet another style of fife and drum corps exists in the form of historical reenactment groups that maintain an ideological relationship with history. As Cifaldi has pointed out, today’s Ancient musicians, while sharing many similarities with the reenactment style, see themselves as fulfilling a very different role:

[Ancients] are not reenactors but are traditional musicians whose music, dress and drill retain vestiges of their eighteenth-century military heritage. Their repertory consists of historic, traditional and Patriotic tunes that until fairly recently were largely transmitted from player to player "by ear." Ranging from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, these exist in a fluid body through which new tunes are adopted and obscure ones abandoned. (Cifaldi 2014).

In interviews, musicians generally confirmed this statement. My findings however, indicated that any attempts at categorization by themes of historicity or historical accuracy would be futile. While the CRV community at large primarily comprises musicians interested in attending to local tradition, it also includes a fair number of corps that actively engage in war reenactment, with a select few specializing in Swiss Basel Carnival drumming. Although some of the groups still compete, both the “modern and “modern Ancient” styles have consolidated. At present, Moodus Drum and Fife is the only corps that technically classifies itself as a traditional Ancient corps by placing an emphasis on slower marching tempi, older repertory, and learning exclusively by rote.

With few exceptions, most fifers today play standard six-hole Bb fifes. Drummers use smaller diameter models capable of maintaining higher head tensions while retaining a dry, thick, sound. Tuning is frequently accomplished with hydraulic head
tensioning press (figure 2-8), which allows drum sections to access more modern playing techniques that require a higher degree of stick rebound. This illustrates how technology and industrial process affects aesthetics within the tradition.

**Repertory**

While the term “Ancient” was once applied to specifically reference the revolutionary war, it now may be associated with a diverse sweep of musical repertoire. Although early fife and drum repertory consisted of calls, duties, and European folk songs, it may be said that, in addition, this repertory has expanded to include many folk styles: European, American, revivalist old-time, maritime, ragtime, black and white minstrelsy, Celtic music, and brass band marches from the early twentieth century. It also embraces the Swiss Basel tradition and some corps perform original compositions as well. This repertory is now widely disseminated in “Company Books” published by the Company of Fifers and Drummers (CF&D). Ancient fifing and drumming has evolved to encompass virtually all types of revivalist fife and drum based organizations. While the term “Ancient” was once used to characterize a narrow stream of musicians, it is now employed as an umbrella term for any revivalist fife and drum corps performing in this tradition regardless of tempo or whether or not they enter competitions. This community’s slow transition from a competitive to a communal model throughout the twentieth century was accelerated in the 1950s with the demise of the Connecticut Fife and Drum Association and the creation of and its replacement with the Company of Fifers and Drummers, who adopted the Ancient muster as the primary way in which corps interface musically and socially with one another.

To summarize, by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the fife and drum were well established and functional components in the majority of European militaries. They
were introduced to North America during the Seven Years War, where fife and drum units remained a functional part of American military activity throughout the nineteenth century (Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican American War and Civil War). The first civilian fife and drum corps were formed in the first nationalist period between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, and developed into a competitive scene during the second nationalist period from around the turn of the twentieth century to World War I. This groundswell of patriotism held sway for the latter half of the nineteenth century, and helped transform fifing and drumming into a strong regional and civilian tradition in a pocket of small towns along the Connecticut River, where it has continued largely uninterrupted. After nearly sixty years of growth around a competitive model, the musical activities were reorganized in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, around a more community-based model in order to reconcile tensions that existed between competitive and non-competitive drum corps and boost waning local participation. This was accomplished by converting juried “field days” into translocal festivals called “musters,” which instead placed an emphasis on the participatory aspects of a regional tradition. Today, musters are national events, serving as a social nexus for this community and are characterized by a distinctive soundscape that features alternating presentational and participatory performance frames. The unique mix of these frames, I have argued, are designed around a templated and naturalized experience of meaningful, embodied place.
Figure 2-1. Manner in which the English pipe and tabor were played (Anonymous 12th and 14th Century Spanish Manuscripts).

Figure 2-2. The common range and fingerings for a Bb six-hole fife.
1. Batter counterhoop
2. Flesh hoop
3. Stay hoop or support hoop
4. Muffler
5. Shell
6. Vent hole
7. Snare bed
8. Flesh hoop
9. Snare gate
10. Snare counterhoop – the bottom head is called the snare head
11. Snare strainer, adjustable
12. Pigtail, on top of the eye splice
13. Butt plate, or anchor
14. Ear, tug or lug
15. Drag rope
16. Snares, or gut

Figure 2-3. Components of a rope tuned snare drum. Diagram courtesy of Patsy Ellis and Cooperman Fife and Drum. (2013 Cooperman website)

Figure 2-4. Three common decorative designs: Moeller eagle, Eli Brown and Odell Chapman proprietary nail board tack patterns. Photograph of Moeller eagle (far left) courtesy of Patsy Ellis and ©Cooperman Fife and drum Co. Eli Brown (center) and Odell Chapman (far right) photographs by Tim Murray.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signal Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The General</td>
<td>The signal for the entire unit to strike the tents, and prepare for the march.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Assembly</td>
<td>The signal for the men to form their companies in preparation for the march.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The March</td>
<td>The signal to advance. An army's pace was variable and was dictated by one of three tempos: 60-75 (the ordinary step), 120 (the quickstep).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reveille</td>
<td>The signal for the soldiers to rise at daybreak (see below).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Troop/Assembling</td>
<td>The signal for calling the soldiers together, for calling roll and carrying out inspection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Retreat</td>
<td>The signal (beat at sunset) for calling evening roll, and reading orders of the day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tattoo</td>
<td>The signal for the soldiers to repair to their tents and remain there until reveille.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Arms</td>
<td>The signal for getting weapons ready in case of alarm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Parley</td>
<td>The signal for a desire for conference with the enemy (often to surrender).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Three Cheers</td>
<td>Coordinating device for “trooping” or forming the line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Grenadier's March</td>
<td>Originally used for a light infantry (elite group) to proceed at a faster pace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drumming out of Camp/Rouges March</td>
<td>Dishonorable discharge from service and out of camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escort of the Colors</td>
<td>Call to display various battalion's colors outside a tent to display a rallying point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Review</td>
<td>The ceremonial order at day's end to march platoons past a reviewing officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Military Funeral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjutant's Call</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>First Sargent's Call</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>All Non-Commissioned</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Officers Call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To go for Wood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To go for Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To go for Provisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Roast Beef”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front to Halt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Front to Advance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quicker</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>For the Front to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March Slower</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>For the Drummers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>For a Fatigue Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Church Call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2-5: Camp and field signals. (Camus, 1976).
Figure 2-6. Towns of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Image courtesy of Daniel Bourret. (Lower Connecticut River Valley Home Page 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connecticut Drum Corps</th>
<th>Year Established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moodus Drum and Fife</td>
<td>1860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chester Fife and Drum Corps</td>
<td>1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep River Drum Corps</td>
<td>1873 reorganized 1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton Drum Corps</td>
<td>1881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mattatuck Drum Band</td>
<td>1881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stony Creek Fife and Drum Corps</td>
<td>1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menuncatuck Drum Corps</td>
<td>1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killingworth Drum Corps</td>
<td>1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Hampton Ancients</td>
<td>1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancraft Ancient Drum Corps</td>
<td>1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westbrook Drum Corps</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2-7: First generation of Connecticut fife and drum corps (Cifaldi, personal correspondence).
Figure 2-8. Hydraulic head tensioning press. Photograph by Tim Murray.
CAMP DUTY.

