

Introduction

Performing arts in prisons - creative perspectives

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The aim of this book is to bring together a collection of essays and perspectives that draw attention to the diversity of positive experiences that have been generated through engagement with the performing arts in prisons. The authors are researchers, activists, professionals, artists and former prisoners. The diversity is important. It represents the multi-vocal and multi-perspective landscape of the arts in prisons.

In prison arts literature, the two main approaches to work have been either to align with the intentions of offender rehabilitation, or to take an aesthetic stance, where the emphasis is upon the inherent value of the arts practice itself. While there may be a degree of crossover between these two approaches, this intentionality often frames the kind of work that is delivered. It is also often somewhat ambiguous. There are artists that outwardly resist change agendas and identify themselves primarily as art makers, and yet when asked to identify the benefits of their work, talk in terms of individual 'transformation'. Similarly, arts practices that are situated within a rehabilitation framework often reduce the value of their work to their effect upon dynamic risk factors or recidivism rates, ignoring the broader value of the practice. This book seeks to explore these positions and the questions raised in order to translate the language of artists *and* criminal justice agencies and encourage arts practitioners to explore and clarify their intentions.

The history of criminology and offender rehabilitation is not one of steady progress and refinement, but rather constant revision, recycling of justifications and policies, and slow moments of progress that all too often are forgotten or neglected for the next new policy manifesto. As Young (1994: 71) observes, 'theory emerges out of a certain social and political conjuncture: this generates points of sensitivity and areas of blindness which inhibit the development of a general theory'. Arts practitioners are subject to the mercurial criminal justice ecology and the sudden political shunts that often occur as a result of a security breach or an evangelical new government determined to make its mark on such a seemingly intransigent sector. In a book about prison arts, context is everything. It shapes and informs the design of programmes and projects, and where good arts practice develops, it is in dialogue with these elemental factors. It is this dialogue that has the capacity to enrich, add to and support the work of those professionals who genuinely want to make a difference in prisons.

In this chapter, we provide some context to the discourse and practice of performing arts in prisons. All community-based or participatory projects are shaped and influenced by the history and ecology of the contexts in which they operate, and are required to justify the merits of bringing the arts into secure environments. Often, support for arts projects comes

from those working in education, recreation or welfare areas of correctional environments. From here, partnerships and projects are often developed, often in ad hoc ways. The financial, policy and access constraints previously mentioned often lead to one-off or short-lived projects. Rather surprisingly, however, the field has also been characterized by some arts companies and practitioners that have sustained themselves over decades of shifting and challenging policy environments, often surviving longer than arts organizations operating in traditional non-prison contexts. The sheer inventiveness of different funding models is astonishing, pointing to the resilience of arts practitioners who believe in the principles of arts in prisons, and that projects will happen – funding or not. Indeed, a number of the projects featured in the book have been sustained through voluntary models of practice. Others use funding from other community projects to support their prison work, or are subsidized by employment with universities or bigger institutions. This economic precariousness, while a feature of all arts work, is intensified in a prison context, where funders either don't see prison-based work as 'pure' art or question the validity of working in communities of convicted criminals. Whilst the uncertainty of funding varies across jurisdictions, some such as the United Kingdom having a stronger tradition of support for prison arts practice from charities and prison reform organizations, which has resulted in broader recognition of the value of arts-based work in UK correctional contexts.

The context of prison

The broad international trend in the last decade has been an ever-growing increase in using prison as a system of deterrence, punishment and to some degree rehabilitation. According to statistics generated by World Prison Brief (2017), 10.35 million people are imprisoned worldwide. Nearly half of the world's prisoners are in the United States (more than 2.2 million), China (more than 1.65 million), Russia (640,000) and Brazil (607,000). Among the countries with the highest prison population rates (numbers of prisoners per 100,000 of national population) are the United States (698), Turkmenistan (583) and Cuba (510), while countries with the lowest prison population rates include Nigeria (31), India (33) and Japan (48). More than 700,000 women and girls are held in prisons throughout the world. The costs of crime to any nation are high. In the United States, the total spending on incarceration in 2016 was \$80 billion, or more than \$260 per person (White House Archives 2016: 5). In Europe, the cost is €25.4 billion a year and in Australia the daily cost of incarceration per inmate is A\$292 per day on average. A recent policy document published by the White House assessed the economic cost-benefit argument for incarceration compared with two other policy approaches to crime, it found that:

- A \$10 billion dollar increase in incarceration spending would reduce crime by 1 to 4 per cent (or 55,000 to 340,000 crimes) and have a net societal benefit of between \$1 billion and \$8 billion dollars.

