

# A Case Study Examining Collaborative Playlist-Making During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

When live music paused during the COVID-19 pandemic, people looked for other opportunities to engage with music. The present case study explored a group of cycling enthusiasts who engaged in a collaborative playlist-making activity during COVID-19, called “*Song of the Day*.” Our two research questions asked: (1) What does the group’s collaborative playlisting process entail? and (2) What were the outcomes of engaging in collaborative playlist-making during the COVID-19 pandemic? Using an exploratory, qualitative approach, we conducted semi-structured interviews with group members ( $N=4$  Australian residents;  $M_{age}=63$ ). Five overarching themes were identified via Thematic Analysis: inspiration and ongoing participation, promoting emotional well-being, bonding, shared and expanded musical engagement, and song selection. Although initially motivated by a simple premise of sharing one song a day to lighten the mood and keep in touch during lockdowns, the playlisting activity guidelines evolved over time. A shift to selecting songs that met stated thematic parameters made the activity challenging and elicited competitiveness and conversation, which fostered continued participation and deepened existing friendships. Engaging in this form of collaborative playlisting sparked enjoyment and nostalgia, fostered group conversation, created opportunities for bonding, and prompted the exploration and discovery of new music and artists. As lockdowns ended, the activity continued, and group members also began attending live, in-person music events together. The group’s use of multiple technologies to share, listen, and discuss extend previous research on collaborative playlist-making and further our understanding of how creative music engagement promotes social connection and well-being.

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Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Melbourne, Australia, experienced harsh lockdown restrictions amounting to 260 days across a series of six separate lockdowns (Macreadie, 2022). To prevent the spread of disease, people were required to stay at home (Agoramoorthy & Hsu, 2021). The long periods of isolation resulted in many negative consequences to people's mental well-being (Newby et al., 2020) and prompted changes to people's everyday lives (Arundell et al., 2021; Sundarassen et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2020). Amongst these changes were music listening behaviours (Carlson et al., 2021; Ghaffari et al., 2023; Ziv, Hollander-Shabtai, 2022). For instance, during pandemic lockdowns, people increased the amount of time they spent listening to music (Carlson et al., 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2021) and explored new music (Cabedo-Mas et al., 2021).

Studies on music listening during COVID-19 provide strong support for the use of music listening to regulate emotions and aid in relaxation (Groarke et al., 2022; Harney et al., 2022; Ziv, Hollander-Shabtai, 2022), reduce stress, depression, and anxiety (Carlson et al., 2021; Mas-Herrero et al., 2023; Vidas et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2024), and provide a distraction or escape (Chmiel et al., 2024; Drake et al., 2024). Moreover, during COVID-19 restrictions in Australia, people reported greater life satisfaction when increasing the amount of music they listened to (Krause et al., 2021; see also Yoo et al., 2023) and an analysis of the lyrics from songs in a crowd-sourced Australian playlist included themes of people desiring closeness and proximity to others as well as having shared experiences and finding positives in bleak times (Putter et al., 2023). These findings are complemented by peri-COVID-19 data that indicates people placed greater value on music listening during COVID-19 relative to pre-COVID-19 times, with many people pointing to music's ability to combat loneliness and promote feelings of social connection and companionship during difficult times (Krause et al., 2025). This work adds to the broader evidence supporting well-being benefits from music engagement (e.g., Dingle et al., 2021; Krause et al., 2018), including social bonding and connection (Dingle et al., 2012; Livesey et al., 2012; Lonsdale & North, 2011), mood and emotion regulation (Dingle et al., 2021; Helsing et al., 2016), stress reduction (Groarke et al., 2019, 2020; Krause et al., 2023; Vidas et al., 2021), and increased life satisfaction (Krause et al., 2021; McQueen et al., 2013; Yoo et al., 2023).