The pupil must now proceed to learn the several 'calls,' and also their uses, and the proper time and places at which they are to be played. They are called, when combined, "Camp Duty." At a certain signal, all the Field Music (Drummers and Fifers), assemble at 6 o'clock, A. M., (or earlier in some seasons), and play the following pieces, which are connected by rolls of the Drum, and are called

REVEILLE.

The leading Drummer gives the 'stick tap' signal, when all commences the

Example 1. Fife and drum score for the Reveille camp duty. (Bruce, 1865).
CHAPTER 3
THE MUSTER SOUNDSCAPE

Chapter 3 will examine structural elements, acoustic spaces, and sounded phenomena present in Ancient musters using Schafer’s concept of the soundscape and Turino’s model for classifying music into participatory and presentational fields, guided by distinct social goals. Throughout, my argument will be that CRV musicians experience liminality (flow and communitás) differently as keynote sounds interact with their immediate acoustic environments. I first make the distinction between two kinds of keynote sounds common to the muster soundscape: what I call first and second order keynotes. I suggest, that through habit and repetition, these have become semiotic prompts for experiencing liminality and affecting subtle shifts in performance frame (participatory or presentational). As I mentioned earlier, keynote sounds fall into two categories: those which Schafer originally described as “anchor” sounds, I term first order keynotes. Sounds that manifest secondarily while still holding an iconic resemblance to their original form will be referred to as second order keynotes. These include reflected sounds effected by reverberation and echo, or sounds that are determined by the natural behaviors of high and low frequencies. The important distinction between first and second order keynote sounds is that the latter may be characterized as being delayed, obstructed, or distorted in some way. Each of these second order keynote sounds, I suggest, function as semiotic prompts that have very tangible social and musical outcomes throughout the various phases of a muster soundscape.

Second Order Keynote Sounds and their Effects: Echo, Reverberation, Diffraction and Phasing

Second order keynote sounds contribute to phasing by delaying, altering or obscuring the sound in some way. Phasing is a term that describes “the effect achieved
when two (or more) instrumentalists or singers perform the same musical pattern at different (slightly increasing or decreasing) intervals of time” (Whittal 2016). Take for example, a loud rock band performing near a cement wall. As the drummer, bassist, and guitarist play their instruments in real time, the sounds they make will be bounced or fed back to them in different ways. If the wall is fairly close, this might take the form of a slight but amplified delay. If it is further away, the delay will be longer and more removed from the initial production of sound. Frequently, this results in an unintended overlapping of parts as tempo, articulation, and clear points of beginning or ending become muddied or obscured. This example illustrates only two ways phasing can manifest – there are, in fact, many factors that may contribute to this ambiguity. At musters, phasing is frequently, though not always, a performance factor. The main causes were usually echo, reverberation, diffraction with a fourth related to proximity – when little distance separated loud groups (this will be discussed separately). Phasing, I suggest, is a major factor in the experience of liminality at musters, because it creates the potential for making the sonic environment seem more porous and the conditions that make it possible omnipresent, predictable and controllable once a musician has become used to a particular sound space. To be clear, phasing is almost always subtle, and, in this context, should not be considered a hindrance to music making, but a way of coloring it. For Charles Keil, when people play music slightly out of phase with one another – what he calls “semisynchtness” (1986:282) – musicians open themselves up to a participatory state. This is analogous to the in-synch-out-of-phase concept introduced by Feld and later explored by Turino. For both scholars, the phenomenon is an active ingredient in the delineation of communal musical space because of its ability
to subtly obscure musical entrances endings, attack, decay, articulation, and intonation, while masking the individual. Below, Turino outlines performance differentials that occur in a slightly different way in a discussion about how stronger, more experienced players often create a “follow-the-leader” effect in the participatory panpipe musical tradition of Conima, Peru:

Music and dance bring the state of being in sync – of being together – to a heightened level of explicitness. With each repetition of a piece in Conima, the possibility of “being in sync” is extended and the social union is intensified, contributing to an affective intensity. In such contexts, extended repetition does not lead to boredom; it is the basis of aesthetic power... during special moments, culturally specific rhythms and forms of movement are not merely semiotic expressions of community and identity; rather, they become their actual realization (Turino 1993:111).

In Conima, musical performances are led by Guías or Maestros. These stronger players with an extensive knowledge of tradition and repertoire, act as guides or informal leaders during fiestas. These leaders often lead by example using a gentle hand as well as a confident musical voice. Generally, it is their role to provide a supportive energy for the rest of the group, many of whom might be less experienced or have not attended rehearsals. This has the effect of de-emphasizing individual performance, thereby shifting the performance frame from one that is centered on the individual to one that is more group-centric or participatory.

In his book *Echo and Reverb: Fabricating Space in Popular Music Recording 1900-1960*, (2005), Peter Doyle defines both of these phenomena and suggests their potential as sign vehicles.

