

5

Impact of community engagement

5.1 Learning and development

Guiding principles

The aim of this final chapter is to explore the implications of the preceding discussion for the development of musicians and artists working in schools and the wider community. It will focus partly on those ways of learning most likely to prepare and support practitioners for the challenges arising from different forms of community engagement. It will also reinforce the key point that for any such learning and development programme to work, it has to be rooted in an organisational culture that subscribes to similar values and ways of seeing the world. In practice this might well entail the organisation making a fundamental shift in perspective resulting in a re-ordering of its priorities.

As was intimated at the beginning of Chapter 3, the quality of community engagement depends largely on the effectiveness of all participants making meaningful connections, understanding and responding to each other's contexts and engaging in those open conversations that lie at the heart of any successful partnership. In brief, 'engagement' necessarily entails:

- | connecting to different contexts
- | connecting conversations between individuals and organisations
- | learning through partnerships

In addition to the range of quality issues discussed in Chapter 4, the above three principles must be seen as central to shaping any learning and development programme aimed at fostering community engagement. Examples of different approaches to learning and development will be drawn from the Case Studies, Personal Testimonies and interviews.

Approaches to learning and development

Kunstenaars&CO, Amsterdam

One of the Dutch organisations interviewed for this enquiry, Kunstenaars&CO (Artists, Culture and Entrepreneurship), is a national training, research and development agency whose mission is very much grounded in the needs of the market place. In his Case Study Joost Heinsius, Manager of Knowledge and Innovation, emphasises the importance of providing opportunities for artists to learn how to connect and engage with the many possible different contexts within the community. Joost states that:

Kunstenaars&CO sees itself as a builder of bridges, both within the arts sector as a promoter of continuing education, but also connecting the arts with the world

out there where there is a lot to gain, not only as new sources of income but also strengthening the position of art within society as a whole, to show that art can really contribute, can be of real value to real people (6.3 D).

For Kunstenaars&CO there is a symbiotic relationship between the development of art forms, the development of artists and their interaction with different communities, cultures and sectors. Artists have to continually innovate in order to make sense of and respond to the challenges arising from different contexts. Being contextually aware is now a necessary condition of being an effective arts practitioner. Joost makes the point well in his Case Study:

We are convinced that there is much to be gained from working outside the art sector as an artist. Responding to different contexts requires artists to redefine their own skills, testing them with professionals from other fields and developing new kinds of art. Working in communities, in business, within health care, within other public sector organisations helps artists to redefine their art, to develop new forms of art which are just as valid on these new 'stages' as traditional art is on its own particular stage (6.3 D).

From this perspective it is self-evident that individual and collaborative learning and development has to hang like a thread throughout the working life of any artist who is trying to engage with the demands of the contemporary world. For example, Kunstenaars&CO has devised a programme of training workshops, counselling, mentoring, coaching and work experience aimed at developing the skills and attitudes of artists so that they can function more effectively in the constantly changing workplace. It also recognises the importance of strengthening their sense of entrepreneurship and understanding of how to be economically independent. In his Case Study Joost makes a clear statement about the skills required by an artist today:

In the firm belief that independence is a necessary condition for a professional working life, we see the artist as a professional who is able to put his or her competences into the work he or she is committed to. Those competences are not only about being artistic or being creative, but also comprise general competences such as being able to influence others, to lead a process, to negotiate, to network, to be able to translate his or her unique contribution meaningfully into contexts other than only the art sector (...) Since the majority of artists are small entrepreneurs (whether by choice or by necessity), they also have to be capable of finding work opportunities, of managing themselves well and managing the different sources from which they draw their income (6.3 D).

Kunstenaars&CO fears that the training and development of artists in Higher Arts Education institutions has yet to fully engage with the question of what arts practice is likely to look like in 2020. There is reluctance from many teachers and students to broaden their perspective and to redefine their role and practice. Echoing the research of Rineke Smilde (2009a) on *Musicians*

as *Lifelong Learners*, Joost Heinsius makes explicit the importance of lifelong learning for all artists:

Most of art education concentrates only on the artistic side and does not prepare artists for the working life that is ahead of them. Nor are there many opportunities after finishing their education to systematically reflect on these challenges together with fellow artists. Lifelong education for artists is very necessary, but certainly is not offered within the world of most artists (6.3 D).

Joost then poses several fundamental questions that need to be addressed by Higher Arts Education institutions if they are going to do full justice to their students in the future:

The working practice of the future artist is much more varied and context sensitive than it was in the past. How can artistic quality be maintained whilst at the same time training students to be prepared for a working life that has never been experienced by their present teachers and directors? How can we find new didactic models that respond to the situations of real life after school? How can we transfer a new image of the artist of the future when the present image is still dominant within many parts of the arts sector itself? (6.3 D).

Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London

A similar point of view to that held by Kunstenaars&CO was clearly articulated by a music student about to graduate from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in 2001. Whilst preparing a vision statement for the School, I interviewed Chris Branch who made the following perceptive comment on conservatoire training:

The highly competitive nature of the world's top conservatoires results in extreme conservatism due to fear of losing their traditions and elitist position. The closed cultural perspective of many professional musicians and students could lead to the destruction of the Music Conservatoire in the future. The danger is that they are producing huge numbers of incredibly skilled players who have little idea how to connect with the rest of the world, and who are struggling to understand the place of music within a post-modern culture (Renshaw, 2001, p. 4).

Despite significant changes in recent years, conservatoires and other Higher Arts Education institutions still need to move on and radically reappraise the main thrust of their provision. New frameworks are necessary in order to enable students and arts practitioners to move convincingly through the changing cultural landscape. The words of the eminent historian Eric Hobsbawm (1997) help to give a sense of perspective to our understanding of both the present and the future.

At the end of this century it has for the first time become possible to see what a world may be like in which the past, including the past in the present, has lost its role, in which the old maps and charts which guided human beings, singly and collectively, through life no longer represent the landscape through which we move (p.16).

If we project forwards into the Noughties – or “a decade that changed the world” (Footman, 2009) – Hobsbawm’s observations are especially pertinent. Events in the last ten years strongly reinforce his position. The need for new maps is now absolutely critical if we are to make sense of the new world.

In the context of Higher Arts Education we need new maps to chart a cultural topography that is far more inclusive and less self-referential. In conservatoires, for example, the main focus continues to lie in conserving ‘classical’ traditions. There is no doubting that the integrity and transformative power of these traditions will always be seen as of central importance, but the urgency of change also necessitates a shift of perspective. As is clear throughout this enquiry, musicians and arts practitioners now need to develop the skills, attitudes and outlook that will enable them to connect to different contexts and changing cultural values. All learning and development programmes need to take these changes into account. The resonance of new ideas, innovation and entrepreneurship arising from the necessity of change, has to act as a catalyst for action that has artistic, social and cultural relevance.

Joint Music Master for New Audiences and Innovative Practice

New approaches to learning and development have been built into the Joint Music Master for New Audiences and Innovative Practice (2008), which was initiated by the Lectorate Lifelong Learning in Music. It was developed and piloted between 2005 and 2009 by Prince Claus Conservatoire, Groningen; the Royal Conservatoire, The Hague; Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London; Iceland Academy of the Arts, Reykjavik; and Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences, Finland. Currently it is in the process of implementation. The substance of this new degree very much reflects changing practice within the workplace. For example, it recognises that:

In today's changing world careers in music are more flexible and international in scope than ever before. Consequently, in addition to performance skills, today's musicians must be capable of working within diverse contexts and situations that are ever changing.

www.jointmusicmaster.org

At the core of the two-year degree lie four compulsory modules in:

- | Action Research
- | Leading and Guiding
- | Performance and Communication
- | Project Management and Entrepreneurship

Improvisation, technology and leadership in different contexts underpin each of the areas of specialisation – i.e., Ensembles, Collaborative Practice and Cross-sector Settings. Perhaps most important, throughout the programme students are supported by reflective forms of mentoring aimed at helping them to identify and develop their personal pathway into their professional career.

Guildhall Connect

Many of the principles underlying the Joint Music Master degree were originally developed and implemented by Guildhall Connect since its inception in 2002. Sean Gregory traces some of this development in his Personal Testimony.

My priority for Connect over recent years has been for the creation of an efficient, workable and sustainable model that embraces both the formal and non-formal sectors. An ongoing and obvious challenge along the way has been that the music generated by Connect participants is often embedded in a contemporary, vernacular culture that does not necessarily resonate with the core business of a conservatoire. In order to assist the evolution of its profile and position, the gradual consolidation of a broader administrative infrastructure took place to support the activity and to enable its ongoing development. As well as continuing to run access and inclusion workshops/projects, satellite Connect Ensembles (local, national and international), apprenticeship schemes and continuing professional development for teachers and leaders, a more ambitious progression route – a type of ‘golden thread’ – has begun to emerge through the programme:

