



## Leading Creative Music Workshops with the Elderly Exploring a Double Balancing Act

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# **Leading Creative Music Workshops with the Elderly**

Exploring a Double Balancing Act

KAROLIEN DONS, PETER MAK, EVERT BISSCHOP BOELE

Centre for Applied Research and Innovation  
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## Introduction

Arts and music are practiced more and more to engage the elderly in staying active, a field which may become more important as our society ages rapidly. The Northern Netherlands in particular is known to have a population which is ageing faster than the national average. Creative music workshops with the elderly are a relatively new field both for participants and leaders, but it seems to offer substantial opportunities for both.

The research group Lifelong Learning in Music, part of the Centre of Applied Research and Innovation Arts & Society and operating from the Prince Claus Conservatoire, Hanzehogeschool Groningen, carries out research into new practices of musicians. The outcomes of the research enable music and music education graduates to take on new challenges in an ever-changing society and to develop innovative practices.

Related research projects<sup>1</sup> the research group carried out in the 'healthy ageing'-field showed that older people not only simply enjoy being engaged music, they also experience positive effects on their physical and mental health and well-being. Moreover it has been proven in several other practices and studies that activities challenging the creativity of elderly yield positive effects on cognitive and social scope.

The present study attempts to explore the field of creative music workshops with the elderly. A growing amount of research has been carried out into running (creative) workshops, and besides we know a lot about the elderly and ageing. The aim of this research is to gather knowledge on the merging of both subjects, creative music workshops with the elderly in the so-called 'fourth age'. In particular, this research project has been carried out as a study of a potential professional field for musicians and music educators. For this reason the research objective is focused on the position of the workshop leader and what is needed to run creative music workshops with elderly in residential homes for the elderly successfully. We therefore aim to explore aspects connected to this practice such as entrepreneurship, musicianship and leadership.

The target group of the workshops in this project lived in residential homes for the elderly mostly, or in the vicinity of these such as in assisted living apartments. The workshops

<sup>1</sup> Overview on <http://www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org>.



were set up in the homes, which brought the opportunity to engage in music education as close to the participants as possible. The current study therefore not only was dependent on the work of the workshop leader and the workshop participants but also on the willingness and effort of the staff of the homes.

This text reports on the research activities that have been carried out. Firstly a literature study on creative music workshops and music education with the elderly was done, resulting in a theoretical framework for the running and researching of creative music workshops with the elderly. This framework can be found in Part I.

Part II describes the results of the pilot study; it gives insights into the process of preparation and implementation, and also includes a concise report on the appreciation of those involved in the project. Finally Part III highlights and summarizes the specifics of running creative music workshops (as described in Part II), and points out aspects for further research by connecting these specifics to the theoretical framework (as presented in Part I).

We thoroughly thank all the elderly participants involved in the workshops, the care staff and volunteers not only for supporting the elderly participants but often taking an active role in the workshops, and the care homes for offering us the opportunity to carry out this research project. A special word of thanks goes out to dr. Rosie Perkins of the Royal College of Music, London, who was, together with dr. Ben Boog, involved in the preparation of the theoretical framework<sup>2</sup> and carried out a comparable project in London and with whom we exchanged thoughts on the carrying out and the results of the research project. We finally thank Sara Stegen for help with the English language.

Karolien Dons, Peter Mak, Evert Bisschop Boele

<sup>2</sup> Ben Boog & Rosie Burt-Perkins, 'Healthy Ageing through Music and the Arts. A Conceptual Framework'. Internal publication. Groningen: Hanzehogeschool Groningen/Lifelong Learning in Music, 2009.

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## **Part I Theoretical Framework**

# 1 Introduction

This publication describes the project 'Creative Workshops with the Elderly', carried out in 2011. The project was a practice-based research project of the research group 'Lifelong Learning in Music' (LLM), studying the practice of the creative music workshop involving a workshop leader and elderly participants. The results of the research should open up possibilities for further practice development for musicians working with elderly people.

In the theoretical and conceptual framework we will elucidate the various elements of the outline above, in the following order:

General backgrounds:

- | - Practice-Based Research for Practice Development
- | - Social Practice as 'Everyday Life'
- | - 'Lifelong Learning in Music'
- | - 'Healthy Ageing'

Specific topics:

- | - The Learning of Elderly People
- | - Creative Music Workshops

The section concerning the learning of elderly people is based on previous work done by dr. Ben Boog and dr. Rosie Perkins, the description of the creative music workshops is taken from previous work by dr. Peter Mak on a conceptual framework of the creative music workshop.

## 2 General backgrounds

### 2.1 Applied research for practice development

The research group LLM works as a research group within the context of a Dutch University of Applied Sciences: at the Hanzehogeschool Groningen. The nature of research within Hanzehogeschool Groningen is greatly connected to the fact that it is a University of Applied Sciences. Hanzehogeschool Groningen explicitly trains professionals, and research is therefore intrinsically connected to the professional world and practice-oriented. Research should:

- lead to knowledge development within the specific research domain,
- lead to results that will be used in the professions and society in general,
- be embedded in Hanzehogeschool Groningen's educational practice.

Some characteristics of research at Hanzehogeschool Groningen are:

- demand driven whilst proactive and guiding;
- translatable to professional application;
- regionally anchored as well as internationally oriented;
- often multidisciplinary;
- relevant for society;
- disseminated optimally.<sup>3</sup>

Research in Hanzehogeschool Groningen is carried out through research groups ('lectoraten'). The research group of the Prince Claus Conservatoire is called 'Lifelong Learning through Music'.

Universities of Applied Sciences train future professionals – in the case of the Prince Claus Conservatoire, where LLM is located, future professional musicians. The research projects of LLM focus on practice development of the professional musician. One of the consequences for research projects therefore is that they stay as close to actual professional practice as possible – we predominantly choose real life settings and not laboratory ones. Often research projects take the form of monitored pilot projects where professionals practice their profession; much of the research carried out can be characterized as qualitative.

<sup>3</sup> 'Versterkt Verder met Praktijkgericht Onderzoek. Notitie Onderzoeksbeleid 2010-2015.' Hanzehogeschool Groningen, 2010.

## 2.2 Music: social practice as ‘everyday life’

One of the reasons to choose this type of research is that we consider the professional practice of the musician to be first and foremost a ‘social practice’ – a practice where people are part of and generate social reality in everyday life. This everyday life is underpinned by a common understanding of social reality by all participants in a specific practice (musicians, audience members, music students et cetera).

To put it in the words of sociologist Harold Garfinkel, this common understanding consists of “... the socially standardized and standardizing, ‘seen but unnoticed’, expected background features of everyday scenes”<sup>4</sup>. In this view, all participants in a social situation together ‘produce’ social reality, and – more importantly – have many possibilities to change social reality while ‘producing’ it; they operate within the structures of common understanding but are the agents of that common understanding at the same time.

## 2.3 Lifelong learning in music

This research project has been carried out within the research group LLM of the Prince Claus Conservatoire. The rationale for the conservatoire to focus its research on the domain of ‘Lifelong Learning in Music’ has been formulated as follows:

“Future professional musicians and artists must engage with flexibility in a rapidly changing professional practice in a constantly changing cultural landscape. Lifelong Learning encompasses the interconnection between personal and professional development; it deals with being responsive and adaptive, with bringing about (cultural) changes in society and considering this as an opportunity to generate work. (...)

Therefore, higher arts education institutions have to create adaptive learning environments, and have much attention for the professional development of teachers. The research domain of Lifelong Learning in Music, underpinning all separate research strands, is the way in which musicians and artists can make a meaningful contribution to our rapidly changing society, where art can be a connecting factor. The underlying question is: how can we make artists look at themselves critically in relation to the connections with society?”<sup>5</sup>

A definition of lifelong learning has been formulated by Peter Jarvis:

“The combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person -

<sup>4</sup> Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984 (1967), p. 36.

<sup>5</sup> Cited from [www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org](http://www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org), consulted 25-11-2010.

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."<sup>6</sup>

The implicit part of this definition is that lifelong learning is also 'lifewide' learning<sup>7</sup>, in which not only formal learning in educational institutes is taken into account, but also, from a more holistic point of view, all situations in and events through which learners learn during their life<sup>8</sup>.

Several characteristics of learning have been formulated by the research group LLM as important when seen from the perspective of lifelong learning. We focus here on four (clusters of) characteristics: situated; learner-centred and biographical; responsive and adaptive; participatory, empowering and transformative.

### **Situated**

Jarvis' definition suggests that all learning is *situated* – learning always needs to be considered within the particular context in which it takes place. In the words of Jean Lave, "learning is an integral aspect of activity in and with the world at all times"<sup>9</sup>. Learning is therefore also a thoroughly social endeavour.

### **Learner-centred and biographical**

As Jarvis' definition above also suggests, when learning is in the centre of our attention automatically our focus shifts to the learner who does the learning; our perspective is *learner-centred*.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Jarvis. *Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Human Learning*. London / New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 134.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Alheit, 'Biographical learning – within the new lifelong learning discourse'. In Knud Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary Theories of Learning. Learning Theorists... In Their Own Words*. London: Routledge, 2009, p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Peter Mak, 'Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning in Music. A Conceptual Analysis'. In Peter Röbbke & Natalia Ardila-Mantilla (Eds.), *Vom wilden Lernen: Musizieren lernen - auch ausserhalb von Schule und Unterricht*. Mainz: Schott Music, 2009, pp. 31-44.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Lave, 'The Practice of Learning'. In Knud Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary Theories of Learning. Learning Theorists... In Their Own Words*. London: Routledge, 2009, p. 203.

This

“... relates to the *biographical learning* of the individual (...). Biographical learning includes people’s experience, knowledge and self-reflection; everything people have learned throughout their lives. A biographical approach to learning thus has the capacity to change both the individual and the context in which the learning takes place and can be seen in contrast to conventional education. This is why we can speak about both lifelong and life-wide learning.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Responsivity and adaptability**

The following quote elucidates the importance of *responsivity and adaptability* in lifelong learning:

“The responsive side relates to critical reflection and reflexivity; in order to be a good lifelong learner an artist has to be reflective and have self-confidence, know her own qualities and (professional) identity so that she can function in different contexts within society. (...) The adaptive side is the entrepreneurial side of the concept of lifelong learning.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Participatory, empowering and transformative**

This leads to the fourth cluster of characteristics. Learning comes about through *participation* – in the words of Lave and Wenger in a journey from ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ towards full participation on the basis of mastery of knowledge, skills and attitudes<sup>12</sup>. This learning may have an *empowering* effect on the learner, and eventually even lead to forms of transformative learning, learning in which a new way of looking at the world is opened up; a new frame of reference<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Cited from [www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org](http://www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org), consulted 25-11-2010. Italics added.

<sup>11</sup> Cited from [www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org](http://www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org), consulted 25-11-2010.

<sup>12</sup> Jean Lave & Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning. Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

<sup>13</sup> See Robert Kegan, ‘What Form Transforms? A Constructive-Developmental Approach to Transformative Learning’. In Knut Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary Theories of Learning. Learning Theorists... in Their Own Words*. New York: Routledge, 2009, pp. 35-52.

## 2.4 Healthy ageing

Healthy ageing is a world-wide concern at present. Many societies, specifically western societies, age rapidly, and this has profound consequences for many aspects of life and society. Within the European Union, healthy ageing is a major political topic. Recently, the EU has shifted the topic of healthy ageing towards active ageing<sup>14</sup>.

The topic of Healthy Ageing is one of the central research topics in the North of the Netherlands (together with such topics as Energy, Sensor Applications, Water, and Entrepreneurship). The University Medical Hospital Groningen has recently, together with a.o. Groningen University (RUG) and Hanzehogeschool Groningen, started to develop the field of Healthy Ageing research as an area of special interest for research in the north of the Netherlands. Hanzehogeschool Groningen is running a university-wide research programme, and encourages its research groups to engage in research in this area.

Healthy Ageing is defined within Hanzehogeschool Groningen as the process by which the likelihood for physical, social and mental health is optimized in order to enable elderly people (55+) to be actively involved in society without being discriminated and to live their life independently with a good quality of life.<sup>15</sup>

Healthy Ageing through Music and the Arts (HAMA) is the newest of the research strands of the research group LLM. The research strand aims at practice development for musicians through developing middle range theory in the field by effectively using the influence of making music on the wellbeing and cognitive skills of elderly people.

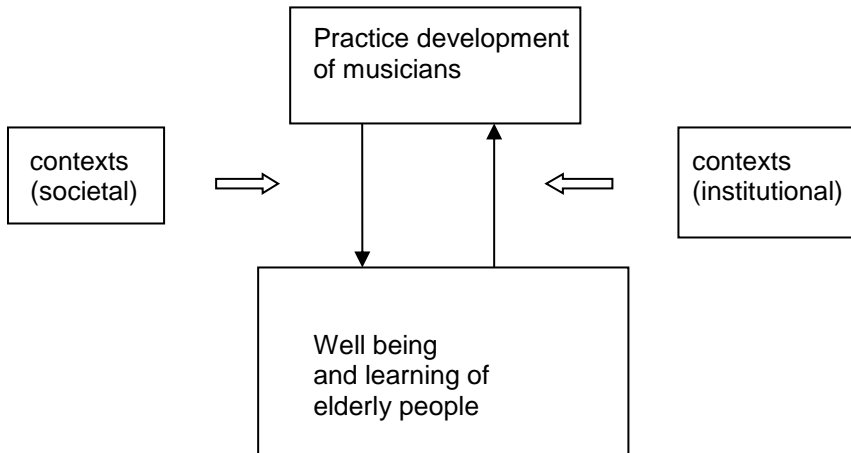
All research projects are carried out as projects in which two “extremes” interact: on the one end the musicians who aim at further developing their professional practice, at the other end the elderly people aiming at enhancing their wellbeing through various forms of learning. Both extremes interact constantly, together making up the specific practice being studied. These practices are always part of institutional as well as societal contexts, they are influenced by these contexts but may themselves influence the contexts at certain points as well.

<sup>14</sup> The Futurage Project, *Futurage; A Road Map for European Ageing Research*. Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 2011.

<sup>15</sup> Cited from [www.hanze.nl](http://www.hanze.nl), pages “Kenniscentrum CaRES”, consulted 25-11-2010.



This is represented in diagram below:



### 3 Specific topics

#### 3.1 The learning of elderly people

In line with the concept of lifelong learning and its implications (see above, section 2.3), elderly people who are learning music are first and foremost seen as learning individuals. However, the fact that they are elderly people has some implications which should be taken into account.

Here we do not make a choice for the problem-oriented view on elderly people learning music which might stress the impediments and handicaps standing in the way of fruitful musical activity. We think becoming older means that some things in life become easier whereas other things may become more difficult. Neither do we choose to use a specific ‘musical’ view on the elderly which might stress certain repertoires or certain music activities as in general more suitable for elderly people – practice shows that elderly people do not restrict themselves in any way to certain repertoires or activities.

Instead we adopt a point of view in which the special characteristics of elderly people being musically active are tied to the idea that music is a social practice (see 2.2). In social practices, social relations form the basis of the world we live in. We acknowledge

that much can be said about older people learning music<sup>16</sup>, but we focus here on the social relations in musical situations where the elderly play a role, orienting ourselves on what sometimes is termed a ‘music geragogical approach’<sup>17</sup>, which outlines the principles and attitudes for music education of older adults. These principles, formulated in terms of relations, are:

1. A holistic view of human beings. Older adults are recognized as whole persons, who are the only experts of their own world, and are able to learn, as they did their whole life (do not infantilize or institutionalize them or see them as people with deficits who need care);
2. Tailor made demands concerning the level of playing and singing. Especially the physical possibilities of older adults need attention;
3. A biographical orientation. Knowledge of the older adult learners’ social and personal biography is required;
4. Competencies-based. Take the competencies of older adults, given the deficits of old age, into account;
5. A dialogical orientation. The person who practices music is partner in dialogue. This is more important than the musical assignments;
6. A validating orientation; communication with older adult learners must depart from the own world (their reality) and the possibilities and characteristics in it;
7. An intergenerational orientation. Older adults love to practice music together with other generations, younger adults, youngsters, children;
8. A culture sensitive orientation. People from different cultures live in our society. The group of older adults in our societies is becoming more and more multicultural.
9. An orientation on the social relations—side of practicing music. Older adults often also (re)start practicing music to build up social relationships.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For a more specific overview (Dutch only), see the website connected to one of our other research projects, [www.hanze.nl/ouderenmuziek](http://www.hanze.nl/ouderenmuziek).

<sup>17</sup> Theo Hartogh & Hans Hermann Wickel, *Musizieren im Alter: Arbeitsfelder und Methoden*. Mainz: Schott, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> The ninth principle is not in Hartogh & Wickel 2008, but added in Boog & Perkins 2009.

## 3.2 Creative Music Workshops<sup>19</sup>

### Introducing the creative music workshop<sup>20</sup>

A workshop can be characterized as “a brief intensive course of education for a small group; emphasizes problem solving”<sup>21</sup>. The term ‘workshop’ is most often associated with experimentation, creativity and group work<sup>22</sup>. The workshop is a place for experimentation and exploration within an environment that is deterritorialised<sup>23</sup>. Although the space is defined, it is not a tightly controlled location that fixes parameters with rigidity and barriers. Within the workshop situation one might consider this as freeing up fixed and set relations, physically, mentally and spiritually whilst seeking the opportunity to enter into new relationships.

A creative workshop is a specific kind of workshop. The term creativity is often associated with the arts<sup>24</sup>. In music, creativity may be formulated as “the ability to invent through the development of imagination. Invention has traditionally meant the coming of something new; something to come that is different from what has come before”<sup>25</sup>. In music, the creative response is connected above all to musical improvisation and composition, although performing composed music can involve many creative aspects too.

In creative music workshops the group participants work together in creating a musical product. Because creative music workshops are improvisational, people can express themselves creatively. This leads to a sense of shared ownership and responsibility both in the process and in the final product. At the heart of any collaborative process is a sense of partnership where ‘leaders’ and ‘participants’ share equal status, developing teamwork, respect and mutual support. There is little doubt that participatory activities that involve shared values and meaning lead to higher levels of achievement and an improved sense of personal worth<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> This section is an abridged and lightly edited version of Peter Mak, ‘Creative music workshops for elderly people: towards a conceptual framework.’ Second draft. Internal publication. Hanzehogeschool Groningen/Lifelong Learning in Music, 2011.