Both reverberation and echo are reflected sound. Echo occurs when a sound is reflected in such a way that the source sound is distinctly reproduced, as when a shout bounces of a distant, relatively flat wall... reverberation on the other hand, occurs when sound is reflected either so many times that no single, discontinuous repeat of the source sound is heard, or when the reflective surfaces are too near the listener to allow...
subjective aural separation ...reverberation is produced when sounds are emitted inside a space enclosed by hard surfaces materials...reverberation acts as an amplifier of sounds, both by causing sound events to last longer and through “consonance” – the reinforcing of midrange frequencies. The temples, mausoleums, palaces, ziggurats, and legislatures of antiquity were highly reverberant spaces, and this quality provides specific acoustic “framing” of utterances made within them...Just as there exists a correspondence between the reverberant utterances and secular power, so too is there an Ancient nexus between the reverberant spaces and the sacred or magical. (2005:38-42).

Doyle's ideas are consistent with Peircean semiotics in that reflected sounds are perceived as qualities and when perceived as such become sign vehicles – “something that stands for something else, to someone in some way” (Peirce 1955:95; Turino 2008:5), and connect to their objects through iconic or indexical processes that “frame” them in ways that further initiate emotion. In this case, these qualities act like primes or pre-loaded semiotic triggers that, when filtered through iconic and indexical processes, help people locate themselves spatially and emotionally. How might they do this? Doyle’s suggestion is that both echo and reverberation help directly influence social behavior by cognitively priming listeners for liminal states, suggesting that “architectural decisions made by early Christians had direct acoustic outcomes, and the specific acoustic properties of these spaces, especially their high degree of reverberance, [which] played a key role in determining and shaping the practices conducted within, sonic and otherwise” (Doyle 2005:43). Pointing to the basilicas of the early Middle Ages, Doyle further suggests “cathedral acoustics served to amplify and give substance and import to the utterances of the priest” (ibid:44). Schafer also notes that medieval cathedrals did more than just aesthetically enhance a priest’s performance. “Cathedrals,” says Schafer, “were ’acoustic machines' whose purpose was to get the attention of the deity and make him listen” (Schafer 1980:52). I suggest these
“machines” had more to do with making a passive congregation listen, but either way, the implications are the same: that natural characteristics of their instruments and acoustic qualities of the sound spaces they perform in helped create subtle psychological effects when echo and reverberation were in play.

A third acoustic phenomenon that I suggest helps presentational music feel participatory is sound diffraction. This refers to the tendency for lower frequency sounds – like the ones produced by rope-tuned snare and bass drums – to bend around physical objects. According to physicist Keith Griffioen, this phenomenon plays a substantial role in determining how fifers and drummers perceive and process the sounds they produce within a given sound space. Paraphrasing Griffioen, when lower frequencies bend around solid objects, they are delayed – even more so as this bending may cause diffracted sound to be perceived linearly, by one ear at a time, as sound waves bend around a human head. The result is that lower frequency sounds that are already less defined, become slightly delayed and more difficult to locate spatially. Griffioen suggests that while higher sounds are not subject to diffraction, they may be subject to other kinds of distortion due to the fact that they are unidirectional. At musters, for example, performance practice dictates that musicians play facing forward, so musicians would not have the luxury of turning their heads to “equalize” the sound, adding to this distorted effect (podcasthistory.org, 2015).

**Kinesthetic Contact, Intonation, and Proximity**

In addition to second order keynotes, there are other factors that contribute to the relative ease with which liminality may be programmatically experienced at musters. Ancient drummers play large, rope-tuned snare and bass drums frequently worn over the neck or around a shoulder with a canvas or leather sling. Thus, when fifes and
drums are played, they are not only perceived aurally (as loud, immersive sound), but through tactile vibration as well. Many muster participants I spoke with noted this intimate level of bio-feedback commenting that “some tunes just feel good under the fingers.” Others related that it is also common to see the fifers learn songs at a muster by watching another's fingers, while bass drummers learn by having another bass drummer come over and play on their drum” (Murray 2014 Fieldnotes-b). These suggest that musicians are often specifically focusing on tactile sensations, contributing to the immersive mindset at musters and is part of what deepens the emotional musical experience for these musicians.

Intonation is also an important factor in evaluating the textural density created by fifes and drums in these kinds of settings. Like other “period” instruments, problems with intonation are simply acknowledged as a part of life for these musicians. This “unique” intonation also serves to distinguish these from modern flutes and drums while acting as an index of Ancient values. Drums are also prone to detuning – particularly when calf-hide drumheads and the tensioning ropes used to tune them expand and contract with temperature variance and atmospheric moisture. These drums produce a distinctly resonant sound, which is colored by snares made of natural gut or twisted calfskin, creating microtonal buzzes and rattles that add timbre density to the music. Throughout my observation of this cohort, their musical practices were in line with descriptions of participatory performance practices from around the world. Turino suggests that:

Densely overlapping textures, wide tunings, consistently loud volumes and buzzy timbres are extremely common sound features of participatory music throughout the world. Taken together, these aspects provide a crucial *cloaking function* that helps inspire musical participation. Imagine this: you are a neophyte flute player and are asked to go out onstage and join in with another solo flautist performing before a large silent, attentive
audience. Now imagine that you are a neophyte flute player and you have the option of joining in with thirty other Aymara flute players performing in a dense, loud heterophony, accompanied by loud buzzy snare drums, in a situation in which almost everyone else is dancing, drinking, or standing around talking. Given the volume and density of the Aymara ensemble’s sound, any mistakes you might make would not stand out much, and no one would really be paying attention to the musical sound in that way in the first place (Turino 2008:46).

This “cloaking function” is an integral part of muster performance and also emerged during jams, which took place in mostly non-reflective acoustic environments such as football fields and baseball diamonds. However, in cases such as this, where a reflective sound is not present and hence, did not contribute as much to the participatory ethos of the event, the players recreated it themselves by overlapping their parts with each other. This sonic overlap happens when tunes end at jams and there are intermittent breaks in which multiple groups of fifers and drummers begin playing different snippets or tune fragments. Once a tune catches the attention of enough participants, it is played by the entire field. As an informant suggested:

There is so much that goes on at a muster. Even the jamming part of it is complicated. I would say that the most important thing is that it is primarily a social event, rather than a strictly musical one... There is certainly a lot of overlap, as you mentioned. Especially in large musters, there is overlapping sound even beyond reverb/echo. Often two or more songs are started simultaneously – as the two tunes compete, the fifers and drummers conform to whichever tune is loudest. In huge musters, it may even split into several small groups (Murray 2014 Fieldnotes-b).