During COVID-19, people turned to music for company more than they recalled doing so pre-outbreak (Kiss & Linnell, 2023). While lockdowns prevented people from attending live music events (Phillips & Krause, 2024), people looked for other opportunities to engage in music to feel socially connected (Fink et al., 2021). This included people's participation in live-streamed concerts, balcony singing and clapping, virtual raves and social media music challenges (Hansen et al., 2021). For some people during COVID-19, music was a social surrogate (Groarke et al., 2022; Krause et al., 2025): in other words, music provided a source of company. The social surrogacy hypothesis suggests humans utilise social surrogates or symbolic social connections to feel connected when physically separated from others (Schäfer & Eerola, 2020); and there is growing research evidence for music's ability to act as a social surrogate (see, for example, Groarke et al., 2022; Krause & Fletcher, 2023; Schäfer & Eerola, 2020). In addition, music induces a sense of nostalgia (Schäfer & Eerola, 2020). Feelings of nostalgia can strengthen social connection (Wildschut et al., 2010), and researchers found that there was an increase in the use of nostalgic media during COVID-19 (Yeung, 2023) which was predictive of one's fear of being isolated during COVID-19 (Wulf et al., 2022).

During COVID-19, people also used online platforms to listen, create, and collaborate with music (Fink et al., 2021). For instance, during lockdowns, a rise in collaborative playlist engagement was observed (Park et al., 2022). Collaborative playlist-making refers to an activity by two or more people centred around the online co-collation of recorded music ordered “to create a coherent overall form” (Harris, 2022, p. 3). Collaborative playlists can be static (unchanged once completed) or dynamic (periodically updated), the purposes of collaborative playlist-making (CPM) pertain to both the production of an artefact and the process of collaboration (Park & Kaneshiro, 2021), and song selection for playlists can be influenced by external events, thematic inspiration, and participants’ emotional states (Dias et al., 2017; Krause, 2010).

Engaging in CPM can promote social connection (Park & Kaneshiro, 2022), even when individuals are physically separated (Harris, 2022). Park et al. (2019) suggested there are three main purposes for engagement in collaborative playlists: these are practical (e.g., enjoy making playlists or making one for an event), cognitive (e.g., to expand music tastes and explore different artists), and social (e.g., connecting with others through music engagement). Harris (2022) categorises primary CPM motivations as either being driven by musical (e.g., ordering songs to create a musical narrative), social (e.g., creating a playlist for a particular event or to strengthen a relationship), or personal (e.g., locating new music) considerations.

While there is some evidence about the use of collaborative playlists within people’s COVID-19 lockdown experiences (Harris & Cross, 2021; Park et al., 2022), the majority of published studies on COVID-19 focus on other musical behaviours. Therefore, the present case study explores an organically developed collaborative playlist activity developed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This activity, called “*Song of the Day*,” was developed by a group of cycling enthusiasts. As implied by the project’s name, group members explained that they took turns sharing a new song at the rate of one per day. The playlist’s content was maintained by the group member who instigated the activity by way of updating an Excel spreadsheet on a weekly basis. Rather than a playlist hosted within a streaming platform, individual group members used a variety of technologies (e.g., Spotify, YouTube, Google, and iTunes) to select and listen to the songs. Importantly, they created a WhatsApp group in order to share, discuss, and critique the selected songs.

In taking *Song of the Day* as a case study, it afforded the opportunity to consider this form of musical engagement during the pandemic and to focus on considering what factors contribute to successful collaborative playlisting as well as potential participation outcomes beyond the playlist itself (including any long-term outcomes). The study was guided by asking two research questions: (1) What does the group’s collaborative playlisting process entail? and (2) What are the outcomes of engaging in CPM during the COVID-19 pandemic?

## Method

### Design

An exploratory, qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews (Naz et al., 2022) was used for this case study (see Supplementary Materials for the COREQ checklist). This permitted an exploration of the participants’ lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee approved this research (ID: H8610).

### Participants

Four individuals voluntarily participated in the study ( $M_{\text{age}} = 63.00$ ,  $Mdn = 61.50$ ,  $SD = 4.08$ ). They were university-educated, living in Australia, involved in the *Song of the Day* activity

( $N=8$  members), and belonged to a social group of cycling hobbyists. One participant was female (25%), and the other three were male (75%). Pseudonyms have been used to de-identify participants. Only one of the members, Tom, self-identified as an active musician.