<sup>20</sup> The information in this section is derived mainly from Sean Gregory, ‘Quality and effectiveness in Creative Music Workshop Practice. An Evaluation of Language, Meaning, and Collaborative Process’. MPhil Thesis, Royal College of Art, London, 2004; and Sean Gregory, ‘The Creative Music Workshop. A Contextual Study of Its Origin and Practice’. In George Odam & Nicholas Bannan (Eds.), *The Reflective Conservatoire. Studies in Music Education*. Aldershot/London: Ashgate/Guilhall School of Music & Drama, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> [www.websters-online-dictionary.org](http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org), consulted February 1, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Lee Higgins, ‘The Creative Music Workshop. Event, Facilitation, Gift’. *International Journal of Music Education* 26/ 4 (2008).

<sup>23</sup> Id.

<sup>24</sup> Henk Smeijsters. *Handboek creatieve therapie*. Bussum: Uitgeverij Coutinho, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> Higgins, 2008, p. 330.

<sup>26</sup> Gregory, 2005.

The knowledge generated through the collaborative compositional processes, critical listening and playing is further strengthened by the acquisition of other interconnected skills. Specific key musical skills gained through improvising, composing and performing can include:

- | aural and listening skills;
- | rhythmic skills:
- | an understanding of harmony;
- | a linear and cyclic understanding of melody;
- | lyric writing skills.

In addition, a number of important supplementary skills are acquired besides instrumental ones which are integrated into the whole performance experience. For example:

- | vocal skills, including confidence in the speaking and singing voice;
- | co-ordination and awareness of the physical presence;
- | development of voice, body and percussion skills through circle-based activities and understanding of their connections to performing<sup>27</sup>.

The goals of a creative music workshop are not only musical. Creative workshop activities may also have such benefits as making new friends, becoming interested in something new, trying things one never did before, becoming confident of what has been done, feeling better or healthier, wanting to be involved in more work like this. The sense of personal growth is paramount. Creative workshops are (by and large) based on the notion of exploration and experimentation, the assumption being that the participants are there because they wish to broaden their horizons, expand their knowledge and experience (both self and musical) and learn new skills<sup>28</sup>.

A creative music workshop is a goal-directed activity. It is aimed at broadening the participants' horizon, expanding their knowledge and experience (both self and musical), learning new things, (re)activating the individual's learning potential; personal growth is paramount<sup>29</sup>. It is a form of non-formal learning because it

<sup>27</sup> Gregory, 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Id.

<sup>29</sup> Id.

- | is embedded in planned activities that are not always explicitly designated as learning but that contain an important learning element;
- | is organized and goal-directed;
- | is highly contextualized and adapted to the needs of the learner;
- | is supervised;
- | regards the supervisor (coach/leader/expert) as an intermediary who assists the learners (participants) in articulating and realizing their self-determined interests;
- | is more holistic and flow-driven;
- | in most cases focuses on learning in groups (collaborative learning activities);
- | doesn't require entry qualification; in group situations sharing the same interests is often sufficient<sup>30</sup>.

### **The elements of the creative music workshop**

In the literature information about the contents of creative music workshops is almost completely non-existent. There is ample information about the effects of music workshops on well-being and cognitive scope, but not on the tactics of running a creative workshop. Gregory (2004) provides valuable information about this aspect, giving an extensive overview of the practical aspects of running a creative music workshop, including the preparation and evaluation. This section is written on the basis of Gregory's work, presented for the most part as direct quotes.

The following elements are usually present in creative music workshops:

warm-ups – backbone/interpretation – musical awareness/memorisation –  
instrumental skills – composition/arranging - improvisation – performance –  
listening -evaluation

Gregory points out that those activities are usually interrelated. "One of the main goals through this process is to create an environment where activities can interact and feed

<sup>30</sup> Peter Mak, 'Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning in Music. A Conceptual Analysis'. In Peter Röbbke & Natalia Ardila-Mantilla (Eds.), *Vom wildem Lernen: Musizieren auch ausserhalb von Schule und Unterricht*. Mainz: Schott Music, 2009.

from one another. Each of the activities may involve different skills and different approaches. Although each one needs a particular focus the ‘turning points’ tend to be when the elements come together as a whole, each becoming a catalyst for the next<sup>31</sup>.

### Warm-ups

“A warm-up, as with dance and drama, is a good way of beginning a creative music session. It is usually run as a circle activity, so that everyone can see each other and have enough room to move. This ‘tuning in’ process helps to develop concentration, group awareness, self-awareness, confidence and spontaneity<sup>32</sup>.”

### Backbone/interpretation

“A backbone of given material helps to set a solid foundation for personal and ensemble development in a workshop. This given material can be a skeleton score of notated rhythms, melodies and harmonies, a subject or theme such as ‘migration’, ‘cityscapes’, ‘seasons’ and ‘The Creation’ or a narrative text, be it a story or a series of poems. (...)

Warm-up processes such as ‘call and response’ or ‘copying and extending’ and pre-composed rhythmic, melodic or thematic ideas prepared in advance of the session by the leader and group participants can provide a focus and challenge for creative work. It is critical that the given material is sufficiently open for the participants to add to, adjust or discard ideas in order to feel ownership of the process and final product. Whether an idea is given by an individual, spontaneously created (for example) during an improvisation or collectively composed by the group, it is important to learn it well, find the right feel and then open it up for collaborative development.”<sup>33</sup>

### Musical Awareness/memorization

“There is a great deal of aural work in these processes – learning melodies by ear, finding harmonies by ear, internalizing rhythms by ear – with much of the material (including the overall structure) needing to be memorized. Most of the work is covered without any form of written notation. Sometimes a skeleton or backbone score evolves, written in musical or graphic notation, which can serve as a reference point for participants. It is important that tools such as a skeleton score and/or a chosen theme enable rather than alienate participants, particularly those who have little previous experience of music-making. Musical awareness in a creative workshop environment draws heavily on people’s capacity to concentrate, co-operate, listen and respond as ideas emerge and develop through the practical work<sup>34</sup>.”

<sup>31</sup> Gregory, 2004, p. 37.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Gregory, 2004, p. 38.

### Instrumental Skills

“The creative workshop environment is an opportunity for participants to realise ideas, discover new musical ‘colours’ and to *find their voice* through an instrument of sound, be it one they play already or one they acquire (for example through singing or percussion playing) as a result of the workshop process. As well as being a *way in* for ‘non’ musicians, these approaches are also incentives for instrumentalists to stretch themselves technically, developing an awareness of, and comfort on, their instrument. There is scope here for setting personal goals, both with technical challenges and broadening creative capacity”<sup>35</sup>.

### Composition/arranging

“It is important that there is a compositional ‘ground’ established by the ensemble, which will have its own particular identity according to the mixture of instruments and musical ‘taste’ of the participants. Melodies, textures, harmonies and rhythms are developed and refined as material is devised individually and collectively”<sup>36</sup>.

### Improvisation

“Final performances from creative workshop processes usually contain three elements:

1. Music devised in the workshop
2. *Backbone* material created and prepared outside the workshops
3. Improvisation – informed by the nature of the previous two elements

The creative workshop environment seeks the most natural use of all three elements. The *backbone* provides a more ‘formal’ awareness, a sense of style and focus, as a result of material that the group has developed, expanded and set out in its own way. There are expressive moments that can only be achieved by improvisation in the spontaneity of the workshop or the performance. Forms of improvising from around the world are often explored, carefully set against structures that are exciting and interesting to listen to. Within the creative workshop environment, improvisation is an excellent tool to keep an exploration ‘live’ and helps to avoid an excess of talking”<sup>37</sup>.

### Performance

“Workshop processes tend to culminate in a performance or presentation, so there is a need to *rehearse* as well as to create. This can sometimes be left to the last minute in creative projects. Making ‘final’ decisions is one of the hardest parts of this field of activity as an individual and as a group. There is a delicate balance between an approach that is *inclusive* – making sure that participants maintain a sense of ownership over what is being produced – and an approach where a sense of *artistic quality* prevails in the final piece. Achieving this requires excellent facilitatory skills on the part of the leader, who will recognize that any measurement of artistic quality will be as determined by the people involved and

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Gregory, 2004, p. 39.

the project's context as much as by the level of music that is created and performed"<sup>38</sup>.

### Listening

"The whole creative workshop process involves careful listening. Approaches to listening in more conventional music-making contexts are generally informed by the genre being played, for example the written *score* or *parts*, a particular *scale*, *mode* or *key*, or the harmonic *changes*. In the more *open* sound world of a creative workshop environment, tuning in to the *sound* and *voice* of each instrument as textures is explored as well as listening to other *people* as they express their ideas and intentions is important"<sup>39</sup>.

### Evaluation

"The artistic/musical end product of a creative music workshop process is as important as the social implications of the process. Evaluation within this context is a complex process, with people often participating for differing reasons, with differing needs and abilities. There is a need for a fine balance between cognitive learning as a result of actual instruction and experiential learning as the result of empowered participation. The danger is that laudable principles involving care for the group and the individuals within it can override the importance of the resulting musical pieces, particularly in community music settings"<sup>40</sup>.

"Creative music workshops need to be well prepared and evaluated. The musical interests and needs of the participants have to be reconciled on beforehand. The musical activities have to be interesting for the participants, worthwhile to spend their time on it. Evaluation of what happens in the workshop (process and content) is of benefit for the participants and for the competence development of the workshop leaders"<sup>41</sup>.

### Quality of space

The physical location of the space and the way the room is set up, in many cases contributes to the success of running a creative music workshop: "spaces 'work' as they have been conceived in relation to the aims of their engagement with their (respective) communities"<sup>42</sup>. Participants have to feel comfortable in the space the workshop takes place. Often this is a place in the participants' neighbourhood, or well known to them.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Gregory, 2004, p. 40.

<sup>41</sup> Ninja Kors & Peter Mak. 'Vocal Students as Animateurs. A Case Study of Non-Formal Learning. Royal Conservatoire and Yo Festival Bus Project'. In Peter Mak, Ninja Kors & Peter Renshaw, *Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning in Music*. Groningen: Lectoraat Lifelong Learning in Music, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Renshaw. *Engaged Passions. Searches for Quality in Community Contexts*. Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2010, p. 66.



Also the set of the chairs (in a circle) and the instruments (in the centre of the circle), and the positioning of the participants is critical to the workshop's success<sup>43</sup>.

### *Variability*

The elements of running a creative workshop as described in this chapter, based on the work of Gregory, refer to a particular context: composing and performing a piece of music in which all members of the group are involved. But creative music workshops can have more modest aims. Although collaborative music making is part of all creative music workshops, composing can be part of it but not necessarily so. Improvisation is enough to warrant the creative character of the workshop. In a creative music workshop the activities mentioned earlier can have different importance attached to them, depending on the fact if the workshop is a single or self-contained event, or part of a series of workshops in the framework of a project. There can be one music (workshop) leader but it is also possible there are more music professionals involved in running the workshop.

### *Tactics*

For running the creative music workshop the following tactics can be of help<sup>44</sup>:

- | Make sure there is a lot of variation and contrast in the activities offered: musical activities with a lot of action for the participants, alternated with activities which are more relaxing.
- | The music must be recognizable for the audience, people must be able to relate personally to what they hear and do in the performance situation. This doesn't mean, however, that what they hear has to be simple or has to match their musical taste in all respects! Musical activities that are too simple attract the attention of the participants only for a short period. Making the familiar more complex by adding extra elements to it increases the attention span and also the appreciation of the participants.
- | Make use of the musical and creative potential of the individual participants. If someone e.g. plays a musical instrument or has some acting talent let them play and act in the workshop.
- | Pay attention to the transitions between the activities. Use bridges to connect two succeeding activities and use them as a connecting activity. These bridges can be verbal introductions (explaining what will happen), little dialogues, or jokes

<sup>43</sup> Gregory, 2004, p.37.

<sup>44</sup> Kors & Mak, 2007.

- | Repeat an activity that was performed earlier or extend it. This can be e.g. a warming-up activity.
- | Make the plan you work out beforehand a flexible one. The group can be enthusiastic about the activities you planned, but this might not be the case. Think about alternatives.
- | Don't push too hard to get every participant to join in actively. Concentrate on those people who are willing to join in immediately and keep an inviting attitude to those people who are not involved yet.
- | Leading skills are essential: leading by doing, not by giving instructions or explaining elaborately. Taking the lead in this context means knowing what to do, without hesitation or insecurity. If the workshop is given by more than one workshop leader or other musical professionals a good cooperation between the workshop leaders is a necessary prerequisite in order to achieve this.

### **Qualities and competences of the creative workshop leader**

“An effective workshop leader has to be a multi-skilled musician who can perform many diverse roles, such as composer, arranger, facilitator, improviser, performer conductor, teacher and catalyst”<sup>45</sup>.

In Peter Renshaw's recently published book *Engaged passions: searches for quality in community contexts* (2010), he specified four domains that the creative workshop leaders he interviewed regarded as central to the success and quality of a project (creative workshop): the personal, artistic, leadership and management. What follows are descriptions of those four domains as direct quotes.

“Personal qualities

Values: respect; tolerance; compassion; integrity; sincerity; authenticity.

Interpersonal skills: ability to relate to other people; ability to work collaboratively in a team with interchangeable roles; having the confidence to share one's vulnerability.

Communication skills: ability to use language flexibly so that it resonates within its context; framing appropriate questions; active listening (respecting silence, reading body language, reframing and reinforcing the substance of a conversation; engaging in non-verbal dialogue through, for example, a musical conversation or a shared visual log).

Personal skills: personal organization; time management; reliability, problem-solving, decision making; dealing with conflict; managing stress; coping with success and failure.

<sup>45</sup> Sean Gregory, as quoted in Kors & Mak, 2007, p. 75.

#### Artistic qualities

Performance skills: technical skills on instrument or voice; musical versatility and flexible approaches to performance; vocal skills; body and percussion skills; quality of listening and sensitivity to sound (e.g., tone, timbre, intonation, ensemble); speed of reaction and response to music: ability to communicate music to an audience or to workshop participants (commitment, conviction, inner energy, daring to take risks).

Creative skills: ability to respond creatively to musical ideas of participants (to make it work in musical terms); fluency in improvisation, composing and arranging skills; understanding elements of composition (e.g., compositional starting points, organizing musical material; techniques for developing material and extending ideas; working with modes; group developmental processes; approaches to working with structure and form); musical, social and psychological responsiveness (e.g., making musical sense in relation to human and psychological needs of participants; establishing connections between musical and human responses); understanding different approaches to arts practice (e.g. non-European and folk-based; cross-arts and cross-cultural collaborations; creative and repertoire-linked projects).

#### Leadership skills

Artistic leadership skills: having the skill and judgment to create and frame a project (workshop) that will work (e.g., making artistic decisions about the musical language and structure of the project; delineation of roles and responsibilities; managing people within a collaborative context). Knowing how to enable the participants to hear, see, feel and understand the connections that are integral to the creative process; encouraging people to get on the inside of musical experience; engaging their aural, bodily and emotional memory in order to internalize sound, rhythm and musical structure; establishing a sense of high expectation for the group and individual participants, by presenting a clear indication of the musical quality that might be achieved; creating a balance of 'pace' that allows time and space for artistic development and creative momentum.

Generic leadership skills: creating an inspiring, enabling environment that encourages participants to build on their strengths and acquire the confidence and skills to explore new challenges and extend their musical skills; having the capacity to respect, listen to and act on other points of view; having the interpersonal and organizational skills to be able to work collaboratively with various others, on the basis of equality; knowing how to choreograph leadership in a group, creating opportunities for developed leadership.

Leadership and tacit ways of knowing: in effective workshop practice the leader creates space in which all musicians become totally engaged in the spirit of the music in the moment; a sense of 'place' is created which holds people in that moment and helps them to feel secure in themselves.

#### Management skills

Project management: knowing how to create appropriate practical conditions for enabling projects to be effective; selecting and managing the physical space and aural environment; having a realistic timescale that will allow for developmental work; being pragmatic about logistical challenges; ensuring the availability and reliability of musical instruments and technical equipment; managing an experienced team of workshop leaders and supporting musicians; creating opportunities for presenting high quality performances, events and recordings;

ensuring sustained funding for future projects; helping to build and nurture appropriate partnerships.

Role of curator: responsible for shaping the flow of the final event or performance; responsible for choreographing and programming the end-product; responsibility for curating the event in terms of number of groups performing, sectors involved, contributory art forms etc.; the curator's role is a second order position – that of a 'spectator' who makes connections; working closely with the artistic director and arts practitioners, the curator's role has an important artistic dimension to it – the aim is to ensure that a presentation has integrity and coherence and is not just celebratory and superficial"<sup>46</sup>.

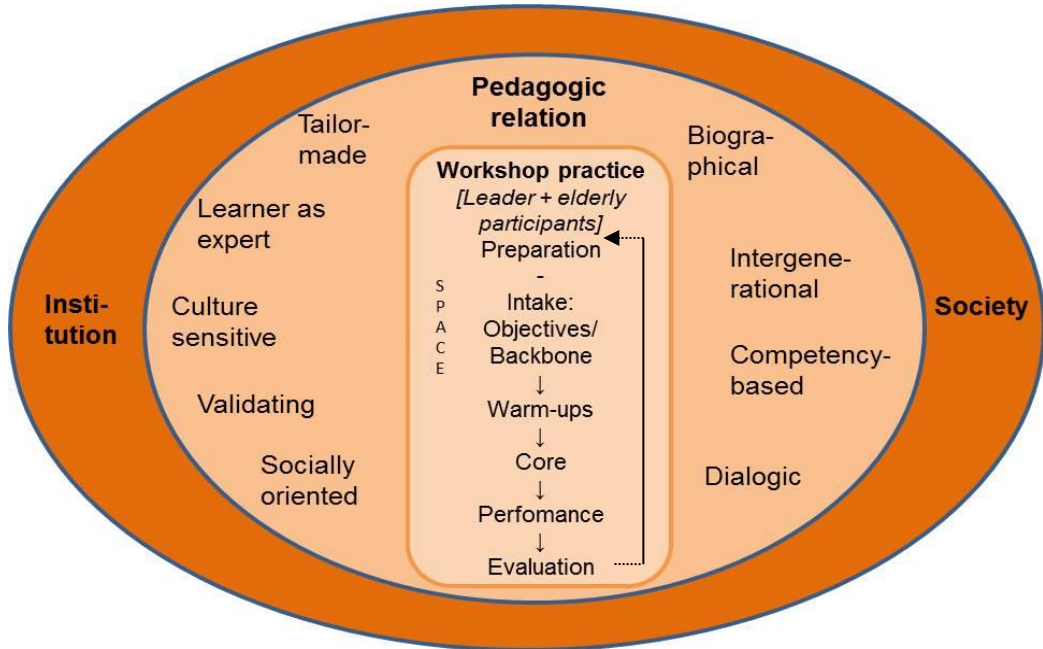
The personal, artistic and professional qualities of the workshop leader are decisive for the success of a creative music workshop. The musical identity of the workshop leader is of paramount importance. The workshop leader cannot stick to recipes and formulaic-led creativity. As Peter Renshaw remarks: "The primary driver is always artistic, but each project (workshop) has to respond creatively to the social, cultural, psychological and physiological needs of its particular context"<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Renshaw 2010, pp. 66-70.