How, exactly, do these kinds of acoustic phenomena, external environmental conditions, and internal emotional contexts add up to feelings of timelessness or shared liminality among participants? I argue here that all of these externalities help widen the target for flow experiences because they facilitate playing styles that are more inclusive and thus produce a wider, more diverse set of possibilities for experiencing signs of performance. At musters, music is produced on loud, outdoor instruments that can
additionally be sensed through physical vibration (in the hand, on body, leg, or face), as well as sound registered in one’s near-field. CRV musicians perceive these sounds aurally a second time – as second order keynotes. I suggest the audible delay that is promoted by, and inherent in these keynote sounds, has been indexed over time through repetition with feelings of togetherness common to social bonding. This kind of phenomenon is common to many types of “in-synch-out-of-phase participatory music throughout the world. For Steven Feld, among the Kaluli, this is characterized by a “constantly shifting heterophonic approach… which leads to an overlapping and a lack of clarity” (Feld 2008:74-113). To be clear, what I am suggesting is that the sonic aesthetic created by fifes and drums, is in part created by the play of echo, reverberation and diffraction, as well as kinesthetic feel, proximity and variances in intonation. The porous texture these things create allows these musicians to experience sound in multiple ways: sometimes as direct, or instantaneous, near field sound which could involve physical sensation, and again, as those sound waves returned from the surrounding architecture and natural environments, actively shaped by the spaces they occurred in as sensate manifestations of these places. Each of these sounded phenomena, I argue, helps form a direct and sensate relationship with the places CRV musicians play in, and each forms a particular niche in CRV acoustemology. This is because first and second order keynotes contribute to habitual perceptions and sensations that are slightly misaligned or ambiguous, and thus more welcoming to wider scale participation. Participatory and presentational aesthetic approaches are not fixed at musters and may be experienced in hybrid forms, as changing acoustic spaces, meaningful places, audience composition, performance practices, and traditions, all
work together to the keep performance frame in a perpetual state of flux. Alone, first order keynote sounds such as a sounded fife or drum function for CRV musicians as dicent indexes of identity. However, the “in-synch-out-of-phase” sonic aesthetic that I initially perceived as chaotic, implicates the need for an additional consideration. It is a dicent index of identity because it is sensed directly through personal experience and in association with various positive and pleasurable states of being. But what I also want to suggest is that because second order keynote sounds are consumed only after they have interacted with meaningful places, they have the potential for putting CRV musicians in the position of sensing themselves, as a dicent of those places.

To summarize, what I suggest is happening in these situations is that the somewhat dislocated qualities inherent in reflected and diffracted keynote sounds have been naturalized and embodied by CRV musicians, such that when they are made manifest in group performances, social practices, and cultural expressions, these embodiments, in the presence of strong emotions can become powerful, dicent indices for multiple aspects of layered CRV identity. With practice and regular muster attendance, optimum experience and self-integration become tools that help participants to structurate and embody a cultural sense of who they are through a sounded experience of where they are – a feeling of being simultaneously *in* the world and *of* a place – because the construction of one’s instrument, repertory, life experience and musical experience have all been products of that place. Meaningful first order keynotes sounds present in music making may become slightly delayed or obscured as second order keynotes (echo, reverberation and diffraction), working in tandem with other acoustic factors, such as the proximity of loud groups to one another, wider
tolerances in intonation variance, or a sensation of direct contact with an instrument. These factors may also be working in other, more presentational sound events like parades, but subtly compensated for with technique, skill, musical experience or perceptual awareness, allowing for flow and communitás to arise more from the dicent indices of layered identities (individual, local, translocal, and national) and more richly expressed through instruments of local manufacture and sentimental value.

**Ethnographic Description and Analysis of Four Muster Sound Events**

Between 2014 and 2015, I attended three musters in two CRV towns representing both the largest and smallest events of their kind – one “DRAM” or the Deep River Muster (Deep River, Connecticut) and two Thunder in the Valley musters (Moodus, Connecticut) in addition to the rehearsals and concert events leading up to them. This study is limited specifically to these three and the events leading up to them. To facilitate my analysis, supporting ethnographic data, although derived from specific moments at particular events, will be combined to construct a normative muster sequence as a platform for demonstrating broader social themes, significant performance practices, and relevant social and musical phenomena that had salience for this community. While no two musters can be quite the same, and smaller ones like the Moodus muster may occur in an abbreviated form, it follows that regardless of size, they all adhere to a fixed, similar progression of sound events. Below is a list that shows the linear representation of this progression. These events allow CRV musicians to experience a relatively standard set of motional, visual, and aural signs (signs of performance) that are predictable, apportioned, and sustainable enough to promote the kinds of habits that allow them to function as a template for participants to experience communitás and flow. The Tattoo, or official beginning of a muster that consists of a
short concert, and jam, and what I term here as the Muster Proper (Figure 3-1), which encompasses all of the phases that occur on the second day such as the Parade, Stand Performances and ending Jam.

What follows is analysis and ethnographic description of the some of the sound spaces that help transform musters into sonic “places,” beginning with a rehearsal that was held in preparation for a muster. Italics are used in conjunction with offset text to indicate ethnographic segments taken from field notes. Again, I stress that analyzing musters in this fashion – as a soundscape – gives us a sense of how CRV musicians craft their sensory experiences around both sonic and physical ways of knowing their environments. Doing so, I suggest, also helps clarify how these events serve as templates for the experience of both individual and shared liminal states of flow and communitás necessary for the expression and sensation of community.

**Sound Event One: Moodus Drum and Fife Rehearsal**

In this episode, I observed a loud rehearsal that split into two halves while musicians played together, inside and outside a rehearsal hall.

