Learning by Elderly People.
A Contextual and Biographical View on How Elderly People Learn in Music; And its Consequences for Arts Participation.
Evert Bisschop Boele PhD
Research Group Lifelong Learning in Music, Hanze University Groningen

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Over muziekonderwijs gesproken
Learning by elderly people.
Learning by elderly people.

Shantykoor De Raaitvinken

Het koor kan nog zingende leden gebruiken.

Muziekonderwijs gesproken.

De Bemanning

Aardema, Jan

Bats, Boelo

Bisschop Boele, Evert

Daalman, Herman

Dijkman, Heino

Nog te benoemen

Menu

- Thuishaven
- 't Koor
- Smoelenboek
- Raaitvinkenlaid
- Repertoire
- Fotoalbum
- Foto-archief
- Filmpjes
- Festivals
- Agenda
- Vrienden
- Links
- Gastenboek
- Contact

Bezoekers:

Vandaag & Sinds:
27 juni 2013 : 1160
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The Research group Lifelong Learning in Music

- Fast changing society
- Changing role of music in society
- Fast changing professional practice of professional musicians
- How can musicians react?
- What does it mean for the conservatoire?
- For example:
  - New audiences
  - Cross arts and cross sector
  - ...
Healthy Ageing through Music & the Arts

- Ageing is an important societal trend
- ‘Healthy Ageing = Active Ageing’
- What does this mean for professional musicians?
  - They carry on playing longer
  - Their audience is ageing
  - Active music making amongst the elderly is growing
  - A growing call from society towards musicians to contribute to the quality of life of older people
Music has proven to be an effective means for healthier ageing.

How can professional musicians contribute to a healthy old age?
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Lifelong Learning in Music

“The research group Lifelong Learning in Music aims to contribute to the development of musicians by helping them become learning, inquisitive and entrepreneurial musicians in society. The research group does this by exploring the different roles that musicians can fulfil and by examining the development of their leadership in relation to their lifelong personal, artistic and professional development. The central question is what it means for musicians to develop innovative practices, whilst engaging with new audiences, based on a fundamental understanding of the various cultural and social contexts to which they have to respond.”
Lifewide Learning in Music

- Formal learning
- Non-formal learning
- Informal learning

Formal, non-formal and informal learning in music
A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

"During the last decade there has been an awakening interest in considering not only formalized learning situations within institutional settings, but also all the various forms of informal musical learning practices outside school." (Volkens, 2006, p. 135)

In fact, the great majority of musical learning takes place outside school, in situations where there is no teacher, and in which the intention of the activity is not to learn about music, but to play music, listen to music, dance to music, or to be together with music. In fact, musical learning starts even before a child is born. Fetuses beyond 28-30 weeks of gestation respond reliably to external sounds. Tunes they heard as a repetitive part of their prenatal environment have a calming effect on their behaviour when hearing them after birth (Lecanuet, 1994). During the first years of their life most children acquire a lot of tunes and are familiarized with the musical idiom of musical culture they grow up with, just by listening, singing and dancing (H. Papousek, 1994; M. Papousek, 1994). Recent technological developments and the in-
A Biographical and Contextual View of Learning

“The combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person - body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) – experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual person’s biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person.”

(Peter Jarvis, 2006: 134).
A Biographical and Contextual View of Learning

Social situation = contextual

Lifetime = Biographical
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Music as Intervention

“A growing call from society towards musicians to contribute to the quality of life of older people.”
The Intervention
The power of music as an intervention

Music is inherently good
- because music had some kind of evolutionary ‘meaning’
The power of music

Music was evolutionary harmless so it stuck around - music is in itself a neutral phenomenon.
So what about the power of music as an intervention?
Music = musicking

“There is no such thing as Music. Music is not a thing at all but an activity, something that people do. The apparent thing ‘music’ is a figment, an abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it at all closely.” (Small 1998)

Music is human behaviour...
And we all know what that means!
The Uses of Music – what people do with music
The Functions of Music – what music does for people

Music touches the self – liking music

The self chooses music – judging music
The Functions of Music – what music does for people 2

Music connects the self to:
- [Music – choosing]
- The Self (‘Me’) - expressing
- Others - bonding
- The supernatural (God, the inner self, the realm of the aesthetic) - transcending
- The material world - materializing
- Time (past, present, future) – ‘presenting’
- Place – rooting

All in the positive, the neutral and the negative
The Functions of Music – what music does for people

Affirmation and Connection lead to effects (e.g. feelings, emotions).