<sup>47</sup> Renshaw, 2010, p. 72.

## 4 Toward a theoretical framework for running and researching creative music workshops for the elderly

Based on the previous sections we present the following model which will serve as a lens for looking at the practice of creative music workshops with the elderly.



The **outmost circle** refers to the societal and institutional contexts of the workshop leader and the elderly. Issues in this circle have to be considered because the content and form of the workshop are related to the societal (social, cultural) and institutional backgrounds of the elderly participants and the workshop leader. Both issues can have consequences for e.g. the choice of the musical material, and may be relevant for the marketing of the workshop. Issues that are relevant are e.g. the view other people (or society in general) have of the value of music for the elderly, the question whether older people can learn new things, the way things are organized at homes for the elderly, the staff members of these homes that have to be involved in planning the workshops and the culture and practices in the homes.

In the **middle circle** the nine principles characterizing music practice with older adults are listed. An explanation of the nine principles can be found in section 3.1

The **inner rectangle** represents the specific practice of running a creative music workshop. It summarizes the main elements of the creative music workshop as described in section 3.2. We mention the following elements:

- | The actors in the creative music workshop are the workshop leader and the elderly participants
- | The workshops takes place in a specific space, which may have specific qualities
- | The workshop itself is roughly set up on the basis of a sequence for the preparation (both by the workshop leader who prepares for the workshop as for the participants who will in some way also think about what it will mean for them to take part in the workshop), the intake (in which objectives are formulated by workshop leader and participants together and are related by the workshop leader to the prepared backbone material), the warm-ups, the actual core in which a product is created together, the performance of this final product, and the evaluation.

2

## **Part II Report on the Pilots**

## 5 Research question and methodology

The main object of this study is to find an answer to the following research question:

What are the specific characteristics of creative music workshops for elderly participants carried out in residential homes for the elderly, and what are the consequences of those specific characteristics for the workshop leader?

Aspects of workshop-content as well as management and organization of workshops with elderly people are areas of special interest. The focus of the study is to uncover the specific competencies needed by a professional musician acting as a workshop leader leading creative music workshops for the elderly in residential homes for the elderly. Sub-questions are:

- | What are the characteristics of creative music workshops with elderly people in residential homes?
- | What are the competences of a creative music workshop leader implementing and carrying out creative music workshops with the elderly in residential homes?

To a lesser degree the pilots also aim to answer the following sub-question:

- | What is the appreciation of elderly participants, staff and volunteers, the residential homes as institutions, and the workshop leader towards taking part in, hosting or leading a creative music workshop for the elderly?

To answer the research questions, on the basis of the theoretical framework presented in Part I, a series of creative music workshops was organized in spring 2011 taking place in residential homes for the elderly in the Dutch provinces of Groningen, Friesland and Drenthe. The workshops were organized within the framework of this research project and observed by the researcher of this project, Karolien Dons.

The organization, design and implementation of the workshops were carried out by Jaap Oosterwijk (see picture page 25), author, producer and musician (music and theatre productions) and workshops for children in curricular and extracurricular settings. Oosterwijk was the central figure in this project, taking on the diverse roles as designer, planner, contact person and leader of the workshops throughout the whole project. Additionally, Oosterwijk acted as co-researcher in the framework of this research



experiment, meaning he reflected on his own actions, those of others involved and the situation.

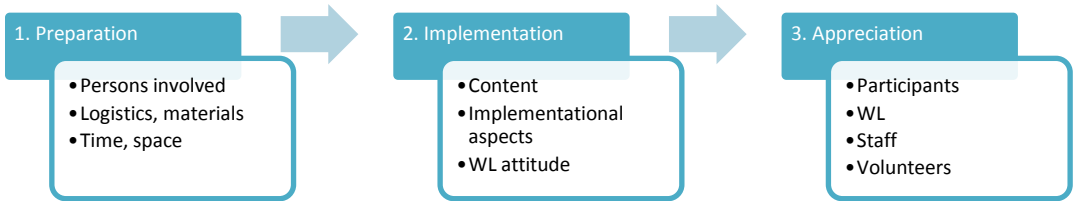


Research data consisted of the following items:

- | Observations by the researcher of the (preparations of) the workshops, including the role of the workshop leader, documented in written observation reports. The researcher made field notes on the spot and observational reports after each workshop, and made an intermediate and final written report of her observations. The researcher tried to focus on the entire process by describing routine occurrences and extraordinary occurrences. Extraordinary occurrences were the moments when unexpected actions occurred and served as a catalyst for actions by workshop leader or participant(s);
- | 'On-the-spot' mini-interviews by the researcher with residential home staff, volunteers and participants, documented in the observation reports;
- | Photo and video-recordings taking during the workshops by the workshop leader and the researcher;
- | A logbook by the workshop leader with reflections on his activities. He reflected on the workshop itself: organization, preparation, execution and progress; and on his role as workshop organizer and leader in the entire process (see logbook template appendix 1).

The data are used first to give an extensive description of the pilots (chapters 6 and 7), followed by a more interpretive analysis in which emergent themes are described (chapters 8 and 9). In a separate chapter (chapter 10) attention is paid to the effects of

the workshops on those involved in the project. The following chapters are based primarily on the written reflections of the workshop leader and the observational reports of the researcher, and to lesser extent on the audio-visual material. The text contains extracts of these reflections. The analysis of the material was done in two stages: first chronologically, resulting in the identification of three stages (preparational, implementational and appreciative), and then by focusing on aspects of the different stages in particular. The text roughly reflects this analytical structure.



## 6 Description: the preparational stage

R: "What are you going to do; and where? And how?"

WL: "Music workshops. *Creative* music workshops. I will use percussion instruments and so they can make music. I do have a plan; it's in my head, I'll write it down. And we'll do it in care homes; in the northern part of the country in several places differing in location, size, type of home and care etc."

*Extract of first meeting between researcher and workshop leader.*

The first step was to develop a plan. Oosterwijk had plenty of ideas on content and on how to make the arrangements, and put these in a concrete plan of action. He wrote down what he was about to do in phases: when, where and with whom.

After developing ideas and refining them first in an action plan and later on in a concrete workshop plan, the preparational stage consisted of getting health care institutions to join in the collaboration, making the necessary arrangements with the institutions and take care of the logistics and materials.

### 6.1 Collaborating institutions

In the search for institutions wanting to collaborate, several prominent umbrella organisations from the care sector in the northern Netherlands were approached with the

action plan and were invited to collaborate in the project. Four organisations were willing to cooperate on short term notice (Dignis-Lentis, ZINN, Zorggroep Tellens and Stichting Zorgcentra Zuidwest-Drenthe). One health care institution from Groningen (Veldspaat, part of Dignis-Lentis) had been in contact with the research group before the start of this project about a potential collaboration, therefore in total five organisations took part in the experiment. Each of the organisations suggested one or two locations or independently operating health care institutions for the experiment. The workshop leader received contact details of staff concerned with the wellbeing of the residents or responsible for daytime activities of the elderly residents.

The choice for seven health care institutions eventually taking part in the project was motivated by two criteria: (1) the interest shown by the institutions and (2) the variety in demographic composition of the centre's residents and geographical location of the centres.

The health care institutions taking part were:

**Pelsterhof** (Groningen city centre)

Pelsterhof is a small home in the city centre of Groningen (approx. 190,000 inhabitants)<sup>48</sup> with 40 residents, and is part of the social infrastructure for other older people living in the neighbourhood. It is a care and residential home with daytime activities for non-residents also. Pelsterhof has residents with diverse backgrounds and economic situations living there. Pelsterhof is run by ZINN, a care organisation active in various towns in the province of Groningen.

**Huylickenstein** (Bolsward)

Huylickenstein is a centre where younger and older elderly people can stay. It has 36 apartments for assisted living and 59 apartments for elderly people needing care. It is located in Bolsward, which is a small town in the province of Friesland with about 10.000 inhabitants<sup>49</sup>. Huylickenstein is run by Zorggroep Tellens, a care organisation active in various towns in the province of Friesland.

**Nij Stapert** (Wommels)

Care home Nij Stapert is located in the village of Wommels (population about 2.200<sup>50</sup>). Nij Stapert has 34 in-house apartments for elderly people in need of care and 54 houses for

<sup>48</sup> [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groningen\\_\(stad\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groningen_(stad)) [online, 7-8-2012].

<sup>49</sup> <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolsward> [online, 13-10-2011].

<sup>50</sup> <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wommels> [online, 13-10-2011].

elderly people requiring only a small degree of care. In addition the home's activities are open to older people living in the villages around Wommels. Nij Stapert, just like Huyckenstein, is a facility run by Zorggroep Tellens.

### **Veldspaat** (suburbs of Groningen)

Veldspaat lies in Vinkhuizen, a densely populated district of the city of Groningen with about 10.000 inhabitants<sup>51</sup>. It is mainly a residential home that offers care facilities and daytime activities also for the elderly living in the vicinity of Veldspaat. It has 32 rooms for residents requiring full-time care, 60 apartments where residents have access to the care facilities and 58 apartments for assisted living. Veldspaat is part of the large health care organisation Dignis which operates in the provinces of Groningen and Drenthe. Veldspaat had already expressed their interest in collaborating with the research group before the start of this project. The thing they found most interesting in taking part in this project was the fact that residents of the institution could play music in an interactive setting, whereas so far the musical activities organised by Veldspaat consisted of listening or singing activities.

### **De Weyert** (Dwingeloo)

De Weyert is situated in Dwingeloo, a village in Drenthe with about 2.400 inhabitants<sup>52</sup> and offering 55 places for residents needing care, 4 apartments for respite care and 28 houses for assisted living. De Weyert is run by to the foundation Stichting Zorgcentra Zuidwest-Drenthe.

### **De Dilgt** (Haren)

De Dilgt is a large care home centre with 168 rooms for residents, 31 rooms for residents needing nursing care, 4 rooms for respite care and supports a large network of elderly living in the village of Haren and surroundings. Haren (approx. 18.000 inhabitants<sup>53</sup>) is a village which abuts the city of Groningen and home to many wealthy citizens. Like Pelsterhof, De Dilgt is part of care organisation ZINN.

### **Saxenoord** (Franeker)

Saxenoord has 83 apartments for residents requiring care and 30 apartments for self-reliant elderly people who also have access to the facilities in Saxenoord. Franeker is a city in Friesland with a population of 12.900.<sup>54</sup> Together with Nij Stapert and Huyckenstein, Saxenoord is part of Zorggroep Tellens.

<sup>51</sup> <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vinkhuizen> [online, 13-10-2011].

<sup>52</sup> <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwingeloo> [online, 13-10-2011].

<sup>53</sup> [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haren\\_\(Groningen\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haren_(Groningen)) [online, 13-10-2011].

<sup>54</sup> <http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franeker> [online, 13-10-2011]



## 6.2 Arrangements with the institutions

The first contact with staff of the institutions concerned with wellbeing was established after the initial contact with the umbrella health care organizations. In some cases the head of wellbeing referred us to the 'activity leader' (Dutch: *activiteitenbegeleider*) for further practical considerations.

None of the care institutions had taken part in a research project of this kind before. However some institutions did work with external partners occasionally when organizing activities for residents. In the case of music there were activities where residents would listen to live music or take part in sing-along sessions. Creative music workshops were not done before by any of the institutions.

When presenting the plan, the reactions of the contact persons varied: ranging from sceptical out of concern for their residents' privacy and unfamiliarity with research activities in their environment, to supportive and considering this research project a great opportunity for their activity department. However, also the more sceptical contact persons wanted to cooperate after having been informed about the research activities and the ethical underpinnings in more detail<sup>55</sup>. Discussions at the end of the workshops showed that all staff were satisfied with the cooperation and grateful for being able to take part in the project eventually.

Prior to the workshops the workshop leader discussed practical considerations in a meeting with the contact person. They agreed upon responsibilities; for the institutions this involved the recruitment of elderly participants (see section 6.3 for more details), providing space, catering and volunteers. The workshop leader also discussed the workshop plan and explained what was about to happen in the workshop itself. In Pelsterhof, Huylckenstein, Nij Stapert, Veldspaat and De Weyert single workshops were conducted. In De Dilgt and Saxenoord multiple-session workshops consisting of five weekly sessions were organised. During the first meeting the workshop leader suggested that the fifth session could include a final presentation for other residents, family and staff but that this could be discussed later on depending on the participants' interest.

After this point both parties (institutional staff and the workshop leader) started to prepare for the workshops. In order to make sure that all the preparations went well at the

<sup>55</sup> During the workshops, we worked on the basis of informed consent. In this publication, personal details have been anonymised.

institution, the workshop leader phoned the staff shortly before the workshop was about to take place. In this way the workshop leader checked whether there were any problems.

## 6.3 Recruitment of the participants

It was agreed that the institution would take responsibility for the recruitment of participants. The workshop leader stated a few conditions for recruitment: he would like to work with elderly people who would be able to take part in the workshop in its entirety, and ruled out people with dementia. The workshop leader indicated that working with these people would require specific knowledge and skills he did not possess. The desired number of participants was determined beforehand. To ensure diversity in the conditions the numbers varied between 6 and 15 participants for the purpose of the study. Participants ranged from fulltime residents to elderly people living independently.

The workshop leader prepared a flyer for potential participants, which the staff could use for recruitment purposes. The flyer explained the purpose of the workshop, practical details and a request to sign up beforehand. In general, the staff reported that this led to hardly any one signing up. Personal invitations worked much better according to most staff. This approach consisted of staff talking to and in some cases visiting residents that they thought might be interested in taking part.

At Veldspaat the number of participants agreed on (about 15 participants) was exceeded. Moreover also the workshop leader's conditions with regard to recruitment weren't met. Originally a group of Moluccan residents were going to take part with *angklung* instruments<sup>56</sup>. The workshop leader had done research on this instrument and had prepared a special workshop with this particular instrument in mind. Upon arrival he learnt that unfortunately the group had withdrawn at the last minute. About ten minutes before the workshop was supposed to start the activity leader of Veldspaat went out to recruit participants by asking people who she crossed paths with to come to the workshop. Eventually she assembled a large group of participants, which did not comply with the conditions stipulated by the workshop leader, because many of them had - sometimes advanced - dementia. Later the workshop leader explained he did not phone prior to the workshop as he had intended and he saw this as one reason for the problems that arose.

<sup>56</sup> *Angklung*: a set of tuned shaken idiophones which allows groups to perform a melody together, comparable in this respect to handbell sets.

Also at Saxenoord (the site of the multiple session workshops) some difficulties arose before the first workshop. A large number of participants was recruited; the workshop leader had asked for about 10-15 participants whereas eventually about 25 turned up. Here also some participants with dementia had been recruited. Towards the end of the first session the group of active participants in the interactive part of the workshop appeared to be about seven. For the second session only those seven were invited to return.

De Dilgt conducted a careful selection of potential participants which turned out to be an effective strategy. The staff contacted residents of whom they knew they would enjoy and appreciate taking part in the workshop, and were mentally and physically fit enough to be able to participate. Also people from outside the care home but from the neighbourhood were invited to participate. About half of the participants were living independently at De Dilgt or somewhere in the surrounding area. The composition of the group influenced the starting position of the workshop leader and also the goals that were set for the workshop. It was expected that a lot more would be done and accomplished at the end of this series of workshops as compared to the series-workshop in Saxenoord. It turned out that one participant in De Dilgt was a regular organ player. This person would play a special role during the session by giving more musical volume to the pieces and by instructing others with small cues.

## 6.4 Volunteers

The workshop leader asked for volunteers or staff participation in the workshops. The workshop leader anticipated that volunteers would not only help and assist the participants with their needs in the first place, but could also play an important role in the workshops' dynamics when it came to content.

De Dilgt assured no care or voluntary staff was needed during the workshops; in the other institutions volunteers were present. Only at Saxenoord's first session no volunteers or any assistance were present. This caused some difficulties as there was need for individual care in the case of several participants, as well as assistance with pouring coffee and tea. Apparently the need for volunteers was not stressed enough at the meeting prior to the workshop. From the second session onwards one volunteer attended all sessions on a permanent basis.



## 6.5 Group composition

The composition of the groups in each home was as follows:

### **Pelsterhof**

- | 4 elderly female participants between the ages of 71 and 96 years old of which one was living in sheltered accommodation
- | 4 volunteers of whom 2 were over 60 years old
- | 1 activity leader

### **Huylckenstein**

- | 10 elderly participants (8 female, 2 male) between the ages of 70 and 93 years old of whom two were living in sheltered accommodation. One participant who was visually handicapped, one participant had dementia, one participant had limited mobility in one arm.
- | 1 activity leader

### **Nij Stapert**

- | 12 elderly participants, all living independently in various villages in the surrounding area. The group meets up several times a week in this set-up for activities in the centre during the day.
- | 3 volunteers

### **Veldspaat**

- | 18 elderly participants, all of them residents who needed full-time care of whom about 15 had dementia (ranging from advanced dementia to the early stages of dementia)
- | 2 care staff
- | 1 intern

### **De Weyert**

- | 5 older female participants, all fulltime residents; one resident who had difficulty hearing and was visually handicapped, one resident who had trouble concentrating
- | 1 volunteer

### **De Dilgt**

- | on average 7 elderly participants (1 male, 6 female) attending the workshop every time, of whom 4 participated in all the sessions
- | in total 9 different people attended one or more sessions, of whom 2 were non-residents and the rest were full-time residents
- | no volunteers
- | a daughter of one of the female participants joined in one of the sessions

### **Saxenoord**

- | 7 female participants, all full-time residents needing a lot of care (all used a walking frame) of whom one had a bi-polar disorder (manic-depression) who did not attend all the sessions
- | 1 volunteer

The stand-alone workshops were conducted with groups of full-time residents (De Weyert), with day care residents (Nij Stapert) or with a mixture of full-time and day care residents (Pelsterhof, Huylickenstein, Veldspaat). The group at De Dilgt consisted of full-time residents and residents living independently on the premises; at Saxenoord only full-time residents took part. Apart from Nij Stapert - where the group was an established group which met up regularly for daytime activities of which the members knew each other rather well - the participants did not know each other.