- | A new ‘non-formal’ curriculum for young participants that offers genuine opportunities for sustained and personalised musical learning alongside a robust mentoring circle of co-participants, students, teachers, parents and Connect tutors.
 - | A new Connect undergraduate programme set up for ‘creative portfolio practitioners’ who break down the boundaries between musical genres, art disciplines, ‘specialists’ and ‘non-specialists’.
 - | A postgraduate programme/research forum (particularly through an MMus in Leadership and the proposed Collaborative Masters in New Audiences and Innovative Practice) for the training and development of contemporary practitioners who collaborate, create and perform as artistic leaders, cultural producers and curators in a variety of contexts.
 - | A continuing professional development programme offering lifelong learning to performing artists, teachers, project managers and creative producers.
- (...) Crucial to Connect is its role as a laboratory, particularly in relation to the developmental work around creative and collaborative practice, leadership and the role of the musician as a ‘portfolio practitioner’ in society (6.2 C).

Project Connect in Brazil

The principles underlying Connect also formed the foundation of Project Connect at the Music School of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (EMUFMG) in Brazil, which instigated an optional course in 'Music Education and Social Projects'. The course had three related aims:

- | To encourage students to consider the variety of roles musicians can have in society
- | To train undergraduate music students as creative music facilitators able to work in a diverse range of social contexts
- | To create sustainable links between the University and social projects

Heloisa Feichas and Robert Wells describe and analyse this project in Minas Gerais in their joint Case Study. The Brazilian context raises some especially interesting issues which the leaders had to take into account. For example:

The idea of bringing this project to a Brazilian reality came from our questioning of the gaps in undergraduate music student's learning. The music school at EMUFMG is based on the European Conservatoire model, a system which is both chronologically and culturally displaced within modern Brazil. The 'master/apprentice' hierarchy, which can encourage reliant behaviour in students, is pervasive. The study of performance, composition and conducting is decontextualised; rooted in the European classical tradition, students explore only a fraction of the diverse musical life of Brazil. There are scarce opportunities for students, including those studying Music Education, to engage practically with the wider society. Collectively these issues frequently prevent students from developing into conscious, self-aware, creative musicians who can positively add to the society of which they are a part. We felt it essential to develop new opportunities for students so that they could explore the connections between their musical interests and the social and cultural landscape of contemporary Brazil (6.3 B).

Heloisa and Robert chose Guildhall Connect as their model because they wanted to focus on collaborative forms of learning, on group composition and on collective ways of creating and performing music. In their Case Study they identify some of the challenges arising from this kind of approach in Brazil.

As students gain a practical and theoretical understanding of Connect's processes there is a natural development of their leadership skills. These skills are transferable to a number of musical, educational and social contexts. This is particularly relevant in Brazil where there has been a steady increase in the number of Brazilian NGOs supporting social projects involving music. These projects frequently engage communities through musical activities, however in many cases the pedagogical approaches are based on old models, frequently involving the reproduction of existing music. We hoped that engaging students in

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this project would make them re-consider the role of a leader/teacher within both the formal and non-formal educational environment (6.3 B).

During the programme several key issues had to be addressed by the students – issues that are not unique to Project Connect in Brazil. For example:

- | Making decisions and finding consensus within group work
- | Understanding how to balance individual autonomy and shared responsibility when working in a group
- | Learning how to communicate effectively and productively in group problem-solving
- | Strengthening interpersonal skills
- | Structuring ideas and developing musical material in group composition sessions
- | Reconciling different approaches to music-making – between classically trained students and those from a popular music background
- | Redefining the role of leader and teacher in a music and educational context

The students' responses to this project will be discussed later in this chapter.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Community and Education Department, London

One area of learning and development that has been especially significant over the last 25 years has been the training of orchestral musicians to work in schools and the wider community. One very important outcome of this redefinition of the role of an orchestra was the recognition that as the players began to extend and deepen their skills, it was also essential for training programmes to focus on their personal, artistic and creative development. As early as 1992 I made the following observation, arising from the work of the Guildhall School's Department of Performance and Communication Skills, under the artistic leadership of Peter Wiegold. The initial development work was carried out with groups of players from the City of London Sinfonia and the London Symphony Orchestra.

Engaging in different kinds of performance practice has widened the opportunity for players to become more responsible for their musical actions. They have been encouraged to make artistic, social and educational decisions of their own, rather than merely be efficient cogs in a high-precision machine, energised by a

charismatic conductor. As one principal player in the London Symphony Orchestra put it – “I now feel a musician again, rather than an instrumental operative”.

For some people, then, the debate has shifted from serving the community to serving the players. At last the artistic health of the individual player is on the agenda. It is now recognised that each musician needs to be confronted by an internal creative challenge as a necessary precondition for working in the community. Responding to this growing emphasis on the rediscovery of the orchestral player as an individual, several orchestras have initiated ambitious training schemes which place their players at the centre of a rigorous research and development programme. Those enlightened managements who care about the survival of the orchestra have begun to see that individual change lies at the heart of institutional change, and that training is the main vehicle for changing the professional culture (Renshaw, 1992, p.62).