This opens up the possibility of Regulation (of Self and others) – again in the positive, the neutral and the negative sense.
The Functions of Music – what music does for people

Music
- Gives you a sense of self
- Connects you to the world
- Gives you an opportunity to influence yourself and others

In thousands of ways

‘Idio-Culture’ (contextual, biographical) as a result of lifewide and lifelong learning
The Musical Intervention

**Fig. 9a:**
The affirmative function

**Fig. 9b:**
The connective function

**Fig. 9c:**
The regulative function
The Question

How to deliver as a professional musician meaningful ‘idiocultural interventions’ contributing to the quality of life of the elderly?
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Q: How do we teach elderly people who want to take up playing an instrument or singing?
“Music and the Elderly”

• Aim: “strengthen professional practice of instrumental/vocal music teachers teaching elderly pupils”

• The project:
  - Exploring existing practices, formulating questions
  - Running pilot projects
  - Evaluating results
  - Test: transfer results on new practices
  - Adjusting results, dissemination
  - Consequences for the conservatoire
What did we learn?

- The desire and capacity to learn never stops
- Elderly people are often insecure, due to the clash of idiocultural wishes and general cultural taken-for-granted ideas (“Don’t start playing the violin after the age of 8”; “bass-guitars are for people up to 40”)
- The main point in teaching the elderly is not about physical, cognitive, emotional or social limitations
- The main point in teaching the elderly is the biographical and contextual – and that is a (gradual, not essential) difference from teaching children
- Learning to play an instrument serves as an ‘intervention’ for each individual in many different ways (physical, cognitive, emotional, social) (or Jarvis: “cognitively, emotively and practically”)
Learning by elderly people.

Middle circle: Theo Hartogh/Hans Hermann Wickel 2008
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Q: How do we give creative workshops for groups of elderly people?
The creative music workshop

A creative music workshop is a workshop in which participants, facilitated by a workshop leader, work together in creating a musical product using improvisation. This leads to shared authorship of the creative process as well as the creative product.

- Participants + workshop leader
- Creativity
- (Shared) ownership of musical product – a feeling of social inclusion = INTERVENTION
What did we learn?

- Workshops highly valued
- Creative and social
- Impediments: working around
- Important: the biographical
- Workshop leader:
  - The central entertainer
  - Musical expectations
  - Decision making and improvising
  - Communication
  - A safe environment
- Shared Ownership – Social Inclusion
Creative music workshops with the elderly

Institution
- Tailor-made
- Learner as expert
- Culture sensitive
- Validating
- Socially oriented

'SGeragogic' relation

Workshop practice
[Leader + elderly participants]
- Preparation
- Intake:
  - Objectives/Backbone
  - Warm-ups
  - Core
  - Performance
- Evaluation

Intergenerational

Biographical

Competency-based

Dialogic

Society

Learning by elderly people.
“While making music I did forget all my sorrows for a while. When I was younger I performed regularly in the theatre. It is nice to do something like that again.”
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Q: How can we introduce good practices in the Netherlands for working with elderly people suffering from dementia?
Music for Life

Music for Life Wigmore Hall in London
(managed by Wigmore Hall – Learning and Dementia UK, London, UK)

Participatory music workshops for people suffering from dementia and their care staff
Participatory music workshop

Making music together using improvisation; leading to shared authorship of the creative process as well as the creative product.
Kim:

“... they don’t have any linguistic skills any more. But they are still there! And this project gives them the opportunity to show that they are still there. And that they want contact and interaction. That incredible deep human need, regardless in which stage (of dementia) someone is, the need to connect with someone and with other people. To be understood and recognized.”
Sue:

“Sometimes people (with dementia) are not really aware of the fact that what they are trying to say does not come through, but some are in that intermediate stage where they more or less give up because they know they try but it does not work. But if you, in one way or the other, give them back the power of communication and bring somebody out, you see an amazing return of consciousness and the possibility to keep control, to integrate others or to stop things.”
Robert:

“This work to me means a way to connect my musicianship with a deeper and deeper consciousness of who I am in this world, and that is the result of interaction with extraordinary people (...) This work shows me continuously who I am, and through that mirror I assess what other things I do. It is very extraordinary that working with people whose version of reality is so vague is actually the ultimate check on reality.”
What did we learn?

- The Person Comes First
- The power of person-centered improvisation
- Finding the person behind the dementia – Social Inclusion
- And what about learning?
  - The care staff
  - The musicians
  - The elderly
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Music as a means for social inclusion

Learning is everywhere

Music = musicking
The power of affirmation, connection and regulation
The idioculturality of musicking

Musical interventions are always based on the musical individuality of The Other – not on ‘Music’
- the biography
- the idiocultural context

Musicians not only should be excellent performers – they should be excellent in ‘listening’ and ‘reading’ too
Mail: e.h.bisschop.boele@pl.hanze.nl

Site: www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org

Blog: www.evertsworldofmusic.blogspot.com