At De Dilgt and Saxenoord, where the multiple session workshops were held, the group size and composition remained relatively constant during the course of the sessions. At De Dilgt two new participants joined the workshop from the second and third session onwards. Initially Saxenoord's first session encompassed over 25 attendants, more than was originally planned, but ultimately seven participants continued taking part actively and these seven came back for each of the four remaining sessions.

## 6.6 Location and time

At the meeting prior to the sessions the contact person and the workshop leader agreed on where and when the workshop was going to take place. The time slot was arranged by the institutions, fitting in with the daily schedule of the residents. At Huylckenstein, De Weyert and Nij Stapert the workshop took place after breakfast and morning routines, and ran on until lunch-time. At Nij Stapert the final presentation took place in the afternoon after the participants had had lunch and had rested. At all other locations workshops took place in the afternoon, usually somewhere between 14.00 and 17.00 hours.

In all cases (both in the stand alone and multiple sessions) the workshops lasted 2 hours which included a coffee break. Ultimately the workshop leader terminated the workshop about 10-15 minutes before the end in many cases. This decision was based on him sensing the diminishing energy of the participants, or because of daily routines of the institution (such as dinner-time or the preparations for dinner).

At the meeting prior to the sessions, potential locations for the workshop were usually visited, in consultation with the contact person the workshop leader then decided in which location the workshop was going to take place, usually the room used for recreational activities. All locations were equipped with chairs and tables. Furthermore the contact person and workshop leader discussed that the institution would provide coffee and tea during the interval.

The multiple sessions workshops took place weekly, and spanned 5 weeks in total. At De Dilgt the planned final session, originally the final presentation, was moved forward to an earlier date because one of the members was not able to attend the planned final session.

### **Mobility of participants**

Residents came to the workshop by themselves or were picked up by staff. At Pelsterhof, Huylckenstein, Veldspaat, Dwingeloo and Saxenoord, the majority of the participants walked with their walker, in Nij Stapert and De Dilgt only a minority had a walker. A total of six active participants came in an (electric) wheel chair. From the second session onwards, all participants of De Dilgt came by themselves and needed no assistance. At De Dilgt some participants didn't live in the vicinity of the home and came to the workshop by car.

None of the participants showed up late; on the contrary many were about 5-10 minutes early. The workshop leader anticipated this after a few sessions and made sure all instruments were ready to use immediately. At Saxenoord the location initially chosen was not open in time for the early arrivals. Since a higher number of participants than planned showed up, this led to difficulties at the entrance. People started to become agitated while waiting in the corridor outside the room.

### **Materials, logistics and setup of the instruments**

On the day of the workshop, Oosterwijk arrived well before the start of the workshop. He liaised with the contact person and the volunteer and prepared the set-up of the instruments and seats.

The workshop leader put together a set of materials to use for every workshop. It consisted of: musical instruments, a CD-player and CDs, flip-chart with markers, a songbook with classics in folk and popular music, blank music notation paper and sticky notes.

In general the musical instruments were easy to play without individual instruction:

- | 3 keyboards
- | 2 snare drums
- | 2 middle size toms
- | 1 floor tom
- | 1 crash cymbal (played usually in combination with one of the middle sized toms)
- | 2 tambourines
- | 2 maracas
- | 1 woodblock
- | 1 cowbell
- | 2 single marimba bars
- | 1 rain stick
- | 1 djembe

In some cases participants brought their own instruments, specifically at De Dilgt, where a woman brought her harmonica and a man brought his Hammond organ for the last two sessions. At Saxenoord one non-active participant brought his clarinet that he used to play a lot when he was younger. Unfortunately this man was unable to take part in the interactive part of the workshop because of his physical limitations and left. One other male resident at Saxenoord came to watch the workshop; he explicitly did not want to take part in the interactive part, but was impressed by seeing the setup and the instruments: “it looks so professional”, he claimed.

The materials were provided by the Prince Claus Conservatoire and were brought to every workshop by the workshop leader. Logistically this took a lot of preparation, and it was hard work. Upon arrival usually the room had to be cleared first (moving all chairs, tables and other obstacles), only then the instruments could be set up.

### **Participants’ choice of instruments**

When Oosterwijk began the workshop, participants were sitting outside the instrument circle. At some point in the story, he invited everyone to take a seat behind one of the instruments. In the multiple session workshops, from the second session onwards, participants sat in the instrument circle from the beginning. The care staff or volunteers helped the elderly participants. Chairs had been placed behind each instrument but were removed for people in wheel chairs.

In response to Oosterwijk’s summons, usually participants did not go to the instrument of their choice immediately. Presumably this was due to shyness, participants needed a little convincing by the workshop leader or care staff to go up to the instruments. At this stage, participants tended to ask for an ‘easy’ instrument, such as the middle sized tom, claiming “that’s already difficult enough”. The keyboards were the least popular choice.

In a handful of cases, participants made their choice in a determined way because of a personal connection with a particular instrument. One participant at Huylckenstein for instance was a substitute drum player in a local orchestra when he was a young man. This recollection made him choose a drum again in this workshop. At Huylckenstein and Saxenoord two female participants used to play the piano a long time ago. The workshop leader used little sticky notes in different colours to mark certain notes that could be used as a reference for playing along. These sticky notes also helped people who did not know anything about keyboard playing. Oosterwijk then marked particular keys used in the piece.

Instruments were swapped rarely during the course of the workshop, once because a participant could not hear herself playing (she changed from marimba bars to cow bell) or in another case because the workshop leader needed a particular instrument to obtain a wider musical range. In that case he asked one participant to swap the snare drum for the large floor tom. In all other cases people kept the instrument that they chose at the beginning.

The choice was also based on the participant's abilities. A female participant at Huylckenstein with crooked fingers and a crooked back didn't look like she was going to be able to hold a drumstick or an instrument. She was rather timid and was waiting for directions on how to join in. Nevertheless Oosterwijk gave her the woodblock with wooden drumstick to see if this would work in her case. Eventually it did: the woman turned out to be very good at tapping each first emphasis of each measure and became a reference point for others to play along to in the group. She herself didn't seem surprised that she managed to do the tapping and played an important role in the group.

In order to have an elderly person sit comfortably behind an instrument sometimes the workshop leader had to be creative: in one case at Huylckenstein the keyboard, with a cross-shaped support, was laid across two chairs enabling a wheelchair user to play the keyboard.



After the residents were seated, volunteers or care staff taking part in the workshop took up the left-over instruments. The workshop leader sometimes asked volunteers to play a particular instrument, such as the djembe, because he wanted to use the volunteers in a specific supporting role. At De Dilgt and Saxenoord, in the sessions that followed the first one, Oosterwijk placed the instruments in the same way as the first. Spontaneously participants returned to "their" instrument as soon as they arrived.

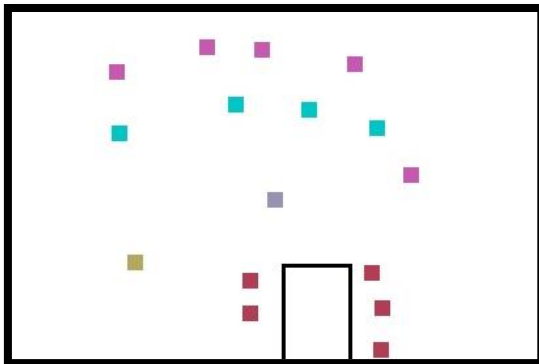
## Positioning of people involved

All instruments were played while the participants were sitting down. There was enough space in between the instruments to be able to get to a seat using a wheelchair or walker.

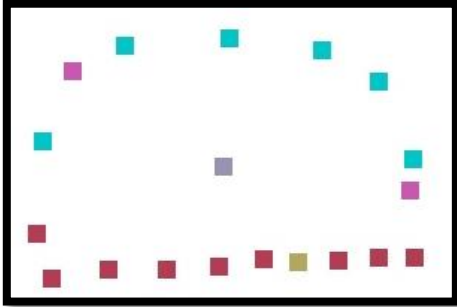
The positioning of the participants and workshop leader in the workshop space differed from institution to institution. A few examples:

- Participant
- Volunteer or care staff
- Workshop leader: position flexible between instruction and piano position
- Researcher
- Audience
- Musician: position flexible according to instrument played

Pelsterhof



Veldspaat

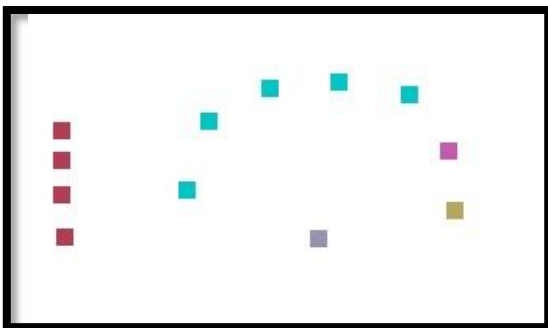


At Veldspaat, not all participants were engaged in the workshop in the same way; this was not clear for the workshop leader at the beginning. Eventually by asking participants individually to participate, and by attempting to persuade people to participate, the group got reshuffled and split up in a group that did not join in, (marked in the figure as audience) and a group that was actively engaged (marked as participants). Afterwards the workshop leader reported that clarifying this took up a lot of his energy and he said that if he had known this at the onset he could have taken this into account when organising the room and the instruments. Some of the participants who hardly joined in were in fact holding an instrument and were able to follow some of his instructions. This was very confusing for him, especially because there wasn't a position in the room from where he could see the entire group that was following his instructions. He directed his attention in particular to the group that was actively engaged.

“Participants sitting behind me, not again! Can't make eye contact and can't engage with them.”

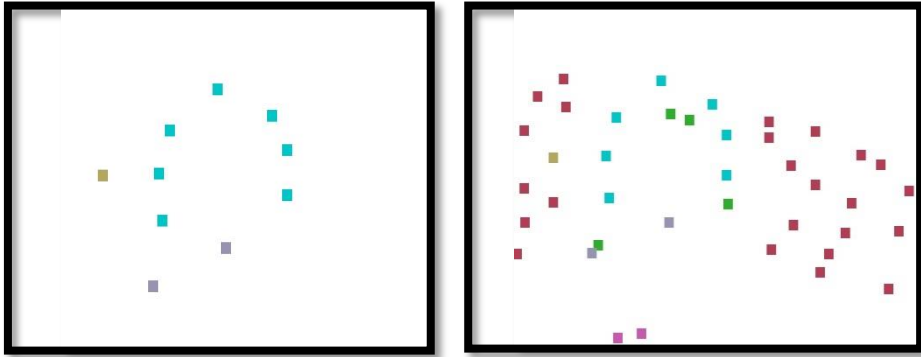
*Oosterwijk right after the workshop at Veldspaat.*

Dwingeloo





De Dilgt (workshop and final presentation)



The location of the first workshop session at De Dilgt was a small square room. After the first session the sessions and the final presentation took place in a large space with an original café interior. This space, right at the entrance of the care home, plays a major role in socially-oriented activities at De Dilgt.

## 6.7 Budget estimation

So far the organization of the workshops involved a varied set of tasks. The budget estimate incorporates working hours, materials and other items. An estimate of the costs of stand-alone and multiple-session workshop pilots is given below (see Part III for further observations):

### Stand-alone workshop

Remuneration workshop leader € 50 an hour	
2 hours workshop + travel + preparation time (5 hours)	€ 590,-
Rent/purchase instruments and materials	€ 300,-
Transport € 40,- a day	€ 40,-
Rent for the location	€ 0,-
Extra help or volunteers	€ 0,-

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€ 590,-

Multiple session workshops:

Remuneration workshop leader €50 an hour	
2 hours workshop + travel + preparation time (5 hours / session)	€1250,-
Rent/purchase instruments and materials	€ 300,-
Transport € 40,- a day	€ 200,-
Rent for the location	€ 0,-
Extra help or volunteers	€ 0,-
	<hr/>
	€1750,-

## 7 Description: workshop content and methods

### 7.1 The workshop outline<sup>57</sup>

At De Dilgt and Saxenoord multiple session workshops were conducted, consisting of a series of five sessions of which the last one was a final presentation. In the other five institutions single (stand-alone) workshops took place.

Oosterwijk developed an outline or a workshop plan for all the workshops which was supposed to function as a blueprint for all the workshops. In principle all sessions followed this blueprint, the material and time spent on different components in the workshop differed however.

The workshop leader prepared the outline for each workshop and included a time schedule. The more workshops he did the more he discovered that keeping to the time schedule was a challenge. He discovered that it was difficult to estimate the time needed for activities and that he needed to make split second judgements during the course of the workshop changing the outline of the workshop he had prepared. More and more he started to prepare workshops by using the activities he planned to do that specific day, and then worked out a slow and a fast scenario. All this took place unconsciously; Oosterwijk relied on his intuition a lot. In this way he created more freedom for himself which allowed him to react to each situation in a more flexible way.

<sup>57</sup> The outline presented here is developed by Oosterwijk. Because the workshops' content addressed here relies solely on the knowledge and experience with creative music workshops of Oosterwijk, the material and content of the workshop aren't discussed in great detail; the methods and issues connected to the specificity of working with the elderly are.

In principle, a single workshop's session consisted of the following stages (in chronological order):

1. Introduction: the workshop leader explains why he and the researcher are here, who we are and what we are going to do in the next two hours.
2. Tuning-in: the workshop leader starts to sing while accompanying himself on the piano with a specific topic or story as a starting point; using a picture of an old boat the workshop leader talks about his feelings and the music that it evokes, and ends by singing a particular song related to this topic: the *Zuiderzeeballade*<sup>58</sup>. Participants start to sing along spontaneously.
3. Introduction of the instruments: the workshop leader introduces the instruments, talks about rhythm, meter, sound colour, note length; afterwards he distributes the instruments amongst the participants (in larger groups this sometimes leads to a distinction between those who want to participate and those who do not) who start to explore and try out their particular instrument.
4. Warm-up: getting to know the instrument by simple homorhythmic exercises. For instance the workshop leader uses rhythms based on names of participants "*Jaap Oos-ter-wijk*"  
These exercises sharpen the mind. The workshop leader asks participants to sing a song that most of them know: namely '*Grootvaders Klok*' ('My Grandfather's Clock'), which he uses as a base for experimenting with the rhythms.
5. Experimenting: *the musical fruit basket*,<sup>59</sup> different rhythmic patterns consecutively: "*si-naas-ap-pe!*" [lit. orange], "*druif*" [grape], "*ananas*", "*zuidvruchten*" [subtropical fruit], "*me-loen*" [melon]. Also playing rhythms simultaneously, using different dynamics (loudness, length, height etc.), sometimes more complex rhythms simultaneous, small improvisations, expressing emotions (*ahh*, angry, happy, surprise, fear etc.). Leading to small pieces of music, for instance: creating a nice summer day in two parts, built up step by step: Part 1: alarm clock, birds, awakening, marching all represented by music and sounds; Part 2: melodic singing on two notes (ascending second), accompanied by piano. In the rest of the workshop, the leader continued to name the rhythmic patterns by their respective fruit names.
6. Interaction: doing rhythmic accompaniment to a song, simultaneously singing and playing a simple well-known song.

<sup>58</sup> Ballad of the South Sea.

<sup>59</sup> Also the name of a former radio program which played music on request, known to many of the participants.

7. Interval: time for coffee and tea: the workshop leader asks participants to think of a composition topic during the interval.
8. Composing a piece: the workshop leader shows them ways in which to express feelings through music, the group decides what kind of song or feeling the group wants to express, the piece consists of different parts consisting of contrasting feelings, usually an ABA structure.
9. Rehearsing and fine-tuning the composition.
10. Presentation or last performance.
11. Evaluation: reactions to the workshop by the participants.

A session in a multiple-session workshop also contained these stages: introduction, tuning-in, warm-up, experimentation, break, composition, rehearsing; certain material was re-used. The multiple session workshops were richer because:

- | more and different songs were used;
- | specific warm-up songs with small physical exercises were used;
- | there was more time for variations and small improvisations, e.g. singing a well-known Dutch song with ridiculous 'made up' lyrics.

We noticed that there seemed to be a correlation between group size and musical complexity: in larger groups, simpler exercises were carried out. There also seemed to be more verbal interaction going on in the larger groups.

## 7.2 The importance of having a coffee break

Some workshops started with a coffee break; others had the break halfway through. These moments were important for the involvement of the participants in many ways. Having a moment's peace at the start gave the participants time to get used to the space and the upcoming session. Usually the place where they drank coffee wasn't the same place where the instruments were set up, this enabled participants to make the transition from their everyday life to the setting in which they would make music, a situation which was unfamiliar to many of them. The coffee break during the session helped the 'tuning in' to this unusual situation – also in the form of 'tuning out'; it helped participants by diverting their attention and to recover and recharge themselves for the next part of the session.

The coffee break was supposed to have an additional effect on the participants: to recharge themselves and to rethink what had been done musically. During the coffee break in the stand-alone workshops, the workshop leader usually asked participants to

think about a topic or idea for the creative part. However, generally this was not really addressed during the coffee break because participants took the time to relax rather than exert themselves. At De Dilgt and Saxenoord, the coffee break became a genuine part of the workshop from the second session onwards. Participants talked about their experiences in the workshop and also talked freely about what was happening in their lives.



This last element was important. Most of all the break provided participants and workshop leader an opportunity to socialize, to get to know each other and discuss things happening in- and outside the workshop. This was a moment where personal connections were built or reinforced, connections crucial for maintaining confidence in the unusual workshop setting. Because participants shared a regular activity, people started to get to know each other and also topics other than the workshop were brought up in conversation. The discussions in multiple sessions workshops tended to be more outgoing and spontaneous than in single session workshops.