Rehearsal was held at the town meeting hall a large white shingled New England structure with a sharply pitched roof, spartan interior, and hardwood floors. Metal folding chairs were either neatly leaned against walls or arranged around a black wood stove in the corner. Some of the structure was being renovated and a circular driveway, currently just dirt and gravel, was in the process of being graded in preparation for asphalt. As people arrived, corps members greeted one another and socialized. Rehearsal began rather gradually, with members wandering around the driveway and chatting with one another, while others either sat on open truck tailgates, or front porch steps or warmed up playing snippets of pieces. The practice actually began when one of the snippets being played by a young girl was picked up by the rest of the group. Other pieces were then called out by name, in succession: “Black Watch,” “British Grenadiers,” “Turks Beat,” “Rosalie, Road to Boston,” “Roving Sailor,” “Irishman’s Shanty,” “Yorktown,” “Yankee Doodle,” “Battle Hymn of the Republic....” It began to rain, so a short break was called before the rehearsal was reconvened inside the meeting hall, with some of the
musicians staying outside under on the hall porch and/or continued strolling around the driveway. Some, still not completely at ease with my presence and recording gear, stared nervously in every direction but mine – a good indication that a presentational ethos was still in place. When things resumed, the music was deafening and with the corps split up like this – half outside and the other half inside – I began to wonder what they might be getting out of this. The hard, wooden surfaces inside the hall both amplified and reflected the music in ways that made it virtually impossible to musically synchronize – rhythmically and intonation-wise, and made it almost impossible for the group as a whole to play in synch. Timing, intonation, and clarity were simply nonexistent. Both the musicians inside and outside continued to wander, exploring the sounds their instruments produced in corners, by windows, or the front porch railing. Several more tunes were called: “Caledonia,” “Nancy Hanks,” “Old Saybrook,” “Town Green.” After about thirty minutes, both groups seemed to settle in. People seemed to forget I was there. Their expressions and postures relaxed as they got caught up in what they were playing. Their movements around the room stopped. Toward the middle of “Town Green,” people in both groups began to congregate in a semi-circle by the door. They seemed to be enjoying the crush of sound that seemed deafening to me, as I huddled in the corner twisting foam earplugs further into my ear canals. Last tunes were called – fourteen in total, and the rehearsal was concluded with plans to meet at the American Legion for a few drinks before calling it a night...

This rehearsal, partially conducted in an extremely reflective sound space, gives a stark example of how participatory and presentational performance frames can be mixed.

Facial and motional emotives marked a subtle shift throughout this rehearsal. Nervous facial emotives, like blank stares and a lack of eye contact, slowly gave way to a more participatory atmosphere. On this occasion, more than a few of the musicians had not been to practice in a while. Things were kept loosely structured and friendly, which allowed people to re-acclimate without worrying about making mistakes. When it began to rain and the group split up, reverberation, caused by the reflective hardwood surfaces inside the meeting hall, amplified, distorted, and, in some cases, obliterated musical definition and articulation. This helped further mask the sonic identity of individual players and created a looser rehearsal vibe. While this appeared chaotic to me,
musicians simply made allowances for loosely executed beginnings, endings, timing and intonation. Technical precision was not the goal. Rather the goal was to make participants feel welcomed and comfortable. As the musicians gradually tuned out my presence at the rehearsal, their facial expressions transition from stiff outward indicators of tension to focused concentration. Postures relaxed as musicians began focusing on their playing and stopped wandering around the hall in opposite directions. They began drawing nearer to each other. Later, when I asked about playing in environments like the one described above, Moodus musicians suggested that their group had a long history of playing in in spaces like the one I observed which they seemed fairly proud of.

Below is a fairly common version of this story, printed in James Clark’s book:

In 1885, the corps performed in Washington, D.C., at the dedication of the Washington Monument. The local anecdote about this event is that they were invited in to the White House to meet President Chester A. Arthur. The president met them in the East Room, where the corps played for him; the thunder of the drums cracked the plaster of the walls. (Clark 2011:121-122).

Musicians who recounted their versions of this story always did so as a point of pride. It suggests, for me anyway, what I have been describing: a love of playing loud music in enclosed and reverberant spaces.

**Sound Event Two: Community Jam**

The first day of an Ancient muster is called the tattoo, named after the nineteenth century practice of summoning foot soldiers into formation for inspection, as Caryn Davis notes:

The tattoo program was implemented 27 years ago as a way to extend the DRAM from one day into two. (The word “tattoo” is derived from the Dutch phrase “die den tap toe” which informed the soldiers with the fife and drum that it was time to turn off the beer taps after an evening of debauchery
and get back to camp. Over the years, “die den tap toe” evolved into “tattoo” (inkct.com 2015).

At larger musters, such as the ones at Deep River and Westbrook, the ceremony is made up of three traditional parts: the Host’s Concert, the Circle of Friendship, and the Open Jam. Although open to the public, tattoos are primarily oriented toward community members. They are often sponsored by the hosting corps or an affiliated junior corps. Events officially begin with the completion of a set up period, where vendors and individual drum corps assemble large canopy tarps to be used as a base of operations for the duration of the muster. Beginning around 7:00 p.m., the hosting corps performs a short concert for the rest of the community at the conclusion of which begins a common tune (all music is memorized) and the performers commence marching in a spiral toward the center point of the muster field in single file line. As the line continues, fifers and drummers from other corps follow, entering at the field’s outer edges until the front of the line reaches the center of the field, at which point the linear formation dissolves, and people re-congregate with friends and family for the duration of the jam. Here, musicians come and go at will and are unbound by presentational performance practices. Similar to how tunes were selected at the Moodus rehearsal, selections are informally “suggested” by groups of people who play the opening measures of their preferred standards. If accepted by the rest of the performing community, the piece is tacitly “agreed upon” and picked up by the rest of the field. If not, other tunes are auditioned until another is agreed upon by the field. This process runs continuously for the duration of the evening until roughly 1:00 A.M. While many musters are by invitation only, due to logistical reasons, jams are open to anyone with an instrument wishing to play.
As I suggested earlier, different facets of identity come into play and balance as the muster progresses. All of the musters I attended involved the balancing of three elements: 1) the specific assertion of group local identity 2) the assertion of a translocal identity that was integrated into a regional cohort, and 3) dress and conduct that mark the importance of patriotism, military service, and the nation-state. The following scene shows how music may be used to effect a balance of identity.