### Materials and Procedure

Purposive sampling involved sending direct emails to individuals involved in the *Song of the Day* activity.<sup>1</sup> Interested individuals responded via email to Krause to make individual interview arrangements and return the consent form. They were asked to indicate their gender, age, and whether they considered themselves to be an “active musician” (yes/no) on the consent form.

Krause conducted four individual interviews online using Zoom in 2022. The instigator of the *Song of the Day* project, Will, participated in a follow-up interview 10 months later. The research aim was shared with the participants on the information sheet, and a semi-structured interview guide was used (see Appendix 1). Krause introduced herself at the beginning of the interview and the main, prepared questions focused on the participants' experiences of music playlists during the pandemic and participating in the *Song of the Day* project (e.g., what role does contributing to the playlist play in your life?; what role does listening to the playlist play in your life?; how do you select songs to include?; and how have your music listening practices changed since the pandemic?). Interviews lasted 23 to 36 ( $M=27.80$ ) min, were audio-recorded, and transcribed for analysis (no member checking was done).

### Data Analysis

An inductive, realist approach to reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data where group members' self-reported experiences were viewed as accurate representations of their realities (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Pickens & Braun, 2018). Codes were data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and were developed through familiarisation with the data achieved by reading and re-reading transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Connelly & Peltzer, 2016). We considered semantically similar content and implicit concepts to develop the initial codes. Krause, Eljed, and Ng performed the initial coding and theme development (using Microsoft Word and Excel) drawing on consideration of how related codes clustered together, which was followed by regular peer dialogue (Smith & McGannon, 2018) with Putter, who served as a critical friend (Sparkes & Smith, 2014) to review the theme construction, challenge assumptions and offer alternative interpretations. Themes were then refined and defined to finalise the analysis and produce the reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The presented extracts used to illustrate the themes are reproduced “as spoken.” Where applicable, bracketed words were included to improve clarity. Krause is female, has a PhD in psychology, and works as an academic researching in social psychology of music. Putter is female, has a degree in psychology, and has collaborated on research on music and well-being with Krause (including regarding COVID-19 in particular – e.g., Putter et al., 2023). Eljed and Ng are female and studying undergraduate psychology degrees. All authors acknowledge that our own lived experiences of COVID-19 were used “knowingly” when analysing the data (Hemming et al., 2021; Krause & Fletcher, 2023).

### Results

The group members were well-acquainted: “a lot of us have been together for 25 years, with the most recent additions having been part of the group for over 10 years” (Will). The group

developed from a shared interest in cycling, and, outside of COVID-19, routinely convenes for in-person cycling excursions. While eight people were involved in the *Song of the Day* project, one of the group members dropped out due to work commitments (Jan expressed that this person may not have had the capacity to fully engage with the project due to work commitments, as he was “a lawyer”). Tom noted that five of the eight group members were retired.

Analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in five themes detailing the nature, and outcomes, of participating in the *Song of the Day* project which are discussed below.

### *Inspiration and Ongoing Participation*

The *Song of the Day* activity was initiated by one cyclist group member, Will, during the first, local COVID-19 lockdown. Tom noted, “So Will is the initiator of it and he’s our spiritual leader of our cycling group . . . He just said at the start of lockdown, ‘why don’t we just start a *Song of the Day*?’”. Initially, against the backdrop of the COVID-19 lockdown, “the idea was playing a song just to make everyone feel good”, or “an upbeat [song] you can sing along to” (Will). For example, *Let the Sunshine in* was the first song shared, and group members took turns sharing songs they believed would brighten up someone else’s day.

Members noted this idea to share songs was a way they would be able to stay connected (Bob: “. . . the idea that just keeping connected and whatever through, you know, the pandemic time”), especially for those in the group who were retired (Tom: “one of the problems with being retired is you don’t have as much interaction on a day-to-day basis with other people”). Participating became a cherished part of the members’ daily routines. Will emphasised: “We all look forward to hearing a song in the morning,” and, often, they found themselves waiting for that notification as a prompt that a new song has been shared. Even when members travel interstate or overseas, Will emphasised that “no one misses a turn.”