- A \$10 billion dollar investment in police hiring would decrease crime by 5 to 16 per cent (440,000 to 1.5 million crimes), and have a net societal benefit of between \$4 billion and \$38 billion dollars.
- Drawing on literature that finds that higher wages for low-income individuals reduce crime by providing viable and sustainable employment, the US Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) found that raising the minimum wage to \$12 by 2020 would result in a 3 to 5 per cent crime decrease (250,000 to 510,000 crimes) and a societal benefit of \$8 to \$17 billion dollars (White House Archives 2016: 6).

Criminology and penal studies offer complex and often contested evidence for and against the benefits of prisons. The prison as a concept and as an instrument of control and punishment continues to exist as a 'detestable solution' (Foucault 2012: 232). Arts practitioners work within the contradictions of a system in which there is a duality of focus: the state's wish for punishment and the need for deterrence, as well as a focus on rehabilitation. One of the core rationales for prisons is that they act as a deterrence to further crime. Yet recidivism is very high, with between 52 and 57 per cent of prisoners in Australia having served a sentence in an adult prison prior to their current episode (Dawe 2007: 14). The large number of prisoners returning to the community after the completion of their sentence also has significant implications. The social costs may include homelessness, disenfranchisement, weakened family structures and negative effects on community cohesion (Graffam and Shinkfield 2006: 23–24). In light of this, research findings from Canada, the United States of America and the United Kingdom confirm that appropriately supported rehabilitation programmes (education, training, work schemes) for adult prisoners can save the community the costs associated with repeat criminal behaviour (Dawe 2007: 19).

While the cost of recidivism is a major influence behind the provision of programmes, the social, cultural and educational outcomes of such programmes also have strong national significance. The rehabilitation agenda (broadly interpreted) has been a consistent element of the disciplinary architecture of criminology since the first prison came into existence. As Day notes in Chapter 3 of this volume, the commitment to rehabilitation philosophy is strongly integrated into the prison system in most jurisdictions. In Australia, as in other territories, this dates back to the first penal colonies on Norfolk Island. The concept of prison simply as punishment has had its vocal advocates, but has always been accompanied by the imperative for reform, re-education and support for individuals following release. Such pragmatism is governed by a hope that where the punishment fails, rehabilitation might succeed. Since the development of the 'what works?' approach in the 1990s, evidence-based rehabilitation programmes have continued to attract significant investment (in terms of training, design, implementation and evaluation), and have been required to respond to increased benchmarking.

These initiatives have been supported by a robust body of evidence demonstrating that rehabilitative efforts are generally successful in reducing recidivism (Andrews and Bonta 2010). Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that without rehabilitation, sanctions

and incarceration alone may result in increased rates of reoffending (Chen and Shapiro 2007). As the cost of prisons have grown, so too has the demand for accountability and transparency, in an economic climate in which most (Western) societies are only just emerging from a context of austerity. The growing trend in the criminal justice systems internationally is to a greater or lesser extent to develop structured treatment programmes that explicitly aim to impact offending behaviour. In Australia, for example, the Australian Offender Programme Standards sets out a compliance framework that requires offender rehabilitation programmes to adhere to criteria that include an articulated model of change, be empirically validated, and that address the needs of the target group at which it is aimed. This new framework provides a context for arts practitioners working in this context, where correctional departments' limited resources are spent on programmes that meet these standards. As Day notes in Chapter 3 of this volume: 'it is increasingly clear that correctional services have neither the will nor the budgets to support activities that are not clearly linked to their key performance indicators.'

Arts in prisons contexts

Arts in prisons programmes have been a steady part of these developments (at least since the early 1980s), with some prison arts practice informed by rehabilitation theories (such as the work of Geese Theatre). More recently, there appears to be a growing confidence in articulating a distinctive rationale, that while prison arts practice can align with the rehabilitation agenda on the one hand, it also can prioritize the unique qualities of art making on the other. Parkes and Bilby (2010) refer to a growing body of international literature that recognizes the distinctive role that performing arts programmes can play in prisoner rehabilitation, education, wellbeing and reintegration. This resonates with recent Australian public policy that acknowledges the importance of building strong communities and the role that social participation in arts-based programmes can play in the behaviour and experiences of those in custody (ABS 2013).

