

Tributaries: A Phenomenological Pilot Study of Virtual Reality Musicking with Autistic Children

Context & Framework

- *Tributaries* explores how autistic children experience musicking in virtual reality.
- Grounded in **community music** and **phenomenology**, the project views VR as a site for creativity and connection.
- Anchored in *Christopher Small's* concept of musicking — music as social action and meaning-making.



Embodied Musicking in Virtual Reality Content:



Excerpt from *Virtuoso* (2025): Demonstrating embodied music creation in VR. **Subtext:** *Tributaries* builds on this approach by integrating natural, place-based environments from Nova Scotia’s landscapes, developed in Unity and Xcode for Vision Pro and Galaxy XR.

Pilot Study & Methods

- Pilot: 2–3 child participants; main study: 10–15 (Nova Scotia & Ontario).
- Sessions: 20–30 min, parent present.
- Data: observation, headset/room video, short interviews with children and parents.
- Analysis: hermeneutic phenomenology + NVivo coding.



Practice

Expands community music into immersive environments.

Research

Illuminates embodiment, creativity, and wellbeing in digital spaces.

Theory

Integrates musicking and phenomenology to advance equity and human flourishing.

“Listening becomes movement; movement becomes belonging.”

Contact & Acknowledgments

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