Group members remarked that they questioned whether the end of lockdowns would signal the end of the *Song of the Day* activity. In fact, “the question has been asked a few times and the answer’s been ‘Yeah! Lets’ keep going!’” (Will). Jan added, “I don’t know what will actually make it stop” highlighting that the group “all enjoy it.” While the ease of lockdown measures impacted some members’ working schedules, Will stated: “they don’t have the time that they once had, but they still participate every time.” Bob expressed that the activity continued because there are “plenty of options there,” saying “I can see [it will] keep on going. Yeah, ‘cause it’s sort of, you know, well, there’s endless songs that you can put on.”

### *Promoting Emotional Well-Being*

The group embraced Will’s suggested activity, given it served as a distraction from the events around them. As Tom expressed, “When we were in lockdown, everyone was just scratching around trying to think of things to do to keep themselves from going mad.” The *Song of the Day* activity also generated high levels of enjoyment. Jan exemplified the members’ enthusiasm for the activity, saying “it’s been a really fantastic and very positive experience.” This enjoyment persisted as the activity continued; as Tom said, “I’m still getting lots of satisfaction out of it.” In particular, the unique connection group members have acquired through the music they have shared was noted as driving people’s enjoyment: “I don’t know anyone else who has done something like that, so it’s been fun. I like a lot of music, so that part has been enjoyable” (Bob).

## Bonding

Against the backdrop of COVID-19 lockdowns which limited social interactions and travel, this activity kept the group members in contact (especially for Bob, who said, “you are still a bit connected with folks, and I don’t live in Melbourne anymore, so I wouldn’t see those guys quite as regularly”). Importantly, given that members were initially connected via their shared interest in cycling, this activity opened avenues for broader conversations. Therefore, *Song of the Day* participation deepened the group members’ pre-existing friendships. As Jan expressed, “having the song to start the day gave us another whole sort of area in life to talk about, and I’ve used it as an opportunity to dig a little deeper.” In other words, those broader conversations afforded them the opportunity to learn more about each other: “it tells you a bit more about the person . . . a lot of the comments, you know, were like ‘oh my God, I didn’t think you were a fan of X’, or, you know, just some fun ones like that.” Jan continued,

for me, it was – I wanted to really learn a bit more about these guys . . . because cycling and talking sport is a bit more superficial, whereas you know we’ve talked about what songs we had at our weddings . . . just things like that which boys sort of don’t necessarily talk about that sort of stuff.

Tom similarly remarked, “we probably wouldn’t have talked about music all that much, but now there’s a lot more discussion about different songs and especially whether the songs that have been put forward comply with what the intent of the theme was.” This comment by Tom hints at an essential component of participating – the group’s ongoing banter. Against the backdrop of COVID-19 lockdowns and physical distancing practices, “the banter in the comments . . . became much more important to us” (Jan, who expressed that, in COVID, “you weren’t having those, you know, social outings or incidental social conversations”). With each song posted, the group chat blooms with activity – members share their opinions and, in some cases, their criticism (“if you put up a Johnny Cash song up, you get hammered” – Will). Further emphasising the group’s increased understanding of each other, Will remarked on how people began to guess the artists of the songs selected. He singled out Jan as someone who began to “tell the type of artist everyone is going to post.”

Their burgeoning interest in, and connection through, music also resulted in additional opportunities to deepen their connections with family members. For instance, the participants remarked on how they began to have conversations about different artists and songs with their children (“One of the other outcomes is talking with our kids” [Will]). Will explained that “when we [started to] talk about someone from their era,” their children become intrigued, often replying “how come you know that [music]?”, which Will said was “quite fun.”

## Shared and Expanded Music Engagement

Engaging in the *Song of the Day* activity led to additional in-person socialising based on music engagement. In between COVID-19 lockdowns, group members came together in-person for a “*Song of the Day* night,” where “everyone voted on their favourite song, favourite video, we made a list out of that, so I think everyone has their own lists and we have a ‘best of’ kind of list” (Will). The night also included a performance from four of the members, an idea that arose “because of the banter [they] had” (Will). In addition, at the end of lockdowns, group members also began attending live, in-person concerts and music events together (Will: “there’s probably four of us who are now going back to watch live music more than we had probably in the previous 10 or 15 years”).