The issue for arts practice is that some of the most significant benefits and values of the arts lie in the affective realms, often difficult to articulate in terms of rehabilitation outcomes and programme standard criteria. Arts practice is often surprising, emotional, personal, subjective and relational. The artistic process is a highly skilled and nuanced combination of methods, reflections and pedagogies, where quality and meaning is often manifest in the personal relationships that exist between facilitator and participant. At the same time those within the prison system that might understand the benefits and values of arts work also need a strong rationale to leverage spending on arts programmes. The real imperative is for arts practitioners to clearly articulate their rationale, intentions and approach in a way that aligns with correctional intentions while not compromising the unique aesthetic qualities of the work.

The prison arts field calls for consistency, commitment and flexibility – perhaps even more so than other sectors. Some practitioners have worked with or without funding because of their core belief in the work, while others have subsidized prison work through other community arts initiatives. Still others have aligned themselves with key areas of institutional operations (cognitive behavioural group work, criminogenic awareness and education and so on). The arts operate in this institutional ecology with considerable tenacity and through hard-earned respect won over long periods of time. Arts practitioners walk the line between inclusion in and exclusion from the operational system. Arts projects have their fans and advocates as well as their detractors and saboteurs. Negotiating these levels of support is a fine art, which calls for diplomacy, care and a very thick skin. At the same time, the progressive elements of the prison system that might understand the benefits and values of arts work also need evidence or a strong rationale to leverage spending on an arts programme. And while reducing recidivism may seem a desirable, measurable and politically opportune goal for performing arts in prisons programmes, it is in fact rather dubious, almost impossible to prove and falls short of the full breadth and depth of the potential of such programmes.

As the contemporary field developed in the 1980s and 1990s, so too did the need for evaluation, research and evidence to support the claims and rationales for the work. In the 1990s, the Unit for Arts and Offenders, and Balfour and Poole (1998) advocated for evaluation methodologies to be incorporated into the work of practitioners, and in more recent years this call has been heeded – at least in the United Kingdom. In 2011, The Arts Alliance (UK), which developed out of the Unit for Arts and Offenders, commissioned an evidence library: a catalogue of research on the effectiveness of arts organizations in the criminal justice sector and an assessment of the viability of providing an online catalogue of research. While a small number of studies documented in that work are published in (peer-reviewed) academic journals, the majority of the work cited is ‘grey literature’ – either unpublished evaluations available by request through an arts organization or documents published on an organization’s website.

The evidence library builds on a previous literature review, *Doing the Arts Justice* (Hughes 2005), which was commissioned by Arts Council England, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Offenders’ Learning and Skills Unit at the UK Department for Education and Skills. Hughes’ substantial report provided a significant literature review with a clear account of the current evidence and theory base for the arts in the criminal justice sector.

Hughes (2005: 53) presents a number of major thematic strands in arts practice in the criminal justice sector, which can be summarized as follows:

- Arts to enrich the prison curriculum (where arts-based programmes enhance basic skills training in areas such as parenting and family relationships)
- Arts education (classes to develop skills in specific art forms such as music education or painting classes)

- Arts as therapeutic interventions (arts-based therapy or as a tool in a broader intervention programme)
- Arts as adjunctive therapy (arts practice with broad personal and social development aims that develop readiness for future interventions or as an adjunct to intervention programmes)
- Arts for participation and citizenship (arts practice that prepares offenders to play a positive role in the community or arts programmes, based on restorative justice models or generative activities/contribution to community)
- Arts as a cultural right (arts for social inclusion, based on the idea that everyone has right of access to high-quality arts opportunities and cultural experience)

The 2010 report by New Philanthropy Capital commissioned by the Arts Alliance, *Unlocking Value: The Economic Benefit of the Arts in Criminal Justice* (Johnson et al. 2011), evaluates the economic benefits of arts interventions. This document assesses the economic benefits of three arts programmes with ex-offenders in the United Kingdom. Reference is made to the progress made since the Hughes report: ‘Six years on, the number and quality of evaluations has increased [...] yet the sector continues to face significant challenges in demonstrating its effectiveness’ (Johnson et al. 2011: 10). The Arts Alliance has also published a guide to evaluating arts projects for arts practitioners in criminal justice settings, *Demonstrating the Value of Arts in Criminal Justice* (Ellis and Gregory 2011), developed by the Charities Evaluation Services; it provides practical assistance in designing methods for formal evaluation. Clearly the message is now being delivered that evaluation and documentation are required to sustain access and support and gain funding for work in this area – at least in the United Kingdom. These publications originate from the United Kingdom against the backdrop of the drive towards evidence-based policy and practice in the criminal justice arena, and demands from the Home Office in terms of standards for research.