## 7.3 Initial contact

After having introduced himself, Oosterwijk explained the reason why he was here and what was going to happen in the next two hours. Then he usually started off by singing the song *Zuiderzeeballade*. *Zuiderzeeballade* tells the story of a fisherman's boat in the days that the freshwater lake IJsselmeer was an inland sea called the South Sea and was connected to the North Sea. The ballad instantly evoked nostalgic feelings in many elderly participants present.

Oosterwijk sang the song alone, accompanying himself on the piano. In all workshops a few elderly people and volunteers spontaneously started to sing along. The *Zuiderzeeballade* created an atmosphere which was identifiable and natural for the elderly

participants. It helped to turn the unease towards the unknown into activation and engagement.

The initial responses to Oosterwijk's actions were very diverse. Some residents were very shy at first. Some actually refused to take part. Eventually Oosterwijk, together with the volunteers and care staff, was able to convince most participants to take part.

Before the start of the workshop, one female participant at De Dilgt is very active and interested in what is going to happen and tells a lot of stories about her musical and artistic interests. She even shows her mouth organ which she subsequently plays spontaneously; the workshop leader immediately starts to play with her, improvising. The woman enjoys this and is at ease in this setting.

*Field notes session 1 at De Dilgt.*

"I tried to engage one female participant by saying I needed her to play the floor drum. Because, I told her, I really need that instrument to give the measure in the orchestra. Eventually she did accomplish all the tasks I asked her to do; but she remained a little in the background. Also during the coffee break she didn't mingle with the others at the coffee table, she just remained seated."

*Oosterwijk about session 1 at De Dilgt.*

## 7.4 Backbone material

The workshop leader prepared a set of musical material that could be used in certain parts of the workshop. These were existing songs such as *In Holland staat een huis* ['In Holland there is a house'], *Eén, twee, drie, vier, hoedje van papier* ['1, 2, 3, 4, little paper hat'], *Eén, twee in de maat* ['1, 2, march in time'], *My Bonny* but also metaphors to explain rhythms such as *sinaasappel, druif, ananas*<sup>60</sup>. For the (few) participants who knew how to play the piano or keyboard, extra backbone material would - in retrospect - have been useful. Many of these participants said they were able to play only using sheet music or other forms of notation. This was not prepared since the workshop leader was not informed about prior musical experience and knowledge of participants.

When creating the self-composed piece in the workshop, the workshop leader improvised and created musical parts on the spot while playing the piano, together with the elderly participants. At De Dilgt one of the workshop's pieces was based on poems written by the

<sup>60</sup> Orange, grape, pineapple.

participants themselves. Oosterwijk made his own musical accompaniments to the poems on the spot, inspired by the poems' topics.

Because of the fact that the participants weren't trained in recalling what they listened to when the workshop leader was improvising they were unable to recall the music when replaying certain parts of the pieces. Often they could not remember the order of different parts of the composition or what the different parts were. Therefore much relied on the listening skills of the participants.<sup>61</sup>

## 7.5 Aspects of musicality

The aim of the workshops was, as determined by Oosterwijk, to let the group enjoy playing together and create a musical piece together. One of the aims that became apparent to Oosterwijk during the running these workshops was that he also wanted to achieve a good sound. The workshop leader found this last aim rather difficult to achieve.

Percussion instruments were used mainly in the workshops. Apart from the piano other melodic instruments were rarely used to complement the rhythm section creating a fuller musical sound. Participants sometimes felt that the sound of the instruments was not that musical, and therefore they preferred to listen to Oosterwijk playing the piano. At the final presentation at De Dilgt, two music students of the Prince Claus Conservatoire accompanied the workshop productions on bass, trumpet and piano. The older participants reported afterwards that they enjoyed playing with them more than without them, especially because of the more voluminous and musical sound which was produced.

A couple of aspects impeded participants from playing their percussion instrument more *musically*. Some participants had difficulties with:

- | playing in time,
- | acting independently, without cues from the workshop leader; especially continuing with their part when the workshop leader diverted his attention to another section in the group;

<sup>61</sup> Here a visual aid could help out. Oosterwijk brought a flip-over to every workshop, but never used it in the single workshops because he was afraid that a visual aid would prove a distraction. "Participants are already busy playing and following my instructions; a third element would make the tasks too complicated and confusing" (Oosterwijk at a discussion halfway through the pilots).

One female participant at De Dilgt playing the metre does not continue to play throughout the piece. She stops when Jaap's attention diverts to another participant. This also happens at De Weyert when a participant does not manage to continue playing a certain rhythmic figure. Jaap uses metaphors in the piece's theme 'farming' to explain that 'the tractor keeps on driving'. Eventually the person at De Weyert understands the assignment; but does not manage to achieve this.

Field notes from De Weyert and session 1 at De Dilgt.

- | remembering where to start in the piece;
- | knowing the possibilities of the particular percussion instrument and translating them into creating a piece;
- | coordination: using their motor skills while simultaneously following the workshop leader's instructions;
- | coordination: using two hands independently of each other or when singing and playing at the same time;
- | immediately reproducing rhythmic patterns played first by the workshop leader;
- | interpreting dynamics in the context of the piece.

At a certain point Oosterwijk indicates to a female participant that a certain beat on the drum has to be strong, because of the dynamics in the piece at that point. The participant executes the beat exactly so, and continues to play every beat like that as the music continues, also at other points during the piece. After a while, the workshop leader asks her to play softer. Her reaction (astonished): "but you asked me to play loud, didn't you?"

*Field notes of session 3 at De Dilgt.*

Participants enjoyed singing and were fully engaged especially when it was a song they liked. Singing made the participants feel good, they participated wholeheartedly and pushed their limits. Singing was also used to create a certain atmosphere, by means of the 'Zuiderzeeballade'. Singing also created equality between participants and the workshop leader: everyone uses the same instrument. There was a common interest and joy in singing.



## 7.6 Improvisation and composition: creative input by the participants

In each workshop Oosterwijk asked the participants for specific input for the creation of the group's own piece in the workshop. The response to this question varied a lot depending on the group and the people. Presumably this was connected to the disposition of the participants and their engagement in the workshop. Also we noticed that participants in the multiple-session workshops were more outgoing and brave at pitching ideas and brainstorming together. Residents from assisted living facilities or participants living independently appeared to be more involved in the workshop.

At Huylickenstein two residents from the assisted living facility were very actively involved in the workshop and also came up with input. When Oosterwijk asked for ideas for the joint composition, one of the elderly participants from the assisted living facility responded by saying she would like to make a piece about a beautiful summer day. After this participant had given her input, other participants were not really happy with the proposal or did not react at all. Oosterwijk 'seized' the idea by supporting it as a good suggestion and by creating material around it immediately. He imitated an alarm clock, which also triggered positive feelings with the ones that were about to dismiss the idea. He did this on purpose, Oosterwijk explained afterwards, because he felt the woman bringing up that idea "needed the support and appreciation at that moment". As she was the only one sharing ideas, he wanted to value her input.

*Field notes from Huylickenstein.*

Oosterwijk started the entire creative process by asking for an idea and then translating this into a musical piece.

When it came to translating the idea of a beautiful summer day into music or sounds, Jaap asked for ideas again, but without any response initially. Therefore Jaap put his own associations with a beautiful summer day into words: "birds, walking, sunlight", and suggested a few sounds to go along with his own instrument or the instrument others were using. By way of this 'thinking-out-loud' he was able to engage with the participants actively, resulting in approving expressions or statements from the participants: "ooh yes" or "that sounds nice!". However no concrete input was given by the participants.

*Field notes from Huylickenstein.*

Usually the topics that emerged at these creative moments were connected to beauty. A few examples: a beautiful summer day (Huylickenstein), an island (Nij Stapert), the

seaside (Saxenoord). After the theme had been decided on, the workshop leader facilitated the composing process step by step by asking questions which guided the creative process, or by making short musical figures and incorporating the responses of participants.

At De Dilgt and Saxenoord the creative process also involved the written input of the participants. At the end of the second session, participants were asked to write a poem or text, which was going to be incorporated in a song during the next session. In the third session participants read the texts out loud. Apart from one participant at De Dilgt who brought an existing poem, the texts were written by participants themselves. The reading out of the poems was a highlight: everyone enjoyed listening to the texts and it evoked positive reactions. The texts were very personal testimonies. A few examples:

Wij, oudjes (*We, elderly*)

Wij oudjes wij kunnen niet springen  
En ook niet meer dansen en swingen  
Maar we doen ook wel mee  
Op drums en djembé  
Wie niet speelt die kan altijd nog zingen.

*Literal translation:*

*We, elderly, can't jump anymore  
Neither can we dance or swing  
But we do take part  
On drums or djembe  
Those who can't play they can always also sing.*

*(female participant at De Dilgt)*

Laputumokus

Laputumokus dat is echt geen mus.  
Wat denken jullie dan dat het is?  
Laputumokus, het is een gezegde,  
Ik zie het hier staan,  
Laputumokus, onze camper had die naam.

*Literal translation:*

*Laputumokus isn't really a sparrow.  
What then do you think it is?  
Laputumokus, is an expression,  
I see it written down here,  
Laputumokus, our camper was called.*

*(female participant at De Dilgt)*

Muziek is heel bijzonder  
Bij plezier of paukengedonder  
Zelfs bij uw laatste gang,  
Speelt het bij uw vrienden nog dagenlang.

Literal translation:  
Music is exceptional,  
When having fun or playing the kettle drums  
Even on your last journey,  
Your friends hear it for days.

*(male participant at De Dilgt)*

Medicijn(Medicine)

Muziek is als een medicijn,  
Voor jong en oud,  
Voor groot en klein,  
Speel je bas, gitaar of fluit,  
Tralali, tralala,  
Muziek dat maakt je blij.

Literal translation:  
Music is like medicine.  
For young and old,  
For big and small,  
Whether it's bass, guitar or flute,  
Tralali, tralala,  
Music makes one happy.

*(female participant at De Dilgt)*

At the following session the workshop leader composed the music together with the participants using these poems as lyrics. The participants were thinking along with the workshop leader and gave hints and indications in which direction they preferred the song to develop. At De Dilgt the creative process was a more collective effort than at the other locations. One participant suggested making a song using a three-four time, which also makes clear that the engagement was of a creative kind.

This creative process at De Dilgt and Saxenoord was very rewarding for the participants and the workshop leader; they shared ownership of the song. These moments stood out from the other sessions and the other workshops because of shared involvement. The roles and aims of that part of the workshop stood out from the other parts.

## 7.7 Presentation moment

The workshop leader had planned a presentation moment during each of the workshops. In practice, these comprised of announcements that the coming performance was the last performance of the piece; or these were announced as presentations with an audience and with a more professional set-up (microphones etc).

At the institutions with single session workshops, Nij Stapert and De Weyert, they set up a presentation moment with extra organizational effort from the staff. At De Weyert the audience consisted of a group of care staff. At Nij Stapert the final performance was organized in the afternoon whilst the workshop itself took place in the morning. During the time between these two activities participants had lunch and took a nap. Those involved in the workshop at Nij Stapert were non-residents taking part in the daily activities of the institution. The non-residents performed to an audience consisting of the residents living at the care home.

The presentation took place in the canteen of the care centre; the staff took care of the set-up. Before the start I went through the programme with the participants once again. During the “real” performance I sensed that people got tired and lost their concentration. No energy and no recall. There was not that much material from the workshop, but the audience wanted more. Because there still was some time left I took the chance to perform a bit of my own compositions; people need entertainment. Afterwards we played the piece from the workshop once again; you could really see the participants pushing their limits and enjoying it. I think I could achieve this because of the method I use; I try to keep it very open and free.

*Logbook workshop leader, Nij Stapert*

At Pelsterhof a group of residents not actively engaged in the interactive part observed the workshop from the beginning till the end, not the final presentation specifically. At Veldspaat the group of non- and semi-engaged participants could be described as the audience; at Huylckenstein there were no other people present apart from the ones participating in the workshop.

Right before and during the presentation, participants showed a little agitation. While playing the attention for the music sometimes diminished or their attention drifted to other things going on in the vicinity. Some participants showed confidence, others did not. Some participants showed their anxiety by expressing their fears about forgetting the lyrics of the songs.

In the multiple session workshops the final presentation took more organizational involvement of the staff. In Saxenoord the presentation took place in the institute's canteen and other residents were the audience. At De Dilgt the performance took place in the same space as where the sessions were held: the room with the original café interior. In both cases residents were invited to attend the presentation moment several days in advance, the first guests showed up an hour before the start of the performance.



At De Dilgt the performance was supported musically by conservatoire students on piano, guitar, bass and trumpet, which gave the performance a more unified and voluminous sound ; “like a real concert”, said some spectators. The students helped elderly participants by giving them little instructions or helping them to remember at which point they were in the performance. One female participant (see the picture above) enjoyed the attention and stood up unexpectedly on the stage after the first round of applause and started to recite a text about getting older.

Two participants at Saxenoord had refused to take part in the final presentation from the very beginning. Eventually Oosterwijk convinced them to take part. It was very rewarding for them, they gave themselves fully, they enjoyed it and they expressed they would participate again a second time. Oosterwijk rated the performance as not that good because of the lack of volume: “extra musicians or proper audio equipment would have made a big difference. The experience would have been more professional and the impact of the experience would have been greater for the participants,” he remarked.

## 7.8 Impressions: after the presentation moment

### Huylckenstein

At Huylckenstein there was no public performance, but a final performance of the piece created by the participants. When mentioning the word ‘final’, participants expressed their concern in a verbal and non-verbal way (movements, body language) to start preparing for lunch. The workshop was over as far as they were concerned. Oosterwijk managed to get them all playing, but there was no opportunity to conclude the workshop with a final presentation.

Eventually three participants were late in being picked up by staff and had to wait. This made them nervous and a bit confused. One of them had to go to the toilet urgently. The workshop leader accompanied them, postponing the putting away of the instruments. He reassured the person that someone would come to help soon. Interestingly, the end of the workshop was originally planned at 12.00 and this was also discussed with staff, but before the start of the workshop a staff member at Huylckenstein announced that lunch usually started at 11.30, therefore it was advisable to stop at 11.30 the latest.

### Saxenoord

Also after one session at Saxenoord, one participant had to wait a little longer to be picked up by a staff member. Oosterwijk had almost finished moving the instruments out of the room. The participant asked him several times whether someone had been called to pick her up.

### De Dilgt

When the performance at De Dilgt came to an end and the audience started to leave the room, the participants remained seated in their usual places behind their instruments. One female participant said she needed time to absorb what had just happened.

## **8. Further analysis: focusing on working with the elderly**

The logbook and field notes of workshop leader and researcher describe the routine as well as the extraordinary occurrences in the workshops. In the previous chapter we discussed various aspects dealing with the specifics of the creative music workshops for the elderly. In this chapter we will focus on some of these aspects in-depth.

### **8.1 The role of volunteers**

Residential homes for the elderly employ many volunteers, mainly people of over 55 wanting to spend their free time in a useful way. Volunteers are an integral part of the running of a residential home for the elderly. In most cases volunteers take on matters directly affecting individual residents: escorting them, helping them with eating or dressing, assisting with activities etc. Volunteers know the residents they work with well, and the residents know the volunteers well.

In the creative music workshop volunteers contributed to the workshop in two ways. First of all they played a role as carer for residents needing help with everyday situations as volunteers usually do. But for the workshop leader, the volunteers also acted as support in running the workshop every single time. The volunteers could use their personal connection in influencing the participants, more than the workshop leader could, who remained someone from outside. The volunteers were 'one of them', and could urge hesitant or participants refusing to take the workshop leader's directions to start participating in the required fashion. In this way the volunteer was also on the workshop leader's side and therefore was both a participant and an intermediary, even though the workshop leader and the volunteers had little or no contact before the start of the workshops.

Volunteers always participated in the workshop, just like the elderly residents did. The volunteers often played an instrument (such as djembe or floor drum) and a rhythmic pattern (such as setting the pace) that played a supporting role.



## 8.2 Biographical input of the participants

Occasionally the workshop leader took the time to allow participants to contribute in a way that was not directly connected to the workshop content, usually by making time for the participants' own stories. At the start of the multiple session workshop, Oosterwijk gave participants free rein to tell their stories. Some participants added information about music in their life to their stories in a natural way. In the stand-alone workshops, especially the ones with a larger number of participants, there was no time for an introductory round.

During the course of the workshops personal stories and memories came to the surface, often connected to music. Oosterwijk deliberately set aside time for the telling of these stories, usually the other participants were listening eagerly. By letting the elderly participants bring up their memories, he hoped to create the right atmosphere and experience for all.

## 8.3 Prior musical knowledge

Many of the participants did speak of having a 'special connection' with music, although few of the elderly participants had experience in playing an instrument. At Huylckenstein, Saxenoord and De Dilgt however, some participants had musical experience. One of the residents from the assisted living facility at Huylckenstein played the piano many years ago. At the first session in Saxenoord a lady took part that used to play the keyboard. Playing without scores or detailed instructions turned out to be difficult for these



participants. Oosterwijk prepared the keys with sticky notes in different colours, helping the participants to remember which note is which key thus enabling them to play along in the right key. If he had known beforehand that certain participants had prior musical knowledge, Oosterwijk said he would have prepared some sheet music or small exercises.

A male participant in the multi-session workshop taking place at De Dilgt was an experienced self-taught electronic organ player, with little formal knowledge of notation or music theory. He regularly played in the central hall of the residential home, but since not all residents loved his music as much as he does and because he had the tendency to play on for quite a long time, this took place less and less. Taking part in the music workshop was in the first place an opportunity to play for him. During the sessions this man gave the pieces more musical volume or helped the others by way of small cues. This appeared to be very helpful for the workshop leader and enabled him to concern himself with just leading the workshop.

## 8.4 Physical impediments

One of the workshop leader's conditions with regard to participants recruitment was that participants should be well enough physically and mentally to take part in the workshop. As we have seen this condition was not always easy to meet. For instance at Veldspaat and Saxenoord residents with (advanced) dementia were invited to take part. However, in most cases the participants who showed up met the conditions as agreed upon beforehand.

Nearly all participants in the workshops had to deal with one or more existing physical impediments in one way or another as a consequence of primary ageing. Some of these impediments affected their playing an instrument. The most common impediments were movements becoming slower, not being able to move a certain part of the body, and visual and hearing impairments. Impediments became an issue at different points during the course of the session: for instance when choosing an instrument or when trying to play the instrument for the first time, but also after having played a while or when going to or returning from the coffee break. A lot of time was needed for participants to get up from behind their instruments to break for coffee and to return to them afterwards.