## Song Selection

*Taking Turns and Meeting Themes.* While “it just started out just posting a song,” Tom recounts how after 4 or 5 weeks, they “figured out that it [was] better to have various themes.” Once each group member contributed their selection to the theme, they moved to the next theme. They also “decided to rotate the order” of who selects the theme (Will). As Will explained, group members could make up whatever theme they wanted. For example, one theme was “water”: “so, you have to find songs about water, and we had ‘if you were prime minister, what song what would you what would your theme song be?’” (Will).

The introduction of themes shifted the nature of the activity (“I think it’s quite different to what it was when the pandemic first started” [Tom]) which made participating challenging and competitive. Jan said,

I think it’s morphed and changed [to be] much more about . . . trying to find songs that we all enjoy but also trying to challenge people a little bit about, you know, different genres . . . Sometimes I’m quite challenged by some of the themes.

In their interviews, Will and Tom also referenced this challenge: “. . . once they know they’re next to do a theme, and with one of them in particular, anxiety sets in” (Will). “If someone throws in a kind of a weird theme, you have to go and start to explore it, like a song with the band’s name in it or something like that” (Will). In Tom’s words, you “kind of have to bend your brain a bit more to think of a theme that’s different than the thing we had before.”

In addition to having to come up with “fresh” themes (Tom), one of the guiding rules was that a song could not be posted twice. This meant, as time went on, group members were also challenged to identify songs that have not been previously featured while adhering to the thematic guidelines (“now there are almost 700 songs on the list, you’ve got to go back and check that it has not been played before, and it is actually getting a little complicated” [Jan]). The adaptation of the activity’s guidelines not only fostered a sense of competition but also contributed to the longevity of the activity.

*Song Exploration and Discovery.* The act of selecting songs facilitated the discovery and exploration of music genres, artists, and music listening platforms. Upon reflecting as to an expanded listening repertoire, Tom stated, “I certainly expanded my knowledge of different artists.” For example, a noted element to song selection was choosing the specific version (for instance, considering the original, live and cover versions available). Will enjoyed the juxtaposition of original and cover versions, as he found this aided in his exploration of new artists (“one of the themes was ‘covers’, . . . and we put up the original and then the cover. . . . That was really good because you just saw creative differences between musicians”). However, while Will was “more inclined to go looking for something new,” Bob stressed that he was not “a big concert guy” so that he “lean[ed] towards the original version of the song.”

*Reminiscence.* In having to align to each proposed theme, group members also contemplated what the songs mean – both to the artist and to themselves, thereby introducing an additional layer of depth to their song choices. Song selection could, therefore, prompt members to reminisce. Tom mentioned that “. . . most of the ones [songs] that I’ve posted are songs that I listened to as I was growing up.” Moreover, Jan remarked that “one of the first songs [she] chose was a real oldie from [her] childhood.” Some group members then chose to share with the group about these meanings: “some of us have gone in and we’ve [shared] . . . ‘I wrote this song because of the relationship’ or ‘. . . this is the meaning of it’” (Will).

## Discussion

Against the backdrop of increased music use during COVID-19, the *Song of the Day* activity provided an interesting CPM research case study. Concerning the process of CPM (RQ1), although the *Song of the Day* activity originated as a passing suggestion by one member to stay in touch during the COVID-19 lockdowns, the group collaboratively negotiated its parameters to develop a set of guidelines (e.g., meeting themes) that fostered shared motivations and continued engagement. In terms of RQ2, *Song of the Day* as a CPM activity stimulated music exploration and group conversations and supported members' social well-being. In particular, and consistent with previous research on music engagement (e.g., Chmiel et al., 2024; Dingle et al., 2012; Wulf et al., 2022; Yeung, 2023), members were distracted from COVID-19 isolation, experienced joy and a sense of nostalgia from selecting and listening to the songs, and bonded with each other.