Within this body of international research, there is also a growing recognition that arts-based programmes, in particular those that focus on the performing arts (music, theatre, dance and circus) can offer a useful adjunct to prisoner rehabilitation. Over the past two decades, international research has shown that arts-based programmes ‘can provide the necessary motivation to engage the most disaffected prisoners and empower them to take part in other prison-based interventions and programmes’ (Parkes and Bilby 2010: 102). This literature suggests that arts-based programmes can reduce episodes of prisoner violence and anger, improve prisoners’ communication skills with peers and their families, and re-shape prisoners’ identities leading to an increased sense of self-efficacy and improved relationships (see Clawson and Coolbaugh 2001; Parsons and Warner-Robbins 2002). Such pedagogical, skills-based and therapeutic outcomes are highly relevant to corrective service providers charged with the responsibility of managing prisons and delivering more effective rehabilitation and reintegration services. This collection provides illustrations of

various approaches to prison arts practice, together with insights from policy, corrections and criminology experts, and participants.

Captive Audiences

The Captive Audiences research was a deliberate attempt at exploring the intersections of artistic value and institutional goals and priorities. The Captive Audiences research team identified dozens of projects across Australia and selected five case studies that use the performing arts in corrections in diverse ways. With each case study, the research team conducted interviews with artists and stakeholder groups, observed the practices and performances, attended workshops and training sessions and collated relevant materials. The following summary provides an overview of each of the case studies:

Somebody's Daughter Theatre *Melbourne, Victoria*

For more than three decades, Somebody's Daughter Theatre (SDT) has been producing high-quality theatre, music and art with women in prison, post release and with marginalized young people. SDT works with the most disenfranchised over the longer term with the aim of 'breaking intergenerational cycles of abuse, addiction and institutionalisation by providing pathways back into formal education, training or employment'. SDT is one of the leading pioneers of prison theatre work with women in Australia, and the practice observed through this case study demonstrates the strength of long-term partnerships with institutions, the benefits of year-round performing arts skills development and the rich rewards of participants performing high-quality well-produced shows based on real stories to prison and non-prison audiences. A flagship of Australian prison arts, this company demonstrates the potential of long-term projects.

DRUMBEAT *Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Perth, Western Australia, and nationwide*

DRUMBEAT is a ten-week manualized drumming programme that is used in a number of prison, community and education settings in Australia and New Zealand. The programme focuses on rhythmic activities that support teamwork and lead to introspection on a range of life issues including communication, peer pressure and social responsibility. DRUMBEAT also provides an extensive training programme that allows anybody to become accredited as a DRUMBEAT facilitator, and as a result prison staff can be trained to deliver this programme. DRUMBEAT is one of the few manualized arts programmes offered in Australian prisons. It provides clear goals to assist with correctional service delivery, which can be measured and evaluated. The choice of the drum plays a key role in the participants' experience, given the

instrument's accessibility and strong social dimension. The focus on easy access for both participants and facilitators does significantly influence the programmes' musical outcomes, given there is a reasonably low level of musical demand.

One Mob Different Country Darwin, Northern Territory

Dance plays a significant role in the lives of Australia's First Peoples. Dances tell stories of the Dreamtime or may be performed as a public celebration of a particular event. As with many of the ties to First Peoples traditional past, ongoing colonization continues to dismantle and decay traditional ways. The One Mob Different Country case study involved analysing the cultural connection between First People and dance albeit via a prison sentence. Through interviewing and following the dancers intermittently over three years, the One Mob Different Country case study details how the dancers have negotiated skin group differences and cultural rules around dance performance. Negotiating these cultural rules allows prisoners from different clans to perform other clan's dances on land other than their own. While it is very concerning that the One Mob dancers have been enabled by the vast over-representation of First Peoples in prison, the positive outcome is that the institution of prison has provided a mechanism for the non-traditional extension of songlines. In doing so, One Mob provides a link to ancestral past or current events to be celebrated through dance and in doing so, building prisoner self-worth.

Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble (QSE) Prison Shakespeare Project Brisbane, Queensland

The Prison Shakespeare Project (PSP) works with up to 20 prisoners each year, culminating in the performance of a Shakespeare play. The Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble (QSE) has run the project each year since its inception in 2006. The project utilizes a combination of Shakespearean text and Theatre of the Oppressed drama games to create trust and emotional safety for the participants. QSE has developed a sophisticated synthesis of traditional text-based theatre and drama workshops and games. The prisoners rehearse and perform a chosen Shakespeare play that is performed within the prison. The practice seeks to enhance prisoners' communication, literacy, collaborative skills and empathy.