Having to take these impediments in to account in a creative music workshop session was a new experience for the workshop leader. First of all, it took a lot of extra work to prepare the room and the instruments carefully for each workshop, to make the place as

comfortable as possible for all participants. During the workshop itself he dealt with these impediments by ensuring that two general conditions were met: 1. the way in which sound was produced should be problem-free for the participant, and 2. sound quality was secondary to comfort and group engagement. There were cases where participants needed help because of their complaints; in those instances volunteers or care staff took care of them.

In most cases practical solutions could be found to overcome impediments by choosing the right instrument or making the instrument accessible to a participant. For instance when a participant used a wheel chair; the person was helped to the right spot by a staff member after which the workshop leader adjusted the instrument's position in order to make playing possible. One participant at Huylckenstein had crooked fingers and at first seemed not to be able to hold a drum stick. Eventually the workshop leader gave her a woodblock, an instrument for which precise movements are important to create a sound. The lady got on surprisingly well and managed to play for the entire workshop. At Veldspaat one male participant was in possession of only two fingers on each hand but he did manage to play the marimba bars with two drum sticks.

Oosterwijk helped a few visually impaired participants by explaining all the movements and non-verbal cues he used when communicating with the other participants. Sometimes the workshop leader communicated with the visually impaired participant by touch; for instance instructing them how to hold the drum sticks by putting it in their hands. In this way it became possible to make contact with the others on an equal, musical level. The other participants were not bothered by the fact that certain participants were visually impaired.

Oosterwijk knew right before the start of the workshop that one participant was visually impaired, nearly blind. He had to explain a lot verbally, making sure that his body language was also verbalized. For instance at one point he wanted to divide the group in two subgroups A and B, and he pointed out the division by hands. Afterwards he walked up to the blind participant and told him by putting his hand on his shoulder to which group he belonged. Also when indicating when they are going to start playing, giving directions by hand had always to be accompanied with counting down aloud for example. In other workshops he did not count down nor did he count silently.

*Field notes from Huylckenstein.*

Physical impediments sometimes became apparent during the workshop, in some cases impeding participation. A few examples:

- | a thumb starting to hurt when holding the tambourine when inserting the thumb into the intended hole on the side
- | a chair being too hard, too low or uncomfortable: “next time I will bring a pillow”
- | maracas being too heavy to hold for such a long time
- | lacking strength so a participant can’t hit the floor tom hard enough or with the same intensity for a long time
- | finding the playing of the djembe tiresome
- | playing fast rhythms on woodblock isn’t possible because the required posture for holding the instrument is felt to be unnatural

One female participant was playing the marimbas from the start of the workshop, but couldn’t hear herself play, so she swapped them for a cowbell. Her hands shook and she had lost control of her fine motor skills. The participant developed her own way of overcoming this impediment; even going against the instructions of the workshop leader to hold the instrument differently: “when I let the cowbell ‘hang’ in my one hand, I am able to tap the bell more precisely with the stick in my other hand. I can control my movements only in this way.”

Field notes from De Dilgt session 1.

The workshop leader also reported sometimes having to bring back participants who tended to get distracted and became lost in thought. Usually he briefly touched their shoulder in an unobtrusive way whilst conducting the workshop.

In nearly all the sessions the coordination between cognitive and motor function was difficult for some. The various actions involved in making music having to be executed simultaneously make it a very complicated activity. For this reason the workshop leader always conducted the workshop in a uncomplicated way: participants remained seated, had one instrument for the entire workshop and were invited to react on the cues the workshop leader gave to engage musically.

Only on a few occasions during the course of the workshops a participant directly asked for assistance. In all cases a volunteer was present to provide the care needed whilst the workshop continued without interruption.

## 8.5 Memory

Difficulties with memorizing arose in all the workshop groups and affected the pace of the workshop. Virtually all elderly participants had difficulties with recall during the workshops. The main difficulties were remembering rhythmic figures when revisiting a piece played previously or when groups played different rhythms simultaneously.

The workshop leader was aware that the retention of information took more time than with younger age groups. Therefore his instruction was very important for the participants. Often participants asked for individual instruction, and in some cases the same instructions were asked repeatedly. While playing often participants actually forgot their part or forgot where they were in the piece as a group.

In looking at the multiple session workshops, when material from earlier sessions was used in follow-up sessions, we saw that long-term memory difficulties also affected the course of the workshop. For this reason the workshop leader repeated the material explicitly when revisiting a particular section.

Participants had difficulties keeping their specific rhythm when the group was divided into sub-groups each with different musical tasks. The length of time they could keep this up depended on people's ability to persevere mostly; otherwise people started to play the rhythm of the groups close to them played. Very often as a result everyone played the rhythm of the group with the most persevering participant.

The creative composition usually consisted of three parts in an ABA structure. When playing the piece and coming up to the next part, participants had difficulty remembering what their role in this part was. The workshop leader helped them by signalling what they had to play. Moreover it appeared that many participants did not have any idea of what the whole piece sounded like.

One participant at De Weyert had short-term memory problems and informed the workshop leader at the start. During the course of the workshop it became apparent that the problem was more complex, that it was also connected to coordination and reflexes and that the participant may have not been aware of this herself. When receiving instructions from the workshop leader to perform a certain rhythm and to keep on playing that rhythm whilst other participants started to play other rhythms, she was not able to keep up her own rhythm. Only when he gave her the task to tap along in the meter of the

piece, and in this way intuitively tap along with the music, she was able to keep her rhythm, however not in a steady pace.

On the other hand another female participant at De Weyert was exceptionally good at remembering the rhythms and executing them correctly. The workshop leader could ask her to perform more complex rhythms. She picked up all the concepts in a very short time and was able to keep up her part during the two hour-long workshop. The workshop leader enjoyed working with her and was satisfied that he could help her along so well.

Concluding, we see that difficulties with both short-term and long-term memory occur. At the multiple session workshops at De Dilgt and Saxenoord participants found it difficult to remember the texts in the consecutive weeks. Some of the songs used were printed on a hand-out, which participants brought to the workshop diligently every week. The creative piece was rather difficult to remember as there was no written version of the song at first. Afterwards two participants of the sessions at De Dilgt reported that they could not always tell at which point in the song they were. During the fourth session at De Dilgt, the workshop leader made a written version of the self-composed piece on a whiteboard. He used notes during some rehearsals by pointing out the beginning of each part. The workshop leader did not continue using the whiteboard in the course of the session because he was occupied with individual instruction then; however the whiteboard stayed in place also in the following session. The written version helped the workshop leader to recall the piece in the preparation up to the fifth and final session.



In the case of the texts written by the participants themselves, when these songs were performed at the presentation moment these texts were copied by hand by the other participants. When performing those songs participants encountered difficulties in dividing their attention between reading from the paper and playing the instrument and receiving instructions from the workshop leader. Dividing their attention between these three things was new for them and seemed to demand a lot of effort.

Repetition was essential, also in the one-session workshops. The workshop leader deliberately did not vary the rhythms much when going from one piece to the next. Also in the multiple session workshops, he used the same rhythms in the second or third session as in the first session.

## 8.6 Humour

Humour was an integral part of the workshops. Oosterwijk is an entertainer *pur sang* and he used various types of humour while conducting of the workshops. He highlighted comical situations and could turn aspects of the workshop which did not seem funny at first into potential jokes. Never did he laugh or mean to laugh at personal issues of the participants, but sometimes he did lighten the mood by making fun of being old (or young). Participants enjoyed these moments where Oosterwijk took the situation and himself not too seriously and afterwards he said that this was one of the main qualities they mentioned when asked what they liked about him as a workshop leader.

Participants also joined in the humorous atmosphere, especially at the multiple session workshops. After a few sessions participants and workshop leader got to know each other better and could talk more freely about their thoughts and impressions. At De Dilgt two participants were very much engaged in the joking around with the workshop leader, especially the female participant who recited the text and the organ player.

“As a workshop leader I am an entertainer as well, you have to be very aware of this. At the presentation moment you need to make an impact on the audience, you have to use the atmosphere and make sure all participants feel it in some way too”.

*Logbook Nij Stapert Oosterwijk.*



## 8.7 Listening to each other

The workshops were carried out in such a way that participants had to follow the instructions of the workshop leader; there was not much interaction among participants. However Oosterwijk tried to facilitate listening to each other and playing together, but found this very difficult to achieve. Participants were very much focused on their own task, especially in the single session workshops. A lot of concentration was needed just following the workshop leader's instructions, and also because the piano, which Oosterwijk played, played a central role in the collective music making and therefore he usually was the point of reference for participants when playing together. When playing, it seemed to be hard enough to take the workshop leader's instructions, his playing on the piano and one's own playing into account, let alone paying attention to another participant's playing.

## 9 Further analysis: the workshop leader

### 9.1 The centrality of the workshop leader

In the creative music workshops with the elderly, the workshop leader demonstrated a lot of confidence in what he was doing. When telling a story, in being clear and to the point, in letting people speak, in listening to one another, in giving compliments etc., the workshop leader acted not only and not principally as a facilitator but more as the central and decisive 'central entertainer' around which the workshop revolved.

In connection to his decision-making responsibility the workshop leader also maintained a flexible attitude towards the workshop and its circumstances. Every aspect of carrying out the workshop was executed integrally; communication, pedagogical and musical-occupational aspects were integrated which made the leading of the workshop a continuous process of changes in focus and decision-making.

Leading the workshops demanded a lot of energy, lots of directing and input. And at the same time, as the workshop leader reported, a lot of easy-goingness and improvisation.

“It was a constant decision-making process. Improvising in activities and material; in reacting to things and results of your instruction. I can describe it as having a backpack stuffed with material or a collection of drawers which you can open whenever you need something. It’s mostly about finding a balance between reacting and not reacting; you just need to let some things happen”.

*Final logbook Oosterwijk.*

The workshop leader also reported moments where he could not make a decision easily, which made him doubt what to do next. Especially unexpected things that occurred could trigger this feeling. An example: when a grandson of one of the participants came to visit his grandmother; he sat down intending to follow the workshop from the side until the end. However the participant was distracted constantly. At a certain point she stopped taking part and asked the grandson to take her out of the room. Later Oosterwijk said that he let things happen just as they came.

## 9.2 Artistic expectations

The workshop model that the workshop leader had constructed at the onset changed when put into practice. When he explained what was different between the planned and the executed version, Oosterwijk pointed out, amongst other things, the feeling that his own musical-artistic expectations often were not met. Most of his plans were not executed as he expected, specifically when it came to the amount of creativity in composition and improvisation. At the start of every workshop he hoped that the participants would put more improvisation and composition into the pieces but eventually he found that he always ended up with having to give most of the input himself.

At De Weyert, one participant picked up his instructions really fast, was able to do a lot musically speaking and was a quick student. The workshop leader wished that for once



he could conduct a workshop where all the participants would be like her, so that he would be able to reach the expectations he had before the start of the workshop series.

“One has to accept that it does not go as fast anymore. Now it is about trying to make something with the tools and energy you have and get from the moment. The satisfaction comes from letting people feel they have created a piece; created it together with the others”.

*Final logbook Oosterwijk.*

After having conducted the single-session workshops the workshop leader hoped to reach more of his musical expectations in the multiple session workshops. Although indeed he was able to achieve more than in a single-session workshop, still not all his expectations were met. This is one of the reasons why personal characteristics such as having patience and persistence are so important when carrying out the workshops.

The group of participants was different at De Dilgt. There was more interest and active participation there; some participants asked a lot of questions. He had to change his mind set and added more information about the instruments or about musical aspects in general to the workshop material.

## **9.3 Management of non-elderly participants**

Apart from elderly participants, others also took part in the workshop as participants and/or as part of the musical accompaniment: volunteers, care staff, music students and sometimes also family members. It was the workshop leader's responsibility to make these people feel at ease and to help them execute their tasks.

Just like care staff, volunteers played an important role in supporting the workshop leader and the participants (see 8.1). The workshop leader also tried to let the volunteers derive pleasure from the workshop besides giving assistance to the elderly by asking for their input in the creative part of the workshop where all participants composed a piece together.

“Volunteer Jose is a very positive and collaborative volunteer, a real help. She did not always solve the situation when someone lost track; but she always tried to help and was very good towards me and towards the participants.”

*Logbook De Weyert Oosterwijk.*

At De Dilgt there was no involvement of volunteers, care or activities staff in the workshop itself. The participants did not need any assistance. This made the participants in this workshop also a very “distinct” group of people sharing an experience without them having a direct connection to the institution by having other people present.

Two music students of the Prince Claus Conservatoire<sup>62</sup> supported the workshop leader musically in De Dilgt by taking on the accompaniment on piano, bass, guitar and trumpet. The students took part in the fourth and fifth session at De Dilgt. The music students were helpful to the workshop leader not only by adding to the musical sound; but they also helped out in many ways in the facilitation of the workshop. They helped by giving tips to participants helping them to get back on track or making it easier: “stand a little closer to the microphone”, “here is the chord you have to play”, “now hit a little less hard”. These tips took some of the work away from the workshop leader, who of course still had the responsibility for the creative process. The participation of the students meant a difference in the dynamics and pace of the workshop. Although the involvement of music students did help the workshop leader in many ways, Oosterwijk mentioned afterwards that their participation also took some of his attention away from the elderly.



<sup>62</sup> The first attempt to recruit students did not get any response. Eventually two students were eager to take part and they explained that it was the new environment that attracted them to it.

In one case at Saxenoord and one case at De Dilgt, a family member visited a participant at the time of the workshop, which led to that family member joining in the workshop<sup>63</sup>. In both cases this turned out to be a very positive experience, both for the family member and the participant. The family members functioned as genuine participants in the workshop, but at the same time they gave assistance to their elderly relatives. Sometimes the family members also helped other elderly participants by giving them cues or instructions. Their presence added an extra dimension to the workshop and it also helped Oosterwijk to conduct the workshop.

## 9.4 Communication with the elderly

The workshop leader seemed to adapt his communication style to the participants in the group. He used words and language that were connected to the participants' environment, as he would also do when working with other age groups in other settings. A very obvious example is him using the Frisian language when conducting a workshop in an institution situated in Friesland. Singing 'Grootvader's Klok'<sup>64</sup> in Groningen or Drenthe and 'Ús pake's klok' in Friesland.

Another example is when Oosterwijk had to turn the group's attention to different parts of the self-composed piece, since it was not always clear to participants which part was being addressed in the chronology. The workshop leader therefore gave the different recognizable parts terms such as the 'sea'-part and the 'storm'-part. When going from one part to another only those concise clues were needed to facilitate smooth changes on the participants' side.

Every single and multiple workshop started with the recounting of a story. The workshop leader used a picture from a newspaper as a starting point to bring about the creation of music from the participants' own feelings. The picture referred to the time when this generation were in their prime. The picture served as a recognizable and tangible item from everyday life that evoked feelings which the workshop leader then tried to put into music. In this way the workshop leader established a connection and used this as a starting point to engage the participants in the activities.

The workshop leader explicitly tried to involve all participants in an equal way. This recurred many times in his logbook and seemed to be one of his core personal aims. For him equal participation is one of the key features of running a creative music workshop,

<sup>63</sup> These two cases were different from the occasion where the grandson entered while the workshop was in progress as described in 9.1.

<sup>64</sup> 'Grandfather's Clock'.

and it also took a lot of effort to achieve balanced involvement even though he confessed it was not always easy. He tried to involve everyone by switching his attention away from the group to the individual and by making certain decisions so that all participants felt included.

At Veldspaat, due to the large number of participants (actively engaged and semi-engaged), the workshop leader had problems keeping the involvement of all the participants as balanced as possible. He decided to focus mainly on the actively engaged participants and tried to make room for stories from all the individuals present. In the bigger group when addressing both active and semi-engaged participants, he used more non-verbal communication and repeated more. Other cases where the equal involvement was difficult to maintain was when one particular participant took up too much attention by hitting a drum excessively hard and loud or by talking a lot to other participants. The workshop leader tried to equalize the 'input' and balance out shortcomings and overabundance.

At De Dilgt and Saxenoord the explanations and language used was more elaborate and more sophisticated. Participants asked questions about the instruments and the musical pieces. There was time for immersion and background knowledge. The participants appreciated this extra input.

## 9.5 Creation of a safe environment

Only participants at Nij Stapert had worked together before, and everyone knew each other therefore. Here, and even more so when people did not know each other, Oosterwijk was responsible for creating an atmosphere enabling communication and sharing. The workshop leader tried to establish a safe environment from the very beginning by sharing his own story and expressing his feelings by singing a song (*'Zuiderzeeballade'*). Implicitly this personal investment from the workshop leader also called for an investment from the participants.

When participants began to feel comfortable and got to know each other a little better, as they did for instance at the multiple session workshops, they were willing to go a little deeper, gave more input and shared more. For the workshop leader the moments in which people were contributing to the workshop by giving ideas, reflecting on the outcomes or interacted with each other were the highlights of the workshop. One such memorable moment was during the workshop at Pelsterhof, where one lady started to

compliment the performance of another elderly participant: “That sounded good, you are doing well!”.

Right before the coffee break the workshop leader tried to facilitate interaction by giving the participants a small assignment: think about a topic that will serve as inspiration for the creative piece after the break. This would immediately give participants something to talk about in case they had nothing to talk about, especially when participants did not feel at ease yet in the workshop setting and would not start talking spontaneously themselves. In case of the multiple session workshops the small assignment was no longer necessary from the second session onwards (see 7.2).

At Veldspaat many of the non-engaged participants got distracted from the workshop. The workshop leader felt that this group, which needed a high level of care, also needed a safe environment. Because the workshop was a little disorganized and the room was crammed with people with very different levels of interest in the workshop it was a little confusing and not pleasant for the ones that did want to participate fully. One aspect that did enhance the feeling of safety was the attitude of one of the care staff: she was sitting in between the active and the non-active participants and helped a non-active participant by playing the tambourine with her and holding her hand the whole time.



When participants knew each other, there was more active participation and spontaneity. We have seen this at Nij Stapert and also at Saxenoord and De Dilgt. As a consequence the workshop leader did not need to invest that much to ensure a safe environment. This enabled him to focus on other aspects of running the workshop and therefore enhanced – in his mind – the workshop results. The workshop leader expressed pleasure in his logbook only explicitly when reporting about the multiple session workshops; it may be an advantage that participants know each other.