One orchestra that responded creatively to this challenge was the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO). In 1993 Judith Webster was appointed to lead its new Community and Education Department. As was discussed in Chapter 2.2, Judith came to the orchestral world from a background in music therapy. Her understanding of improvisation and creative music-making, together with her insight into questions of motivation, identity and personal development helped to inform her approach to the learning and development of the players in the orchestra. In her Personal Testimony Judith outlines some of the main elements of her approach:

On arrival at the RPO, the first decision I made was to provide professional development to the orchestral musicians who chose to be involved in community and education work for the first time. Rather than teach them how to be a teacher or workshop leader, and provide them with lots of tricks and clapping games which they could use in workshops, I decided to focus on their own musical skills – giving them opportunities to learn to improvise, to work without notation, creatively, flexibly and freely with other musicians from different traditions. Remembering my own fear of improvisation when first training as a music therapist, I considered it vital to support them through this process by doing it with them. I was more familiar with improvisation than they were, albeit a less skilled player. I felt instinctively that I needed to make a relationship with each of them in music as they would relate to me differently than if our relationship was one of ‘management and player’.

This was one of the most important decisions I made, and enabled me to gain their respect, and to challenge entrenched views about management and what to expect from me. It also allowed them to realise that I understood the implications of what I was asking of them, understood their fears and demons. As a result, they respected me and we began our journey of discovery together. As an orchestral musician myself, I gave a great deal of thought to the roles they play within the orchestra, how the psychology of, for example, a rank and file violinist might differ from that of a principal trombonist and how these might affect their responses to an improvisation workshop with colleagues. An important influence on my approach to setting up this new work was therefore my own awareness of

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personal identity, how it was expressed in music and how to work with this creatively (6.2 L).

One key point stands out in Judith Webster's approach to her work with the RPO – that is her awareness of the importance of making connections. For example:

- | Ensuring that the learning processes in the development programme made meaningful connections with the individual players
- | Enabling each player to make connections between their personal, artistic, creative and professional development
- | Unlocking the motivation of the players so that they might re-connect with their initial reasons for becoming a musician
- | Understanding the culture of the Orchestra so that the learning and development programme would connect to its DNA
- | Making connections with those community contexts that resonated with the psychological and social character of the Orchestra
- | Building up and sustaining external partnerships that connected to the Community and Education mission of the Orchestra

Further excerpts from Judith's Testimony illustrate the strengths of her holistic approach to the development of the players and their work in the community.

The other key decision I made was that I should understand the core identity of the Orchestra itself – its DNA, its essence, what made it tick and how that showed in its playing, how it collectively expressed itself. In my judgement, it was this that would determine the kind of work we should initiate in a community setting. It would guide me in setting up projects – who with, what we would do well, how we would approach the work. Once again, this proved to be a crucial decision which affected the type of challenges I offered the musicians through their evolving community engagement and context.

I used my music therapist's insight to steer their individual and collective professional and personal development. Through continually reassessing this, I was able to unlock high levels of motivation and watch them grow into new creative roles, with a sense of achievement and pride in their work. They re-connected with the reasons they took up music in the first place, sought out musical and social challenges and faced new situations with relish and commitment. This was the opposite of what I had been told to expect from them.

(...) Once I had tuned into the DNA of the Orchestra, I then needed to create appropriate and developmental opportunities for the players to work in. In my assessment, the Orchestra was earthy, uncompromising, gutsy, passionate, and possessing huge warmth and compassion. So I sought out challenging social

contexts where our work could question the status quo and make a difference. The Orchestra proved to work best when working with offenders, young homeless people, children with special needs and their families, and in tough youth club settings. They were fantastic at working with underdogs – and could relate to the psychology of their situation in their own way.

(...) My music therapy background also informed my approach to setting up external partnerships. It was imperative that the community partners, just like the orchestral musicians, had a clear and honest understanding of what we were trying to achieve together, what we could not achieve and how we might expect to reach our shared goals. Key to this was ensuring that the musicians and partners all understood their different roles, and respected their own skills as well as those of the partners (6.2 L).

The effectiveness of the model devised by Judith Webster and the RPO can be put down to three interconnected forms of development: player development, organisational development and partnership development. To be successful each strand needs to be integrated into a holistic learning and development programme that is fully engaged with the continually evolving changes in the wider world.