Unlocked Kempsey and various other locations in New South Wales

Unlocked is a self-funded initiative of Red Room Company, a not-for-profit organization that aims to create 'unusual and useful poetry projects which transform expectations of, and

experiences with, poetry'. Focusing on the educational domain and positioned within that ambit by all those involved, it takes Australian poets into correctional centres to work with inmates, and stimulating active creative participation. In doing so, it also contributes to fostering cultural access and prisoner wellbeing. Reading selected poems, writing and combining lines inspired by images, playing surreal 'missing words' games and co-writing rap texts create an environment for the inmates' personal expression. The outcomes – recorded and published in hardcopy – provide a strong sense of achievement. Sound in pedagogical approach and impressive in outcomes, the project seems to undersell itself in both educational potential and its contribution to other corrective services aims, which could hopefully lead to more sustainable funding model.

The team's observations of arts practice within Australian prisons saw projects that contributed across a number of domains: cultural access, education, health and wellbeing, prison environment, changing offending behaviour and reintegration. It was evident that, at least in Australia, performing arts projects in prisons take myriad forms. Informally there will always be people drawing, writing poetry or playing a guitar in prison, and this too continues in most correctional facilities in Australia. Some prison education units provide courses in music or drama, with some prisons having specialist facilities such as instruments, recording technology and music rooms. Some rehabilitation programmes utilize arts-based methodologies, such as drumming or offence-related drama-based activities and role-play. NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) week is often a focus for performing arts practice, with many state jurisdictions encouraging culturally significant performing arts opportunities at this time for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners.

Given the wealth of practices, it is surprising there has been little research that documents arts-based activities in Australian prisons, especially since corrective services providers express a need for a knowledge base from which to engage, implement and evaluate such activities and programmes. Captive Audiences has sought to make inroads into this line of research by mapping and contextualizing current practice, and by generating a research-based framework for prison arts in Australia based on current practice and extant literature. It is precisely this type of foundational knowledge, which is commonly overlooked in the urgency to deliver and evaluate new services and innovative projects, that has become the focus for this book. Our aim is that this provides a solid basis for future theoretical and evaluative studies.

Finding a common language

Captive Audiences' most common observation throughout the research has been the challenge to find a means of effective dialogue between arts and correctional organizations. Whilst we observed that the intentions of arts facilitators and correctional managers were very similar, it seemed that a common language enabling arts organizations to effectively communicate with corrections was missing. We established a pressing need for a framework that situates performing arts practice within prison contexts: one that assists arts practitioners to develop proposals for relevant and meaningful projects, and which frames correctional



Figure 1: Performing Arts in Prison Service Delivery Framework.

professionals' effective engagement with arts projects and arts-based approaches within programmes and activities.

Emerging from the Captive Audiences research is a practical tool that can assist in the development and management of prison performing arts projects: for arts facilitators it offers a vehicle for reflecting upon the intentions of the project and a language and structure for developing proposals; for correctional managers it offers a framework for understanding the potential contribution of proposed arts projects to the prison, and a language for developing policy and engagement with arts organizations. This framework positions performing arts within two major areas of correctional service delivery, namely *Prisoner Development* and *Humane, Effective and Safe Prisons*. Arts projects are by their very nature heterogeneous: no two projects are the same, and therefore their contribution to the correctional enterprise is varied, and often multifaceted. Our observations of arts practice within Australian prisons saw projects that contributed across a number of domains: cultural access, education, health and wellbeing, prison environment, changing offending behaviour and reintegration. The framework is not intended to stifle practice, but rather to give each practice the opportunity to make explicit its goals and contributions to the correctional agenda.

Developing and assessing performing arts proposals

Captive Audiences identified a need for guidelines in developing and assessing proposals for performing arts project delivery in Australian prisons. A recommendation arising from both fieldwork interviews and the steering committee was to use a logic model approach for project development, management and evaluation, situated within a relevant theoretical framework. Logic models are used extensively within both correctional and arts management to develop projects and build common understanding amongst stakeholders. Working through a logic model process also helps to ensure that any evaluations yield relevant, useful information based on the intentions and assumptions of the project.