## 10 Appreciation of the people involved

### 10.1 The participants

#### General

In this project we did not test the effects of taking part in creative music workshops on elderly people; neither did we aim to give a detailed picture of what taking part in such workshops means for this specific group of people. We did however carry out an evaluation by asking participants the same general question at the end of the workshop: what did you think of the workshop? This question produced an answer, and often this answer led to further questions such as: why did you take part? Or: what did you think of the workshop leader? These conversations could be called ethnographic mini-interviews. They were conducted on a small scale and with just a limited amount of participants.

One thing that all respondents had in common was the first reaction to the general question: all enjoyed taking part. However, the reasons for this were diverse: some expressed wanting to meet like-minded people or others in general, some liked trying out different things, some stressed the enjoyment of listening to music, being able to play an instrument (known or unknown to them), or forgetting the worries of everyday life. At Nij Stapert the reactions were extremely positive: “We haven’t had such a day in months”, and from the audience: “Wish I could have taken part”.

Many people spontaneously expressed their wish to take part more often in these kind of activities; and if there would be a second time they would prefer a workshop with more than five sessions. None of the participants that were engaged in the active music making part of the workshop stopped coming or refused to follow up the instructions of the workshop leader, the only exception being the participant who got a visit of a grandson during the workshop. Participants seemed engaged and interested in the activities the workshop leader offered, which can be taken as a sign that they experienced positive feelings while being involved in the workshop.

At Veldspaat some reactions during the workshop were not very positive. The participants who not actively engaged in the workshop seemed to take the workshop not too seriously and criticised their own performance and the behaviour of others. A few times the opinions of these elderly participants themselves were expressed literally during the workshop: “We are too old for this”, “I was never able to make music so I will never be able to”, “For God’s sake what are we actually doing?”. However the ones that did

manage to get involved and did push themselves to their limits and could enjoy the experience were happy and proud and expressed feelings of satisfaction. One person was rather unhappy and critical but her attitude changed during the workshop. The focus on what participants could not do (anymore) instead of a focus on what they were still able to do was very much present in this group.

At De Dilgt the creation of a musical piece using the participants' own poems was the highlight of the workshop series. The participants very much enjoyed working on the creative piece which contained their own texts together with the workshop leader and the other participants. This creative moment stands out from all the other sessions and all the other workshops because it was very apparent that they enjoyed themselves enormously and experienced a special moment together.

### **Multiple session workshops**

An indirect indication of participants enjoyment in the multiple session workshop was the attendance of participants throughout the weeks. Generally the great majority of participants attended the workshops week after week both at Saxenoord and De Dilgt. At Saxenoord one person dropped out because of illness. At De Dilgt one person was too busy to attend the last two sessions; one person lost interest in the workshop and did not return for the second and last session.

At De Dilgt a conversation with the daughter of a regular female participant also showed the involvement and the significance of the workshop in her mother's life at that moment: "She once told me that taking part in this workshop provides her with a moment and place where she can forget her worries for a while". Another female participant from De Dilgt mentioned a similar thing: "Now I find myself in a period of my life where I am being confronted more and more with the difficulties of getting older". The taking part in the workshop gave her a feeling that she had done something good.

One participant at Saxenoord was rather shy and a little confused during the first session, but enjoyed the workshops more and more, and got more and more engaged. At the second session it turned out that she used to play the piano in the past, which she enjoyed and would like to do again but did not have the physical strength anymore to do actively. For her taking part in the creative music workshop was a way to relive those feelings connected to making music, even though she added: "it cannot fully replace the feeling of playing the piano".

A particular case was the organ player in the workshops at De Dilgt. As a self-taught musician he knew a lot about playing the organ, and was keen on playing with others who

had about the same or better musical skills during the workshops. After the first workshop he had to lower his expectations. He spoke about the inability of the other participants to play and at some point during the coffee break expressed his views quite explicitly that he did not think that the others would go far in the music workshop. The fact that he – as the one having prior musical knowledge – was the only male between six other female participants made the atmosphere competitive but also quite funny: during one session the organ player confessed that the situation was ‘actually not too bad’. This to the great amusement of the other (all female) participants, everyone understood that he did not mean it that way. Eventually, after the final presentation during the last workshop session, he reconsidered his earlier statements: he thought it sounded good musically after all and he was “surprised about the ladies doing so well”.

### ***Difficulties***

Participants reported having encountered difficulties during the workshops when it came to memorizing. At times some were confused and lost track of where they were; a few reported that they were not always able to follow the instructions of the workshop leader. Percussion ‘was not everyone’s thing’, but people liked it because it was easy to start with.

### ***Non- and part time residents***

When comparing full time residents with non-residents or part time residents of the institutions we see a difference in engagement and goals. At Huylckenstein, there were two participants from the assisted living facility amongst the group which consisted mostly of full-time residents. Residents from the assisted living facility live more independently and are usually younger than full time residents; they tended to show an interest in the workshops that went beyond the interest of full time residents. The residents from the assisted living facility were eager to learn, whereas the full time residents looked upon the workshop more as a source of enjoyment. A similar pattern emerged at De Dilgt where most of the participants came from outside the institution.

### ***Appreciation of the workshop leader***

The impressions of the workshop leader’s role were solely positive. Participants appreciated his patience, the easy way in which he conducted the workshop and the energy he put into it. The organ player praised his handling of the participants without prior knowledge; he was surprised that he could raise their performance to such a high level.



***Concluding: the value of participating***

Despite the diversity in expectations and reasons of taking part, there is a common denominator: the workshop sessions lead towards a feeling of well-being. The workshop becomes a place where participants are engaged in a creative collaboration with peers.

Participants confirm this by saying for instance that the workshop provides them with a good reason to meet others; others from within the institution or from outside the institution. And also by coming into contact with music or music playing again. A good example also is the participants' input in the creation of a new musical piece; in this process participants are given the opportunity to express their preferences, their personal interests and to contribute biographical details - for instance when writing their own lyrics. Elderly participants are engaging in an activity which does not belong to their everyday routine, which makes the experience more rewarding for them. Another consequence of being asked to take part and step into this adventure is the participant's feeling of exclusivity when being involved in the workshop or when performing for an audience. Especially at the multiple session workshops this feeling of being selected to take part made participants feel good.

## **10.2 The workshop leader**

The workshop leader evaluated the workshops and his role in a final logbook, in which he made a few concluding remarks about his own performance. Here we draw from this source material, and additional feedback from some of the interim reports is also incorporated here.

The workshop leader found it very important to approach the elderly not only as a group but also as individuals. By combining these two aspects he managed to activate participants. According to Oosterwijk this aspect was one of the most important aspects when carrying out workshops with the elderly in care homes. Everyone had his or her own story, some had physical and mental impediments; he felt that these aspects needed to be addressed in one way or another in each workshop. "I tried to accept everyone as they were. From that point onwards you can start to think in more general group terms."

"I would have liked to know more about the backgrounds of participants at the start, before starting with the workshops. At Veldspaat originally this was the case with the Maluku participants; but eventually the Maluku were replaced by a large group, half of which were very difficult to engage. I had to change my ideas very quickly and go forward in a completely different direction; that was rather tough that time."

*Final logbook Oosterwijk.*

Overall the workshop leader expressed having enjoyed the work many times. However it took a while to achieve this feeling of enjoyment. After the single workshops, he never reported any personal enjoyment in the logbooks; the focus was mainly on aspects having to do with his own performance, the workshop and the progress in the workshops. When the multiple sessions started, the workshop leader started to mention enjoyment in his reflections, especially after the second sessions at De Dilgt and Saxenoord. And after the fourth session of De Dilgt he even mentioned:

"It is bliss to work with this group. From time to time I need to push their boundaries. From time to time I have to give some of them the space to have their say and let them do what they want; and sometimes I have to restrict this also; but... Beautiful! I have not got any remarks whatsoever apart from the fact that I enjoyed it very much".

*Logbook session 4 De Dilgt Oosterwijk.*

## 10.3 The music students

One of the music students assisting Oosterwijk at De Dilgt was the first candidate who expressed the wish to take part in the project. Her reason for wanting to participate was the opportunity to try out a new practice in relation to her studies. Afterwards she said to have enjoyed taking part; mainly because it enriched her focus on the studies she was involved in at that moment. She believed the elderly participants in the workshops had a lot in common with a group of children from the primary school, with which she had some experience. She felt that she could support the workshop leader in other ways than just musically, by giving directions to participants individually. The student would like to do this work more often, seeing the value of the positive atmosphere it brings the elderly participants.

## 10.4 The volunteers

Assisting in a creative music workshop was new for the volunteers in most cases. But they did enjoy taking part, especially because it was something different than their usual tasks. The volunteers' main task was to assist the elderly, but because this is mostly about being on standby in case anything happens, they could also take part in the workshop. Participating together with the elderly was the most satisfying aspect for them; they could share the experience together.

## 10.5 The institutions

The care staff concerned showed a lot of enthusiasm towards the initiative. All participating institutions asked for a follow-up project in which they could participate. When asked, institutions also expressed their willingness to invest financially in setting up follow-up or similar activities.

“I and my colleague are very satisfied with how it went. We heard only positive reactions from the residents. We are interested in setting up a follow-up project and organize these workshops in a more structural way. We are even willing to look for funding. However five sessions altogether are too few; I feel participants would have felt even more comfortable with a few more sessions”.

*Quote from a conversation with head of wellbeing at De Dilgt.*

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# 3

## **Part III Conclusions and Recommendations**

# 11 Specificities of running creative music workshops with the elderly

In this section we will draw our conclusions and formulate recommendations for further research by relating the descriptions and analyses in part II to the theoretical framework in Part I. Again we stress here that this study is explorative in nature and that the data are limited to a detailed analysis of 15 workshop sessions led by one workshop leader. Therefore our conclusions and recommendations cannot be anything but tentative.

In chapter 11 we will describe our findings organised in relation to the conceptual framework as described in chapter 4, focusing on the workshop practice itself, the specific pedagogic relationship which characterizes working musically with the elderly, and the wider institutional and societal contexts, ending with a concluding section.

In chapter 12 we will focus on the characteristics of the workshop leader as described in chapter 3.2. We do this because, as explained earlier, the competencies of the workshop leader are of central concern to us in this study.

We will finish this report with a short chapter drawing general conclusions and giving recommendations for further research.

## 11.1 Introduction

In this chapter the specificities of running a creative music workshop with elderly participants are described in relation to the model developed in chapter 4. Subsequently we will focus on the workshop practice (11.2), the pedagogical relationship (11.3) and the wider institutional and societal contexts (11.4) and we will finish with an overview of the most prominent characteristics of the creative music workshops in section 11.5.

In this introduction we want to stress that we found that there certainly is a demand for creative workshops in residential homes for the elderly, given the enthusiastic reactions of our partner institutions as well as the elderly participants in this project. Therefore at the end of this explorative research project we consider the creative music workshops for the elderly definitively as, using the term utilized in our research group LLM, an 'innovative practice for new audiences' which deserves further development.

The estimated budget described in chapter 6.7 may, on the basis of the conclusions in this chapter, be too low. Given the stress in the next sections on the importance of preparation, the budget may have to be raised. Further developmental research into the

creative music workshop practice for the elderly might give an insight in the extra amount of time needed for preparing the workshops and the budgetary consequences.

## 11.2 The workshop practice

### **The participants, volunteers and care staff, supporting musicians**

Apart from the workshop leader (whom we will discuss separately in chapter 12) there were three categories of participants in the workshop: the elderly participants themselves, volunteers and/or care staff, and additional supporting musicians.

As for the participating elderly, we can conclude a number of things. When it comes to recruitment, many older persons associate taking part in creative music workshops with the skill of music making which they claim they do not possess. This preconception makes it difficult to recruit participants. Out of all the recruiting approaches that were used in this project, the most effective one was the one where care staff in charge of the residents' well-being drew up a list with a limited amount of residents of which they knew they would be able to take part in and enjoy the activities. These candidates were approached personally by phoning them or asking them face-to-face. It turned out that the personal approach worked best, which is a convincing argument to leave the recruitment to the institutions.

The workshops in this project were aimed at a particular group of elderly people: active elderly people living in or nearby the care home for elderly. It was indicated during the first contact with the care homes that participants should be able to take part cognitively and - to some extent - physically in the workshop. Unfortunately in the running of the workshops it turned out that not all participants met these requirements; specifically a number of elderly with dementia were amongst the selected participants. Therefore it is advisable to stress the selection criteria in the preparatory meetings with the institutions, and mention explicitly the fact that these kind of workshops are not suitable for people with dementia, because their participation would require more specific attention than a regular workshop leader may be able to give.

The diversity among the elderly participants was enormous. Not only because elderly people in general are just as varied as non-elderly people when it comes to all kinds of demographic characteristics and musical backgrounds, but also because of the increase in impediments which people get when growing older added enormously to the diversity between participants. They ranged from participants living outside the institutions in relative good health to participants living as full time residents in the care homes needing

advanced forms of care. This asked for a great deal of flexibility and inventiveness on the part of the workshop leader.

Furthermore elderly persons have listened to music throughout their lives. This means they will have a particular taste in music and may know a lot about that music. The creative music workshop however asks persons to get engaged in music making, which for some is something they have never done before. For the design of the sessions the workshop leader uses no prior music making knowledge as the starting point. For some of the participants this conflicts with their knowledge of music as a listener. Tapping into the musical experience of the elderly while conducting the workshops therefore is advisable.

Nearly all workshop participants had one or more regular impediments due to primary ageing. Some of these impediments affected playing an instrument. The most common impediments were slower movements and slower mental processing, memorizing difficulties, not being able to move a certain part of the body, and visual and hearing impairments. During the workshop itself the workshop leader dealt with these impediments by using two criteria: the way in which sound was produced on the instruments should be comfortable for the participants, and sound quality was of secondary importance to comfort and group engagement.

Memorizing and coordination difficulties occurred in all the workshop groups – also in multiple session workshops – and affected the pace of the workshops. For many of the elderly participants, diverting their attention for example between their own playing and the playing of their fellow participants proved difficult. The workshop leader has to take this into account by allowing more time for the absorption of information than with younger age groups, and by doing one thing at a time.

The number of participants is crucial. Too small a group leads to a musical result that may be perceived as too 'thin', too large a group of participants makes communication and individual attention hard, which stands in the way of an effective workshop. In terms of groups size seven to ten participants seems work be best.

As for volunteers or care staff present: they are indispensable unless the group of participants only consists of independent living elderly people. They offer personal care to the elderly participants, which cannot be given by the workshop leader in any way. They may also serve as communicative 'middle men', enabling an easier contact between the workshop leader and the elderly participants by drawing from the lives of the participants they often know well. And finally volunteers or care staff also contribute musically to the workshops, giving it a, in some cases, much needed firmer musical body.

As for the supporting musicians, their support was not indispensable but on the whole very helpful and stimulating for participants and workshop leader alike. They acted as musical support. In our project the supporting musicians were students, and they expressed that participating in this project was an enriching learning experience for them. However for the workshop leader the supporting musicians in the workshop meant he had to manage their role as well, which made his role more demanding.

### **Space and time**

As for the space where the workshops were conducted in, it seemed to be a pivotal issue that it was not too small and that it could be set up in such a way that the workshop leader could communicate with all participants. It also seemed important that the room was available well before the start of the workshop and was also available for some time afterwards in order to let participants leave without hurry and give them the opportunity to reflect on the workshop. An additional room where participants could meet before and after the workshop, and possibly during the break, would be ideal. As for the instruments used, generally a choice was made for easy percussion instruments and keyboards and this seemed to work well.

The specific time during the day in which the creative music workshops for elderly participants take place is another crucial factor. The most suitable time seems to be the morning –in the afternoon participants may tire quickly. Two hours is the maximum, maybe this is even slightly too long. The importance of having some time before and after the workshop has been stressed already; a coffee break lasting a respectable length of time is even more important. As to the question whether workshops should be performed as single sessions or as a series, our results seem to point unequivocally in favour of a workshops series, for all kinds of reasons which will be described in the following sections.

### **Preparation**

One of the most important findings of our study is the importance of preparation. Unlike creative music workshops with children or adults, where an experienced workshop leader may be confronted with an unknown group of people and nevertheless is able to conduct a successful workshop, for workshops with the elderly being informed about the personal details of the participants beforehand is advisable. Reasons for this are: having biographical background knowledge to draw inspiration from, anticipating on musical backgrounds, and anticipating on impediments. This requires that the workshop leader and the institution doing the recruitment keep in close communication with each other. Also working in a workshop series rather than in single sessions workshops enables the



workshop leader to get better acquainted with his participants, as our project clearly shows.

It is also easier to work out plans beforehand when the workshop leader has more information about the participants. Although in practice plans are never completely realized, planning in workshops for the elderly is extra important because the final result of the workshops seems to depend quite heavily on how much the workshop leader is able to tap into the life experience and the biographies of the participants – and this requires preparation beforehand.

However, as said before, plans are never fully realized. One of the main characteristics of the sessions we observed was their unpredictability, which often could not have been solved by more preparation, however careful the preparation might have been. The workshop leader therefore has to adapt to the circumstances in part, instead of following a prepared plan, combining prepared methods and material during the course of the workshop, incorporating the verbal and non-verbal reactions of the participants immediately. Therefore our stress here on preparation may also be understood as a stress on preparational experience – it may be advisable to have sufficient workshop leading experience before embarking on leading workshops with elderly participants.

### **Intake**

As expressed above, taking time for the intake is extremely important in order to be able to do justice to the life experience as well as the specific physical-psychological characteristics of the individual participants. Also expressed above, even the most carefully done intake will not prevent the course of workshops changing due to the individuals present. Therefore the workshop leader must be prepared to ‘manage his own expectations’ in order to be prepared for the unprepared.

### **Warm-ups and core**

When it comes to the warm-up exercises and the creative core of the workshops, some remarks must be made. The first one is that the strategy for the workshop as developed in our project eventually became the following.

The workshop leader brings to the workshop:

- | backbone musical materials which correspond with the participants’ interests;
- | knowledge of clusters of exercises and methods with particular orders, leading up to specific musical results;
- | being prepared for flexibility;

- | a plan containing *what* he wants to start the workshop with (content) and *how* he wants to start of the workshop (process).