We can consider the *Song of the Day* process (RQ1) against Harris' (2022) constituent behaviours of CPM: song selection, song ordering, and discussion. In terms of song selection, the shifting parameters of the activity illustrates how collaborative playlists can be impacted by the initial motivations and subsequent shifts in these motivations (Park et al., 2019). Specifically, as the *Song of the Day* had the initial purpose of connecting with others and improving mood, group members reported sharing and listening to upbeat and happy songs (Karakayali & Alpertan, 2021). Similarly, the songs in a crowd-sourced playlist created by Australians during a period of extended COVID-19 lockdown were found to be higher in energy, less acoustic, and had substantially more positively valenced words relative to charting music (Putter et al., 2023). This is also consistent with a social primary motivation – using CPM to strengthen existing relationships (Harris, 2022). However, the shift in the parameters to meet stated themes resulted in group members sharing and listening to a more diverse range of music. This suggests that participants may have additionally developed cognitive and personal motivations for engagement, such as expressing their music knowledge and locating new music (Harris, 2022; Park & Kaneshiro, 2022; Park et al., 2019).

Interestingly, song ordering was not a feature of this collaborative playlist activity. While there is a sequential feature to the activity because a song is added daily, the members' ritual was tied to the act of listening to the day's song rather than co-editing and listening to the playlist in its entirety. With *Song of the Day*, curation was primarily historical, to preserve a record of the song selections, not to focus on the playlist order or narrative, but to ensure new additions are not repeated songs.

Regarding discussion, prior research on collaborative playlist engagement has highlighted the lack of means for group discussion on existing digital music platforms to the extent users desire (Park & Kaneshiro, 2022). As *Song of the Day* group members were making use of various listening technologies and listening asynchronously, the WhatsApp group discussion is the sustaining foundation of the playlist-making activity. As such, it seems as though a single digital platform is not necessary for cultivating discussion or continued CPM engagement, rather users can make use of pre-existing and familiar technologies to afford discussion alongside playlist development.

Indeed, the *Song of the Day* members valued each other's commentary. In alignment with Park et al. (2022), who highlighted the importance of humour to CPM engagement, banter and competition were critical to *Song of the Day*. Having to meet evolving thematic requirements with new songs, as well as new themes, was a noted cognitive challenge that instilled a sense of competition amongst the group. However, additionally, with the challenge came judgement: by way of it being a collaborative playlist, people's personal selections were critiqued which stimulated ongoing discussion in the form of banter.

Though the banter (as a feature of the group discussion) can be noted as one of the outcomes of engaging in CPM during COVID-19, it likely underpinned another of the noted outcomes as well – the deepening of existing friendships (RQ2). The group shared an interest in cycling such that this CPM activity provided the opportunity to deepen their bond and learn more about each other in a new way. While previous research on music participation often highlights community-building and bonding as a participation benefit (e.g., Dingle et al., 2012), here it features asynchronously to the musical act of listening. Nonetheless, it promoted the group members' ongoing musical engagement.

Their CPM engagement also led to strengthened bonds with people outside of the group, including family members. In addition to feelings of nostalgia resulting from some of the selection of songs (Park et al., 2022), group members discovered artists that their children liked. This newfound knowledge of music from their children's generation prompted intergenerational music sharing and engagement beyond the playlisting activity and with people outside of those participating in creating the playlist. Thus, where an analysis of a crowd-sourced playlist made in Australia during lockdowns illustrated people's desire for closeness (Putter et al., 2023), it seems that participating in a CPM can realise social closeness and bonding.