A prison arts proposal using the logic model could include:

1. **Situational analysis:** What are the perceived needs? Why are we doing this project? (e.g. *lack of engaging rehabilitation services for a distinct prisoner group; need for development of the educational curriculum in ways that are relevant to a prisoner population; low motivation among prisoners for engagement in prison activities and programmes.*)
2. **Goals:** How is this project meeting this perceived need? Phrase your goal in terms of the change you want to achieve over the life of your project, rather than a summary of the services you are going to provide (e.g. *developing links with community and culture for*

Aboriginal prisoners in this prison; motivating prisoners to engage with literacy through poetry and performance.)

3. **Assumptions:** What assumptions are we making? (*e.g. arts projects can assist in the rehabilitation of prisoners; cultural expression is a basic human right.*)
4. **Intentions of the project in terms of correctional service delivery:** How does this project fit in with the service delivery of the prison? (*Refer here to the positioning of the project in terms of the framework outlined on the centre page.*)
5. **Project inputs:** What resources are necessary for completing the activities? (i.e. human, financial, organizational, community or systems resources in any combination.) How will these assets/resources be gained? (*e.g. physical facilities, costumes, sets, art supplies, musical instruments, funding of the project, facilitator skills, approvals, sufficient prison access, staff support, willing participants.*)
6. **Project activities:** What are the specific actions that make up the project? Describe the activities involved in the project (*e.g. theatre games; song writing; group reflection; rehearsing a play*) in line with the project's aims and goals, appropriate for the participants, the facility, the technology, the resources of the facilitators, the intended artistic outcome and the intended instrumental outcome. Include detailed descriptions covering the duration and intensity of the project activities.
7. **Project outputs:** What are the creative outputs (*e.g. theatre performance; film; published material; songs; dances*)? Describe these in detail (including audience type and anticipated number; numbers of prisoners involved and in what roles; what happens to any creative product or data generated by the project).
8. **Short-term outcomes:** What are the projected immediate and tangible benefits of the project? Ensure that projected outcomes are linked with stated resources and activities.
9. **Intermediate-term outcomes:** What are the next projected results or impacts that occur because of the project activities? Document expected changes in programme participants, the organization, the prison and/or the community as a result of the programme. Include specific changes in awareness, knowledge, skills and behaviours. Include any previous evaluation data here. These link your short-term outcomes with long-term outcomes as a logical progression and must remain within the scope of the programme's control or sphere of reasonable influence and be generally accepted as valid by various stakeholders of the project.
10. **Long-term outcomes:** What change do you hope will occur over time? Long-term outcomes are those that result from the achievement of your short- and intermediate-term outcomes. They are also generally outcomes over which your programme has a less direct influence. Often long-term outcomes will occur beyond the timeframe you identified for your logic model.

Clearly articulating approaches to prison work and/or governing philosophical rationales helps both arts practitioners and criminal justice organizations communicate more

effectively. Issues of evidence and efficacy become more realistically aligned with what the arts can and cannot achieve. As the case studies highlight, each prison arts project will have different intentions, methods and media; however, communicating their intention and process with clarity and coherence is critical if the arts are to be supported and maintained within criminal justice environments.

Organization of the book

This book brings together a range of voices, experiences and expertise. From criminologists to theatre social activists, from highly skilled music practitioners drawing on cognitive behavioural theories to the perspectives of ex-prisoners. Reflecting the diversity of international prison arts work, this book explores how the arts have adapted to working with different groups and individuals in prison in imaginative and innovative ways.

The book starts with Andrew Day's chapter that examines the ways in which arts practice is viewed within the criminological and policy literature, and its growing precarity in an ecology driven by increasing standardization of offender programmes and evidence-based accountability. He notes the different rationalizations and diversity of arts practice, but cautions that arts practitioners need to be alert to their own justifications as well as being able to support their position with some degree of credible research. It is an important perspective, which calls for prison arts to have greater precision and clarity in the language and rationale for the work.

This is followed by a fascinating interview with Louise Heywood and Andy Watson from Geese Theatre. These arts practitioners have a combined experience of over thirty years of developing highly innovative offence-focused programmes, residencies and group work projects. The interview covers a range of work produced by Geese Theatre, how they have survived and adapted to new policy changes, and how the work integrates models of change with developing criminological theories like desistance and Ward's Good Lives Model. One Mob Different Country (One Mob) outlines the extraordinary work of a dance group in the Darwin Prison Precinct in the Northern Territory, Australia. As John Rynne, Dennis Lew Fatt and Brett Schroder discuss in Chapter 3, One Mob is not only unique in overcoming the logistical issues of performing traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance in a maximum-security prison; more importantly, the dancers have overcome skin group differences and cultural rules around dance that enables members from different skin groups, moieties and clans to perform and share others' dances. The work of One Mob highlights the chronic issue of First Peoples' incarceration in Australia with current statistics recording that First People represent 86 per cent of the prison population in the Northern Territory. This is comparative to the First Peoples in the United States, Canada, New Zealand and parts of Latin America. The chapter highlights the benefits of enabling subjugated knowledges to be represented and performed, and raises questions about the notion of standardized programmes that are designed as one-size-fits-all models. It also questions the

notion of constructing an evidence base using western paradigms of evaluation. This is not to undermine the need for research and evaluation, but rather to call into question the ethics and assumptions of particular approaches to evidence and understanding.