It is 7:00 P.M. and the midday heat has started to lift. The baseball diamond is now lined on two sides by tent-like canopies – one side for vendors and the other for participating corps who now sit beneath them in languid clusters of folding camp chairs. It has the atmosphere of a county fair, complete with cotton candy, snow cones, and fried food, but without the ambling crowds. The tattoo officially begins with a concert performance by the Deep River Jr. Ancients. A stoic drum major leads them onto the edge of the performance area – a baseball diamond framed in the chain-link fencing – to whoops and shouts that emanate from beneath the various canopies. The Deep River Junior Ancients march out from the chute with expressionless faces. After a short “concert,” of featured pieces, the front line makes a ninety-degree left turn in place and begins marching around the outer perimeter of the baseball diamond. Again, expressions soften and the mood becomes less formal. The thick, dry odor of red baseball diamond dirt rises in puffs of red clouds and hangs in the air around the field as musicians of every age emerge from canopies to connect with end of the circle, smiling and laughing. They seem almost impatient for this – to begin jamming – as the volume starts increasing. The sound takes on a staggering weight – I can feel it on my skin, my face, and my ears pop with distortion. After thirty minutes, a fifer runs back to the canopy, fife in hand, where I sit chatting with a bass drummer from Moodus. She is elated, exhilarated, and out of breath as if she had just run a four-minute mile. I ask her what she likes about it the most and she looks at me as if she doesn’t understand the question. She seems half frustrated with my question and says, “You know what you should do? Take your camera – right now – and walk through the center of the circle! Go do it now!” So I fumble for my ear plugs, take my small, handheld video camera and do as she commands. Most are standing with clusters of friends. Many of the drummers seem to be intentionally overplaying, enjoying the physical exertion while others simply sit this one out, sipping drinks for the duration of this tune. I feel embarrassed, as if I have just intruded on a party I wasn’t invited to. A group of young drummers have arranged themselves in defocused clusters around the center of the diamond, staring calmly into the distance. Nearby, a bass...
drummer who is well past his eighties plays a bass drum on a stand. He
too is “elsewhere” and stares past the field. A lone snare drummer stands
at the edge of the gathering next to a red cooler he has positioned near
the third base line, smiling and contented with a beer can resting on the
edge of his drum. As the sun sets, insects swarm the ballpark lights, while
music rises and falls in entropic waves, moving in and out of focus as the
beginnings and endings of tunes are overlaid with periods of sonic chaos.
It is game-like – I think to myself – a spontaneous, musical version of “king
of the mountain” with literally hundreds of musicians vying for favorite
tunes as loudly as possible. Some are accepted immediately, while others
simply fizzle out, only to be replaced by another. When I return, the fifer
asks rhetorically, “see what I mean?” By 11:00 p.m., the field has begun to
regenerate as new players enter and others retire to eat and drink with
their friends outside their tents and campers. Others stay within the circle
for the duration of the evening, until the resident state trooper ends the
proceedings around 1:00 A.M. The field disperses and the crowd, spent
ambles back to their tents and campers where some continue to play.

This description of a jam brings to light how presentational and participatory musical
frames are often regulated at larger musters. While the host concert was a
demonstration of skill, precision, and of local identity performed with militant stoicism,
the jam became an expression of integrated community that involved members from all
of participating groups. Emotive gestures suggested an informal atmosphere, as people
added impromptu movements to familiar tunes such as a kick or head nod, emphasizing
a well-known part as they gathered in loose clusters to play with friends that were not
necessarily part of their local corps. The pervading sense was that this was an act of
broader community, one that spanned across a broad range of experience levels and
ages. Sound reflection was not an active ingredient in this sound space, because it was
performed in an open field with few structures around it. In Jams, first order keynotes
were dominant with little, if any, reflected sounds. The overlap and phasing in this case
resulted from people either intentionally or unintentionally playing in and out of phase,
over one another, due to the sheer numbers (literally hundreds) of people participating.
In between tunes, people intentionally played over one another to “suggest” their
favorite tunes and the louder volumes, ambiguous beginnings and endings, and slight deviations in arrangement, once again, worked to obscure the performance of individuals and promote optimal experience for the participants. What I want to point out here is that sounded overlap and phasing has been normalized such, that it is sought out and created even when it is not a reliable feature of the acoustical environment.

Second order keynote sounds are absent, though unconsciously recreated by playing over one another. Strangely, there is ample historical evidence to suggest that this kind of overlapping, heterophonic texture has its roots in the early military tradition of “bearing on,” or the practice of playing louder to drown out the sound of a rival unit’s fife and drum corps. Cifaldi describes it in the following way:

“Bearing on” was to play with enough vigor and volume to confuse the target corps until their music became disorganized, forcing them to stop. “Bearing on” continued in Ancient practice until at least 1885, when one newspaper reported an incident that occurred between the Moodus Drum and Fife Corps and the Portland Regimental Band, both of whom had attended a G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic): It was considered great sport to attempt to drown out all other opposition bands or drum corps (Cifaldi 2014:4).

The practice is also mentioned in the book: Drum Taps in Dixie: Memories of a Drummer Boy, 1861-1865 (1905):

The first two years of the war we were brigaded with a certain Massachusetts regiment that was about as fine a body of men as I ever saw together…their drum corps was a good one, too, but of course the boys of the Second New York thought they were a little better than the Bay State fellows, consequently quite a little rivalry existed between the organizations, and when the regiments were out for a review or brigade drill the stalwart drummers from down east would always try to drown out the lads of the Second Heavy (Miller 1905:25).  

Miller’s memoir spans the years of 1861-1865, which coincides with the beginnings of the Connecticut fife and drum phenomenon, just before the outbreak of the Civil War.

My point by now should be fairly obvious – which is that both intentional and
unintentional overlap during muster performances sets up a unique space-time relationship across the muster soundscape. This usually manifests as a spatially mediated heterophonic musical texture.

**Sound Event III: Step off, Parade and F-Troop**

Day two of a muster involves three distinct sound events that comprise what I define as the muster proper. Figure 3-2 is a Google map image of the Deep River Muster parade route to Devitt's Field. The parade involves all of the participating corps gathering at a prescribed staging area or “step-off” point, where groups warm up and assemble in queue. I include a short description of it here, because although it is not considered by CRV musicians to be a particularly significant part of a muster, it includes the kinds of sonic chaos that often characterized CRV music when it involved the community at large.