Moreover, while engaging with music was at the core of the activity itself, it was also an outcome in that the group members discovered new music (Cabedo-Mas et al., 2021), leading to attending in-person music events. In other words, their CPM involvement increased other music behaviours: though their playlisting was ongoing, this additional engagement with music after lockdowns lifted illustrates a longer-term impact on their musical behaviours. While previous researchers have highlighted changes to music engagement during COVID-19 (e.g., Carlson et al., 2021; Ziv, Hollander-Shabtai, 2022), the present findings illustrate that these behaviours may transcend COVID-19 altering longer-term engagement with music. This outcome also highlights the multi-dimensional nature of music engagement motivations. After lockdown restrictions lifted, the initial activity motivation of keeping in touch was no longer applicable, yet the group was driven by other motivations to engage in music activities together. As the value of music can change in times of crisis (Krause et al., 2025), it would be interesting for future research to examine CPM longitudinally to explore longer-term impacts.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

Although the *Song of the Day* provides a successful, in-depth representation of what CPM can offer, it is important to keep in mind that our findings are the result of a case study involving a small number of individuals. While the context of COVID-19 lockdowns triggered this activity, it became a valued part of the participants' daily lives such that it persisted long after lockdowns ended. As other researchers have found (e.g., Krause et al., 2025), people's perceptions of the value of music listening shifted during COVID-19; however, whether shifts in musical behaviours and preferences including CPM activities are short- or long-term remains to be seen in future research.

Moreover, although the organic, unstructured nature of the activity allowed for a realist representation, the nature of the activity did not concern additional playlists nor people. Therefore, future research should endeavour to investigate if similar findings are applicable across multiple examples of collaborative playlists and cross-culturally. Furthermore, the current research did not intend to, nor focus on, measuring group members' explicit responses to music listening cultivated from collaborative playlists. Therefore, future research must continue to examine the potential effects of collaborative playlist listening (on explicit attitudes, behaviours, and group dynamics) to better understand its broader impact and potential to

promote well-being. For instance, such work could disentangle the social benefits of the conversations prompted by engaging in CPM from engagement in playlisting alone.

Nonetheless, this particular example of CPM, the *Song of the Day*, reinforces and extends our current understanding of CPM. While previous research has found that younger adults are more likely to perceive online engagement with playlist-making and listening as social relative to older adults (Harris & Cross, 2021), the participants in our sample ( $M_{\text{age}} = 63$ ) bolstered their social well-being at a time when social interactions were restricted. As Harris (2022) wrote, CPM can form part of people's routine, daily musical behaviours – and this was certainly true for the *Song of the Day* participants. Eagerly anticipating each new song, they created a ritual in locating, sharing, and listening to songs. The well-being benefits associated with this ritual resulted from the ongoing collaborative process, rather than the creation of an artefact (Park & Kaneshiro, 2021), illustrating the potential of CPM as a form of everyday musical engagement (Harris, 2022). Consequently, our results support the burgeoning research illustrating that music listening activities can foster social connection and combat loneliness, even in times of global crisis (Harris 2022; Park & Kaneshiro, 2021; Park et al., 2019).

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### Ethical Considerations

The James Cook University Human Research Ethics Committee approved this research (ID H8610).

### Author Contributions

**Amanda E. Krause:** Conceptualisation; Data curation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Project administration; Supervision; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing.

**Isabelle E. Eljed:** Formal analysis; Investigation; Writing – original draft.

**Sarah Sai Wan Ng:** Formal analysis; Investigation; Writing – original draft.

**Kaila C. Putter:** Conceptualisation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Supervision; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing.

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### Data Availability Statement

No aspect of the study was pre-registered. Requests regarding the qualitative data should be directed to Kaila Putter, [kaila.putter@jcu.edu.au](mailto:kaila.putter@jcu.edu.au).

## Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

## Note

1. Following the publication of a piece in *The Age* (accessible at <https://www.smh.com.au/culture/music/the-music-you-chose-to-get-through-this-last-lockdown-stretch-20211007-p58y0t.html>), Krause was informed of the cycling group's *Song of the Day* activity which led to the research opportunity.

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## Appendix I

1. How does music fit into your everyday life?
2. Can you tell me about how you usually listen to music?
3. Can you tell me about your experiences of playlists during the pandemic?
  - a. How do you select songs for the playlist?
  - b. Individual vs. collective playlist contribution/experience?
  - c. What role does making the playlist play in your life?
  - d. What role does listening to the playlist play in your life?
  - e. How does your playlist experience influence your well-being?
  - f. Can you reflect on if, and how, your playlist experiences/habits might have changed since the pandemic?
4. Is there anything else you'd like to share?