Chapter 4, by Sarah Woodland, reflects on the value of drama in a women's prison. It explores how concepts of *value* align with the notion of reform and the rehabilitation of prisoners. The chapter draws on recent studies that aim to bring more theoretical rigour to the question of how and why we should value the arts and culture, particularly in community and participatory contexts. Woodland illustrates this through her professional development over three theatre projects at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre in Queensland, Australia, examining with considerable honesty how her practice has become responsive to the needs and interests of the women participants, and how notions of social, cultural and aesthetic value have formed and shifted around her work.

Anya's (pseudonym) chapter offers further insights by providing a first-hand perspective of prisoners. The chapter charts her personal journey through incarceration, and the ways in which she first encountered a prison theatre project. She describes what the experience taught her, how she was impacted by the process and how she sees the values and benefits of performing to audiences both inside and outside the context of the prison. While individual voices, in research terms, may be dismissed as subjective and anecdotal, the richness of Anya's insights and her ability to articulate and analyse her experience provide a powerful narrative about the ways in which engagement is understood and felt.

In an interesting juxtaposition, the arts project involving Anya is explored in depth in the next chapter by theatre-maker and psychologist Linda Davey. Davey's chapter connects criminological theory and arts practice, exploring the potential for offender change in correctional contexts through performance-based theatre. Drawing on criminologist Fergus McNeill's (2014) argument that social and moral change at the level of the offender/community interface is integral to successful desistance from crime, the chapter posits that public performance can mediate this interface, providing unique opportunities for offenders and their community to begin to repair their relational breach.

Much like Geese Theatre's work, the Rhythm2Recovery DRUMBEAT programme adapts and translates cognitive behavioural theories into aesthetic group work practice. The programme focuses on rhythmic activities that support teamwork and lead to 'introspection' on a range of life issues including communication, peer pressure and social responsibility. In Chapter 7, Simon Faulkner and Brydie-Leigh Bartleet describe the development of the programme and examine the key role that the drum plays in the participants' experience and the ways in which it provides easy access, a physical outlet and a strong social and team work dimension in group settings.

Jacqui Moyes is, as far as we know, the only National Arts in Corrections Adviser in the world! In Chapter 8, she discusses the delivery of creative projects in New Zealand prisons, specifically the importance of Māori performing arts, and the value of creative collaboration with prisoners and community partnerships. As Moyes outlines, the Arts in Corrections Adviser sits between the spaces of creativity and containment, providing a translation service

between artists and custodial staff. The adviser makes visible the projects and programmes that often get dismissed as ‘constructive activities.’ It is part of her job to encourage, promote and document arts practice in these settings.

Rob Pensalfini charts a very different approach to the arts in Chapter 9 that maps out the unique and rich history of Prison Shakespeare across the globe. Pensalfini argues for the benefits and impact of performance as an important and critical part of an arts-in-prisons approach. Drawing on his theatre work in prisons over the last five years, and exploring the growing literature and practice of Prison Shakespeare work, he articulates the ways in which performance events in prison create multiple impacts for participants, prison staff, families and general audiences.

In Chapter 10, Penelope Glass offers another complex example of a long-running programme that has managed to survive and exist in the harsh conditions of the Chilean prison system since 2002: the *Fénix e Ilusiones Theatre Collective*, a group of actor-prisoners. The chapter outlines a very different methodology, philosophy and approach to arts in prisons. *Collectivo Sustento* guides the work of the prisoner-actors, collectively designing and performing group-devised theatre shows about social issues. The chapter discusses a recent initiative that sees the actor-prisoners’ tour to juvenile detention centres to perform and talk about experiences of prison. As the authors argue, the arts work has been created ‘within the context of a country beleaguered by a brutal neoliberal system, where social engagement has been one of the major losers.’ The chapter documents and seeks to illustrate through the words of the collective the ways in which theatre may be seen as a powerful vehicle for communication and engagement.