By now, about twenty corps have arranged themselves in scattered clusters on the front lawn of a retirement home, marking the beginning of the parade route. The air is perforated by what sounds like a Charles Ives canon left to its own devices – an overlapping din of fits and starts, coming and going in harsh, unpredictable waves. Connecticut Valley Field Music is lined up against a stand of evergreen trees, intently playing through their parade sequence. Behind them, several drummers from Stony Creek, in blue vests with red trim, do the same. The Nathan Hale fifers are gathered in a semi-circle, each playing independently of one another while drummers adjust the tension of their instruments, pushing thick leather thongs down over exoskeletons of rope lacing. Moodus Drum and Fife, dressed in blue and red continental soldier uniforms, is now gathered around clusters of antique drums. Westbrook Fife and Drum and the Adamsville Ancients suddenly emerge from clamor in disjunct, fragments of piercing, angular melody. As I walk across the lawn, new sounds become more distinct, as the Lancraft drum section, gathered into a small circle, runs through a solo drum piece. (Murray 2015)

The relative musical chaos of this scene demonstrates the opposite social effect I had witnessed during the previous evening within a similar, non-reflective sound space. Groups, in effect, “tribed” or divided themselves by town assemblies creating an
overlapped sonic environment. Whereas the previous night had been largely community-centered, individual awareness here seemed completely focused on their own groups rather than their integration into the broader community.

Figure 3-3 is a google map image of the DRAM parade route to Devitt’s Field. The parade is the procession of these corps through a town and is typically around a mile in length. At larger musters, after each corps has reached the end of the parade route, members wishing to march the route again with friends from other corps may break off and run back to the step-off point to march the route again.

The procession begins after corps have assembled in order of receipt of their invitation acceptance. Unlike other types of ceremonial parades, muster parades consist exclusively of fife and drum corps and consequently become moving, presentational concerts in which each movement, cadence, or composition is cued by preset signals that are telegraphed by snare drum. As one young fifer described:

One drummer, the lieutenant, plays a flam, followed by a 15-stroke roll on the snare; the signal for all drums to “hook up” to the straps…. [he then] beats out two flams, to which every drum in line joins in. Ten flams are played, followed by a 7-stroke roll, played only by the lieutenant. On the first beat of the cycles of eight, the entire corps steps off onto their left foot, keeping in step with the drum beating; the captain leads the corps, walking before the front fife rank, but before the color guard. Once the corps begins marching, the beating becomes “Street Beat,” a repeat of seven flams and a 7-stroke roll, [which is] vamped. (Elliot 2013:3)

This quote, taken from a collection of unpublished interviews, is useful for its description of one specific way a corps might signify within a given soundscape. In this case, a specific rhythmic sequence has been intentionally indexed with directions for movement in order to convey specific information and instructions to the rest of a corps. Verbal cues may also be given in these instances. These involve symbolic processes because as Turino points out, they involve the mediation of language (1999, 2008, 2012, 2014).
Musicians I spoke with from a wide spectrum of corps indicated that throughout the duration of a parade, tunes are often called out at random. Making mental shifts like this in order to process aural information from verbal and musical cues, outlines a level of symbolic mediation, which is significant here because it outlines how speech acts may be inserted into a complex and interactive sonic environment. These shifts may be made for various reasons – to keep the music interesting, challenging, or unpredictable, but most importantly, they customize musical selections of a specific group to the members that are on hand, since not all corps members will necessarily be present at every muster. As one snare drummer suggested, “It’s not as easy as it sounds. People who haven’t shown up for rehearsals show up to march in the muster parades. Calling out tunes means customizing [the repertory] to the people you have marching at any given time” (Murray, Fieldnotes 2015c). From a Peircean standpoint, cognitive states must be balanced and regulated within the Thirdness of human perception in order for musicians to enjoy acts of performance. Flow and communitás evolve out of states of being that are best described as a state of Secondness, because they mediate pure perception (a first) with agreed upon signals in the context of playing memorized music, which involves habit and training (which are all thirds). Judith Becker notes, “trancing” is a common emotional byproduct of musical performance as deep listening or performing music may induce the feeling of time stopping altogether (Becker 2004:133). This involves a Firstness of experience that may only be comprehended after the fact, as raw emotional experience gives way to higher order signs of perception. I invoke Peirce’s ontological categories here in order to highlight the processual juggling act that CRV musicians must enact as they receive information from both their physical and sonic
environments. My discussions with fifers and drummers indicated that parades are intense and immersive sensory events in both emotional and physical ways. They are performed while wearing hot, (often woolen) uniforms in addition to carrying (in the case of drummers) heavy instruments around their necks or shoulders, usually during the height of summer. Informants spoke frequently about the physicality of playing and moving to music, how fast or slow they marched, and suggested that that it was common to play “as loud as they possibly could” at events like jams (Murray 2014-b). Furthermore, conversations indicated that musicians were acutely aware of acoustic environments and were, to a large degree, cognizant of how this environment affected them. In reflective sound spaces such as parades for example, response is often consciously and unconsciously registered:

You really feed off the crowd. If you go down the street and there’s nobody there and you get one of those sections of parade when there’s nobody around, or the crowd is absolutely dead, you’re just going down and playing music and you’re doing your thing…If the crowd’s excited…you play better and they’re more excited, and vice versa. So it actually makes a better experience if the crowd’s alive. (Elliot 2013:4-5).

Crowd noise and response is one type of what I term “near-field sound,” or sound that is produced and primarily consumed within in the arena of space closest to the musician as it is produced. This would also include first order keynote sounds. Both kinds of sounds have the capability of causing visceral, emotional interpretants.

“F-Troop” is an informal addendum to the muster parade that happens at larger musters, named for the 1960s era ABC television series “F-Troop” (1965-1967) The occur when younger musicians who have finished the parade with their own groups run back to the start to march it again with friends and other members of the community.
This tradition is still a relatively new for this community, as several older informants later explained:

**Male informant:** The original F-Troop was actually formed by a bunch of guys who had been in the [U.S. Army] Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, and had been discharged out. And it became sort of an add-on, playing together, type of group. They formed at the first F-Troop Muster, which was held up in Manchester Connecticut back in the mid-1970s.