During the workshop the workshop leader:

- | incorporates information of the participants (physical, cognitive, emotional) and the environmental aspects
- | based on that information makes decisions continually on what happens next.

In the pilot workshops it turned out to be, with some exceptions, very hard to come to substantial creative musical input on the part of the elderly participants. The workshop leader felt he was the central entertainer on which the group relied heavily when it came to producing a piece of music rather than the inconspicuous facilitator he should have been according to the general ideas about creative music workshops (see section 3.2).

One of the solutions was to work more text-based: participants brought in their own texts, which also allowed for a distinct biographical dimension, which were then transformed into music on the initiative of the workshop leader but with approval of the participants. This may be one of the reasons why participants stressed after the workshops that they really felt they had made a joint production. This combination of relatively little creative input and a perceived creative ownership is worth more in-depth study, as it seems to be a way of changing the content and process of the workshop slightly while staying true to its participatory character. We may add that creative processes also seem to take longer, and especially in the single session workshops too much time could not be spent on it, which again speaks in favour of a series of workshops.

Another element found in our project was that both the participants and workshop leader felt a need for a fuller sound, which speaks in favour of musical support for the workshop leader.

### **Performance**

Although it may seem tempting to diminish the importance of the joint final performance, whether it is a public event or not, in view of the sometimes modest musical results of the workshops, the fact that they were working towards a final performance was very important to all the participants. Many of the participants were ambitious and very conscious of the results of the work and – rightly so – very proud of it. Therefore a joint final performance should remain a key element of creative music workshops with elderly people.

## Evaluation

We have seen that, when compared to creative music workshops with other groups, the balance between workshop leader and elderly participants shifts to the workshop leader when it comes to contributing to the workshops. A feeling of shared ownership concerning the process in and result of the workshops therefore will depend on the quality of participants' personal and collective experience. The evaluative conversations with participants as well as our observations during the workshops indicate that participants did value taking part and enjoyed being present and indeed felt that the workshops were 'theirs'. Enjoyment was created through several aspects: music making, being together with others (young and old) and also listening to the music when the workshop leader played (in particular together with the music students).

The value of taking part for participants can take several forms. For some the social aspects are the most important: doing something together with their peers, the type of activity is not that important. It is a way to get in touch with others, and the sessions are a way to keep in touch. For some participants performing music was something totally new, and that new aspect made it attractive. A few of the elderly participants liked to try out new things, this workshop gave them an opportunity to discover something new and have an adventure. Also the active engagement of mind and body was of value for some. The workshop was an opportunity to be distracted from their normal life filled with worries, and be challenged intellectually and physically in a positive way.

Given the importance of the evaluative remarks above, when no formal evaluation procedure is set up it may be advisable to reserve some time at the end of each workshop for evaluation purposes. However, the end of the workshops may in practice not always go as planned due to the category of participants and in the sometimes uncertain context of a residential home. Therefore it is advisable to rely not only on the final moments of workshops for the gathering of evaluative remarks but to keep one's eyes and ears open during the workshops (specifically during the coffee break) for the evaluative remarks of the participants.

## 11.3 The pedagogical relationship

In this section we will discuss how the nine specific characteristics of the pedagogic relationship with elderly people (see section 3.1) can be found in the project we researched. We will group the nine characteristics under the following four sections. The first section clusters characteristics which describe the fundamental positive attitude needed with older learners: biographical, dialogic and validating. The second section describes the

cluster how that attitude is geared towards the specific characteristics of the individual: tailor-made, competency-based, and seeing the learner as expert. The third section outlines the social orientation of the pedagogical relationship. The fourth section discusses two less pertinent characteristics in our findings: culture sensitive and intergenerational characteristics.

### **Biographical, dialogic and validating characteristics**

There are many examples how the workshop leader used his interest in the participants' biographies in order to make connections and find a basis for workshop content. There were attempts to connect to the era when the elderly participants were in their prime: when they were working and/or caring for their families, for example by choosing song repertoire from that era. When participants turned out to have an active musical past – such as a participant who used to play the piano – they were reconnected consciously to the instrument that reflected that past best. Trying to connect to their current situation by way of humorous references was another example, as was the exercise in which working with texts gave the elderly participants an opportunity to write about more personal matters.

One could say that a creative music workshop is, due to its creative character, dialogic and validating by nature. This was reinforced by the dialogic way in which the workshop leader incorporated suggestions from elderly participants and sometimes volunteers or care staff in his music and in that way answered them musically. The validating character of the relationship was present especially in the attempts of the workshop leader to obtain balanced participation, balancing out contributions by running with one idea and downplaying another; and also for example the way in which he gave the slightly dominant organ player a place in the workshop where he could use his skills in a way that was of use for the group as a whole.

Especially the biographical character of the relationship would have been fostered more if the workshop leader could have obtained more foreknowledge about the participants; and we found this turned out to be stronger in the workshop series compared to the single session workshops.

### **Tailor-made, competency-based, the learner as expert characteristics**

The second cluster of characteristics of the pedagogical relationship contains characteristics that enable the workshop leader and the participants to step into a relationship that takes into account the particularities of individuals. With the specific group of the elderly participants in our project, much of this related to a way in which

impediments which were present were handled without letting the impediments determine the character of the workshop. Many tailor-made solutions were invented on the spot, based on the competencies the elderly participants showed in that particular situation<sup>65</sup> and taking in account that principally the elderly participants themselves knew what their own competencies were.

Many examples of tailor-made situations are mentioned; for example the use of sticky notes on a keyboard, putting a keyboard on two armchairs to make playing accessible for a wheelchair bound person, using songs in order to work around physical impediments that hindered playing, communicating with the visually impaired participants by touching them, or keeping the set-up simple and clear to avoid 'cognitive overload'. Many of these examples seem to rely on an implicit sort of making-decisions-as-you-go by the workshop leader. And to be clear: tailor-made here does not only refer to keeping in mind people with impairments; participants showing above-average capacities were also accommodated for.

A reservation should be made when it comes to the learner as expert. The way in which learners view their own abilities is not always realistic by definition, but may be coloured by general societal ideas (see also section 11.4). When participants spoke of their inability to play musical instruments, this may not be so much the learner's expertise but rather societal prejudice adopted by the subjects in question.

Another restriction is that there seems to be a certain tension between a tailor-made pedagogical relation and the facilitator-role of the workshop leader. When, as was the case in our project, the workshop leader had to think up many tailor-made solutions for individual participants' particularities, this may also lead to the workshop leader taking a lot of decisions by himself, thus leaving less room for the individual initiative of the participants. This seems to be a question of balance.

Finally, again it must be mentioned that, given the importance of this cluster of characteristics, a workshop series is probably to be preferred above single session workshops.

### **Socially oriented characteristics**

<sup>65</sup> We consider competencies here as clusters of skills, knowledge and attitudes enabling individuals to act purposefully in a situation. Lack of certain skills or knowledge within a competency need not be detrimental for that competency as a whole; a competency-based attitude in this respect means that the workshop leader constantly searched for alternative skills, knowledge and/or attitudes in order to make purposeful action possible.

It has become very clear in this project that, although many of the participants were definitely (also) musically motivated, the social setting of the creative music workshops was a very attractive feature for them. This social connection between the participants formed itself not so much during the workshop but rather before and after the workshop and also during the break, which was also very important in this respect. The same applies to the social connection with the workshop leader.

This is enforced by the fact that, given the lesser capacity for dividing their attention between several activities at the same time, during the workshops themselves participants were very much focused on their own tasks and on the workshop leader, which left little room for sociability. As in most of the workshops the participants did not know each other well beforehand, the workshop series again showed its advantages also in this respect.

### **Culture sensitive and intergenerational characteristics**

Culture sensitive and intergenerational characteristics were less prominent in this project. The workshop leader did show a cultural sensitivity in the preparation of the workshop with the group of elderly from the Maluku – which in the end did not turn up. Also the connection to the Frisian context in some of the workshops may be seen as cultural sensitivity. In a wider sense, the biographical orientation of the workshop leader (see 11.3.) may be interpreted as a form of cultural sensitivity.

The intergenerational character of the workshops was rather minor – the workshop leader, many of the volunteers, the care staff, the students and also occasionally participating family members of the elderly participants were all (much) younger than the participants, but this fact was never mentioned.

## **11.4 Institutional and societal contexts**

### **Institutional contexts**

The influence of the institutional context was noticeable in certain points. For example, the fact that the institutions seemed to care little about letting people with dementia participate in the workshops may have something to do with the fact that, within the institutions, people with dementia are rather common and apparently it is not deemed too problematic if people with dementia may find themselves in situations where they cannot participate fully.

Participants seemed to show a certain amount of being used to thinking of themselves in terms of receiving care, and became (probably rightly so) nervous when they expected that care would be postponed for example. Also the adherence to strict time-tables – which sometimes led to agitation in the workshops – may be connected to the regulation of institutional time.

On the positive side, it must be said that care staff and volunteers within the institutions were enthusiastic and supportive without exception.

### **Societal contexts**

Earlier we mentioned already that notions concerning older people and active music making seem to permeate the self-images of the elderly participants. “We are too old for this” or “I was never able to make music so I will never be able to” may be taken as expressions of this phenomenon. The workshop leader therefore has to be prepared to handle those preconceptions about the musical abilities of elderly participants.

Another element of the societal context can be found in the difficulties we encountered recruiting conservatoire students to play a supporting role in this project. It does not seem to be a given for students that carrying out creative music workshops with elderly people is a viable work opportunity for them. Actually, the fact that this practice is as yet virtually absent in the North of the Netherlands may be a sign of this as well.

## **12 The workshop leader**

### **12.1 Introduction**

In chapter 3 we quoted Sean Gregory on the definition of the workshop leader: “An effective workshop leader has to be a multi-skilled musician who can perform many diverse roles, such as composer, arranger, facilitator, improviser, performer conductor, teacher and catalyst”.

Jaap Oosterwijk, the workshop leader we worked with, was precisely that. He combined all these elements from his decade-long career as teacher, workshop leader, composer and what not. The only thing he had no experience with was the combination of the creative music workshop and the target group of elderly participants. That made him the excellent candidate for our project.

In this chapter we will comment briefly on the workshop leader qualities and competencies as expressed by Peter Renshaw (see section 3.2.). We will not discuss the complete list of qualities and skills but will single out those qualities and skills that seemed to be tied specifically to the character of the creative music workshop with elderly participants in our project.

## 12.2 Personal qualities

When it comes to values, two competencies stand out. Respect and compassion (or, probably more apt: empathy) are values which are very important when working with the elderly, given their life experience and sometimes difficult circumstances. Next to that, integrity and authenticity seem to be valued by the elderly participants in particular; they may be seen as the 'double' of respect and compassion in the sense that respect and compassion refer to the participants' individuality and integrity and authenticity to the workshop leader.

Interpersonal skills and communication skills naturally are extremely important for any workshop leader. The ability to relate to other people stands out in this respect, given the enormous variety one can encounter in this group of participants. Personal skills such as organizational skills (given the precise preparation for these type of workshops), problem solving and decision making are important, the latter because of the often unpredictable character of the workshop. Also the personal quality coping with success and failure is important, although we like to stress here that although musical results may sometimes be limited this should actually not be perceived in terms of 'failure'; rather, coping with success and failure here means being able to see that success not always lies first and foremost in the quality of the final musical product but more in the entire process – and again maybe not only in the musical processes but also in for example social or communicative processes.



## 12.3 Artistic qualities

When it comes to artistic skills, performance skills on an instrument that may give 'body' to the music are extremely helpful, as are creative skills such as fluency in improvisation, being able to respond musically to (also non-musical) ideas of participants, and possessing musical, social and psychological responsiveness. All these may reinforce the biographical, dialogic and validating relationship that has to take place in these workshops.

## 12.4 Leadership skills

Artistic leadership is important but again this is a balancing act; indeed, having high artistic expectations conforms to the fact the elderly participants themselves do have a musical and creative agenda. Equally important, though, are creative and inspirational forms of generic leadership.

## 12.5 Management skills

Finally when it comes to project management it turned out how important these skills are in this project; although many factors are unpredictable, good project management skills can diminish this unpredictability considerably. Considerations, for example, about the exact space where the workshops are taking place and about the time frame are important, while at the same time a good amount of pragmatism is helpful. Finally, given the importance participants attached to the final performance, the workshop leader in his role as a 'curator', needs to ensure that a final performance has integrity and has a coherent presentation.

# 13 Recommendations for further research

In this report we have shown that creative music workshops with the elderly are influenced by a number of factors. To mention some:

- | Firstly and predominantly there are the cognitive and physical qualities and limitations of the elderly participants, and the presence or absence of prior music playing experience.
- | The severity of the physical and cognitive limitations requires the presence of an assistant to the workshop leader.

An additional important factor, but of influence to a lesser extent, is the number of participants and consequently other factors as the size of the room.

In each session these factors appeared in a particular way, and in the pilots these were unpredictable to a large extent. They determined the workshop's course and the workshop leader's course of action to a great extent. We have observed that the workshop leader engaged participants continuously and adjusted the session's design accordingly. The ingredients such as intake, warm-ups, core, performance, evaluation and the use of backbone material therefore were present in the practice, but had to be adapted to the situation continuously.

Thus in trying to cope with the unpredictable character of the workshop setting, the workshop leader aimed at reaching an adequate (re)design of the sessions continuously. In this we recognize the workshop leader's efforts to comply with the principles as mentioned in the middle circle of the theoretical framework, such as tailor-made, learner as expert, competency-based, validating, dialogic and biographical.

In search for 'the' optimized workshop session, we need to look for ways to minimize the unpredictability as much as is possible prior to the session. In the workshops we have seen that the sessions are (re)designed in the first place around the physical and cognitive abilities of the participants. Important as that is, we need to further explore the possibilities to engage participants through creative engagement addressing the participants' interest and background.

Participants indicated having enjoyed taking part in the sessions. However the source of this enjoyment was manifold; participants of the multiple session workshops developed their own reasons and rationale for returning to the sessions. These reasons or objectives and their diversity were unknown to the workshop leader. Clarifying these objectives more thoroughly could increase the tailor-madeness and therefore optimize the participants' appreciation of the workshops.

When looking for opportunities to enhance the workshop experience, and to minimize unpredictable conditions, repeated in-depth communication between the workshop leader and the institutions that goes beyond practical arrangements may be the solution.

The development of professional knowledge about creative music workshop leading, organizing and implementing when dealing with an older group of participants was the primary focus in this study. In the perspective of the rationale of the research group

Lifelong Learning in Music as presented earlier, we can endorse creative music workshop leadership as an example of a profession which is true to the lifelong and lifewide learning tenet. The workshop leader in this study has reported a need for a flexible and adaptable attitude during the entire process from planning to implementation. The responsive and adaptable nature of this profession is exemplified by the development of a leading strategy in which the workshop leader is challenged continuously to rethink the methods and materials that shape the workshop. The tailor-madeness demonstrates a highly learner-centred and environment-centred or situated methodology. Overall we see a need for the workshop leader to improvise and create something on the spot, which relates to the fourth cluster of characteristics of lifelong learning: the workshop practice is a participatory work environment, which empowers the workshop leader to expand his competences.

Envisaging the enjoyment and positivity of the participants, and presuming this affects generic well-being, we need to look for opportunities to increase the number of creative (music) workshop activities held in care homes for the elderly. Consequently the need for adequately trained workshop leaders will increase. Hence it will be necessary to investigate the transferability of the knowledge and skills indicated in this study, to look into professional training and development for creative music workshop leaders.

Summarizing, we would like to suggest five points of special interest when designing creative music workshops for the elderly. We have chosen to formulate these deliberately as points of interest for the workshop leader, because practice development is the central objective of this study.

### 1. Be prepared.

Leading creative music workshops for elderly people requires more preparation than other workshops, because the diversity is much greater than ordinarily due to all sorts of impediments elderly people suffer from which need to be taken into account and because the pedagogical relationship with elderly people should be underpinned by biographical, validating and tailor-made principles. This also means that the workshop leader has to pay close attention to the information he receives about the prospective participants in the preparatory communications with the staff of the institutions at the start of the workshop project.

### 2. (Get to) know your participants.

Know who your participants are, possibly before the start of the workshop project, and create a safe environment for them to participate in the workshops – only then a truly

biographical, dialogic and validating relationship can be created and can the participants' creative abilities be explored to the full.

### 3. Be prepared for the unprepared.

However well you are prepared and however well you think you know your participants, be prepared that everything may be different from what you expected it to be at a particular point. Be flexible and try to cope with the unpredictable.

### 4. Aim for the musical and the social.

Creative music workshops for the elderly are not just musical occasions, but also important social events for the participants (and for yourself). But don't forget they remain, in the end, musical occasions, and that intrinsic creative musical motivation and an ambition to do well are just as important for many of the participants, in spite of all sort of obstacles you will encounter. Remember that the main point of a creative music workshop is to aim for a final product of which the ownership is shared by all – however hard that may be, the feeling of shared ownership maybe is the first and foremost indicator of a successful creative music workshop.

### 5. Go back.

In order to realize points 1 to 4, don't confine yourself to single session workshops – work in series.

Behind these five points one can see two 'balancing acts' which need to be performed by the workshop leader:

- | the balancing act between prepared predictability and flexibility;
- | the balancing act between the centrality of the workshop leader and the shared ownership.

It is this double balancing act that makes the carrying out of creative music workshops for the elderly such an intricate but worthwhile business.

# 14 Appendix

## Logbook form workshop leader

16-03-2011 KD 4.2 Creative Music Workshops

*Please fill in after each workshop session.*

Name workshop leader:

Name of institution:

Location of institution:

Time and date of the workshop:

Number of participants:

1. What did you do in the workshop?

2. What did you prepare practically and with regard to content?

3. What were the objectives? Were the objectives achieved?

4. Did anything unexpected happen? How did you cope with this?

5. Describe the involvement of the participants.

6. Were there any highs or lows?

7. Evaluate yourself as workshop leader in this workshop.

8. Do you have any other observations?

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## Leading Creative Music Workshops with the Elderly

This publication is an explorative study of a new practice for musicians: leading creative music workshops for elderly participants. On the basis of existing knowledge about the creative music workshop and working with elderly people, a project was devised in which an experienced workshop leader carried out creative music workshops in residential homes for elderly people as well as centres for day care. In this publication, we give a detailed account of the workshops and try to establish a first impression of the particular characteristics of this new, but promising practice for professional musicians.

### Research group 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.

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