These politics of resistance and advocacy – not just against a criminal justice system, but about the damaging aspects of neo-liberal cultures that create inequality and injustice – are echoed in the passionate practice of Maud Clarke’s discussion of *Somebody’s Daughter Theatre (SDT)* in Chapter 11. Along with *Geese Theatre* and *Clean Break* in the United Kingdom, SDT has one of the longest-running prison theatre programmes in the world. The company has worked with women in Victoria’s prison system since 1980. The programme runs throughout the year, with music and drama skills workshops, culminating in an annual devised high-quality performance for inside and outside audiences. As Clarke points out, the company has always resisted the ‘rehabilitation’ tag, arguing vociferously for ‘trusting the power of the arts’ first and foremost. Like Glass and the *Collectivo*, the programme is collectively designed and developed. The long-term nature of the project, both in terms of history in the prison and the year-round arts activities, creates a high skills base in the group, and strong elements of autonomy and agency in the content and structure of the programme.

Interestingly, this runs counter to many women’s rehabilitation programmes that are (often) short term, facilitator led and designed by evidence-based research. Day’s (Chapter 1) point here would be that even though these arts projects are unconventional in their methodology (and politics), it would still be strategic to be clear about the value, benefits and worth of the work beyond a purely faith-based advocacy. Nevertheless, SDT and Glass demonstrate that the arts can be highly and surprisingly sustainable in contested contexts where such projects are normally fairly short term and transitive, strong evidence based or not.

Mary L. Cohen provides a brief introduction to performing arts programmes in US prisons in Chapter 12, with an emphasis on musical activities led primarily by volunteers from outside prisons. Because of mass incarceration in the United States, a necessary step towards downsizing prisons and making positive changes in criminal justice is an emphasis on secondary and tertiary desistance (McNeill and Schinkel 2016). Secondary desistance is the shift towards positive identity for people who are incarcerated. Cohen argues that a parallel shift needs to occur where the general public perceives the human needs of people in prison – similar to ideas in tertiary desistance: the social and political influences that impact the extent to which former inmates can desist from crime. This chapter explores how restorative and transformative justice can provide a grounding theoretical framework for performing arts programmes in prisons, and highlights some examples: theatre programmes, instrumental music programmes, performing arts organizations for youth, multi-arts programmes in adult facilities and prison choirs in adult facilities.

In Chapter 13, Johanna Featherstone and Huib Schippers explore Unlocked, an innovative creative literacy programme developed and run by Red Room Poetry in collaboration with poets and educational staff from New South Wales correctional centres. The programme develops the potential of inmates through the reflective power of poetry, encouraging self-expression that helps people to write and share their stories to reconnect with their families and communities. Since 2010, Unlocked has worked with over 250 inmates, inviting Australian poets and rappers into Correctional Central to support intensive writing workshops. They work with the students at every stage of the writing process, from the initial exercises and experimentations, through the editing and rewriting process, to recording, performing and publishing their work in meaningful ways.

Chapter 14, by Dudley Billing and Dave Palmer, tells the story of the Murru Band, a unique music collaboration that has evolved from a four-year prison and community programme run by arts and social change organization Big hART in Roebourne, in the West Pilbara region of Western Australia, since 2010. The chapter outlines the community-led, organic origins of this programme, what has been achieved, the processes utilized by Big hART's mentors, some of the challenges faced and the social consequences of the work. It is a story of how music has drawn men back into processes that have always been a part of the cultural and spiritual life of the Ngarluma, Yindjibarndi and Banyjima people.

Conclusion

We are indebted to the many practitioners and professionals that have made this research and book possible. Prison contexts are tough and challenging environments, full of contradictions, tensions and shifting discourses. One of the many lessons learnt from our research process is the importance of meaningful partnerships between people in prisons, criminal justice professionals, researchers and artists. The conversations and willingness to share work and be clear about the challenges has greatly enriched everyone who participated.

Creativity is a rare commodity. Elusive, transitory and beautiful at times. The difficulty is always in capturing the residue, of understanding what beauty leaves behind, of translating a conviction into something that can be understood and shared by even the most cynical. We suspect that the arts in prisons will often be greeted with suspicion, sometimes embraced by those who care, and perhaps, eventually accepted with grudging support. However, the force of passionate commitment, combined with evidence and careful reasoning, is a resilient guardian of hope and sustained struggle. The book, we hope, is on many levels a celebration of, to borrow from States (1985: 1) 'great reckonings in small rooms', and the need to find ways to honour, validate and evidence the meaningful impact of aesthetic acts.

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