**Female informant:** So F-Troop actually had a muster…

**Male informant:** Yeah, F-Troop actually had a muster. It wasn’t very big, it was more word of mouth. I actually went to the first or the second, but the first group performed and went on stand at both the DR Muster and the Westbrook muster way back then. The term “F-Troop” though, morphed into a group of musicians that would form at the end of a parade – originally fifers and drummers whose corps were not there for whatever reason and these individuals would go to the end of the parade route, and march after the last official corps that was in the muster that day.

**Female informant:** So was that original F-Troop – they were retired Old Guard people? Were they still a coherent unit then? Did they invite other people to come in?

**Male informant:** Not really. Some of the other guys who are from the Old Guard could probably give you a bigger history of it, but people think that the term F-Troop was just the fifers and drummers that formed at the end parade – no it was an actual F-Troop that was formed by discharged members of the Old Guard.

(Murray 2014 Fieldnotes-a)

Sue Cifaldi points out that the naming of this practice was coined by a fifer named Ed Olsen, who created the tradition in an attempt to unify the fife and drum community during a time of relative disharmony and disorganization: “he [Olsen] gave us a lexicon— “jollification,” “muster,” “circle of friendship,” “tattoo,” “F-Troop,” “standpiece,” “sutler”— some of which he slyly slipped into the jargon of the Ancients and others that developed around it” (History of the Ancients blog 2015). Whatever its origins, the impromptu practice of integrating any fifers, drummers, or guardsman of any age or
corps affiliation at the end of a muster, was yet another display of reserved, stoic
identification with local townships, followed by much more relaxed statement of social
integration that personal and local levels of identity.

The parade has ended and I am sitting beneath Moodus’ tent, feeling
generally paranoid about keeping track of my electronic gear and the
rapidly dropping power levels on each piece... I spread each item out in
front of me and nervously begin sifting through my gear bag and pockets
for unused batteries. Hurriedly, a Moodus fifer interrupts to tell me that the
parade is not over yet and that it is absolutely necessary that I see the “F-
Troop.” With no idea what she means, I take my camera back up to the
rocky knoll and start filming again. One last corps comes into view.
Spanning almost a block and a half, it sounds like last night’s jam and is
composed of a collection of members of every age, from the forty-one
participating corps. Some still wear their corps uniforms or pieces of them.
Many are dressed in street clothing – jeans, tie-dye shirts, and
sunglasses. A boy marches by wearing a fake mustache, while a row of
fifers directly behind, talk amongst themselves, laughing and waving to
people in the crowd. Some of the fifers march brightly colored, acrylic
models – each with a distinct look: camouflage, translucent orange, green
and blue; drummers play instruments of varying dimensions and
decoration: some with painted “Moeller eagles “or modern-looking lacquer
fares, and others with tack Patterns reminiscent of older models. Unlike
the groups that passed by earlier, this combination of members from all
the corps projects an incredibly relaxed vibe and their expressions openly
convey happy states.

(Murray 2014 Fieldnotes-a)

**Sound Event Four: Stand Performances**

Following the completion of the parade route by the F-Troop, “stand
performances,” or short concertized presentations, are presented by each of the
attending corps. First, the “Star Spangled Banner” is performed, followed by “The
Company Prayer” (Figure 3-4) immediately following.

During stand performances, the corps are staged one by one in an area called
“the chute,” to wait until the previous corps finishes and begins marching off the field.
When the signal is given, the next corps marches onto the field to a position in front of a
“review stand,” staffed by people from the hosting corps. At this point, relevant facts about place of origin, distance traveled to perform, and the name of each piece to be performed are read over a PA system. After completion of the stand performance, each corps is given a commemorative ribbon. At larger musters, once stand performances have concluded, jamming commences and a “circle of friendship” is formed. At smaller musters, such as *Thunder in the Valley*, circles are skipped and jams take place on a much smaller scale, oftentimes around a campfire or, as I observed in one case, under the bar tent.

Ancient musters are as we have seen, a series of interconnected, semiotically dense and immersive musical sound events that interact with their environments to create “feed-back” in the form of loud, expansive packages of signs, which can have direct impacts on participants’ social and musical experiences of identity. For CRV musicians, musters mix music, produce strong emotions, convert sensory experiences into lived experiences – all things that may inevitably become bound up with family, friends, town, state, and interpretive notions of history, as instruments, uniforms, places, and repertory may be re-experienced in ways that feel creative, affirming, grounded.

As Schafer says:

> Touch is the most personal of the senses. Hearing and touch meet where the lower frequencies of audible sound pass over to tactile vibrations at about 20 hertz. Hearing is a way of touching at a distance and the intimacy of the first sense is fused with the sociability whenever people gather together to hear something special. (Shafer 1977:11)

Thus, musters are pre-structured sequences of events providing a context for making contact with and expressing the self, others, and place in ways that are predictable because both the material and human ingredients have been codified and naturalized,
but not necessarily fixed. They are sculpted with instruments repertoire and collective memories that connect these musicians to place and to each other, to a sense of history as well as to the present day.

Figure 3-1. The Tattoo and Muster Proper.
Figure 3-2. Google map image of the Deep River Muster parade route to Devitt’s Field.
Figure 3-3. Satellite image of Devitt’s Field.
Almighty God, Father of Freedom, Author of the Blessings of Liberty: We thank you for the great company of Ancient musicians who, in their several generations, have been instruments in the search for human dignity and messengers in the pursuit of happiness: We commend all who have marched before us into Your safekeeping, seeking for ourselves such wisdom and understanding as may strengthen us as citizens of a free society, inspiring in others a like desire by our music and example: We ask Your protection for fifers and drummers throughout the land and the hope of Your Divine Providence for all men. (Murray 2014 Fieldnotes-a).

Figure 3-4. Muster Prayer
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tim Murray earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from the University of North Texas in 2003, and a master of music with a concentration in ethnomusicology from the University of Florida in 2017. He lives in Archer, Florida and is currently pursuing a PhD in music with a concentration in Ethnomusicology at the University of Florida. His research interests include the study of world, folk and popular musics, place and identity in music, phenomenology, and Peircean semiotics.