Music for Life Wigmore Hall and for dementia, England

The final example of the pivotal place of learning and development in fostering quality community engagement is taken from the work of Linda Rose with Music for Life. As can be seen from her Case Study, quality of outcome is largely dependent on the quality of the musicians' development, care staff development and trainers' development. The work of Music for Life is exemplary in the way in which it puts the three key procedural principles into practice. That is:

- | connecting to context
- | connecting conversations between individuals and organisations
- | learning through partnerships

Linda explains how after each workshop an hour-long debriefing session is designed to strengthen the learning and reflection of the musicians and the staff. It is an opportunity to learn from each other and to deepen the partnership.

Changes in behaviour and mood are noticed by staff and discussed with the dementia care trainer in the debriefing. Individual staff members are encouraged to share in the discussion, their own vulnerabilities are sensitively drawn out and gradually they may risk talking about their relationships with each other within the workshop or within their teams outside the sessions. Often, tensions are revealed, overlooked promotions discussed, poor teamwork addressed. Also compliments are paid, laughter shared, warmth and trust developed.

The impact of the work on themselves is as important as for those they care for. Valuing feeling responses, reaching staff at an emotional level, raising their confidence and self-worth has a direct impact on the residents. The trainer needs to work with the same level of integrity and sensitivity as the musicians, recognising that he too needs to improvise, working from the personal experience of each member of staff rather than arriving with a body of knowledge about dementia that needs to be transmitted. In encouraging questioning and discussion in this way, the trainer is laying new foundations for learning and the quality of life improves for the care staff too.

The musicians need a period of debriefing too. It is not easy for them to withdraw from the session and look at it objectively as they too need a time of transition to surface back to life outside the intensity of this experience. A facilitator who has also observed the session helps the transition and leads the discussion: talking about the detail of the session, the effectiveness of their planning, exploring the ways they have worked together and the affect on each resident. The detail of this discussion will influence the subsequent session and often raises issues which will need further thought and conversations over the next week. Support for the team is vital, just as it is for staff as they cope with the emotional rigours of the work and face the occasions when connections are not made, as well as celebrating the progress of individuals (6.3 K).

In terms of fostering quality of experience and integrity of engagement, the work of Music for Life clearly demonstrates the necessity of thorough preparation, understanding the context, grounded practice, effective communication and collaboration, and quality of shared reflection and assessment. This is a challenge to the learning and development programme of any organisation.

5.2 learning

The place of mentoring and co-mentoring in and development

The scope of mentoring for arts practitioners

Increasingly, those organisations committed to community engagement are beginning to see that mentoring offers a strong form of support that underpins the learning and development of their arts practitioners, as is evidenced in the Case Studies of this enquiry. This is hardly surprising as collaborative ways of working within community settings draw on those forms of learning that are integral to reflective practice – experiential learning, context-based learning, work-based learning and action learning. In each case, face-to-face mentoring, co-mentoring and group mentoring circles can be used to address specific personal, professional and artistic challenges.

The following scenarios might help to illustrate the challenges confronting musicians and artists as they extend and deepen the quality of their community engagement. The success of such multi-layered projects depends in part on all participants having a clear vision, realistic goals, meticulous planning and shared preparation. There has to be a mutual understanding of different ways of working arising from different traditions and perspectives. Performing artists, visual artists, creative writers, IT specialists, teachers, care workers, and staff from different community contexts have to learn how to work together, to explore new possibilities and to make new connections. There has to be a willingness to negotiate with team members who might hold different views, but whose identity, integrity and skills need to be respected. On occasions, collaborative work can very easily lead to misunderstandings, role confusion, frustration, tension, apprehension, fear, vulnerability, breakdown of trust, and feelings of inadequacy and dysfunction.

Different approaches can be used to heighten awareness and address such complex issues. For example, opportunities for shared learning and development, shared preparation, monitoring and evaluation are critical to making such projects work, but the mentoring of individuals and groups can also provide informed support that will strengthen personal and professional understanding.

Scenarios:

- | A musician working with a dancer, story teller, visual artist and teachers in a neighbourhood school project involving a secondary school and its feeder primary schools. In preparation, cross-arts workshops could be set up for teachers and interested parents to be introduced to the creative process that would be used with the children.
- | A small group of musicians and a poet working in a hospice for terminal care, in which poetry written by patients can act as the initial stimulus for a shared creative process leading to a performance to other patients, nurses and staff.
- | A team of three musicians leading music workshops in a care home for elderly people with dementia. The process would involve working closely with care staff and trainer.
- | A team of three musicians leading a project with a group of long-term prisoners in conjunction with prison staff.
- | A composer and a performer working together with a disabled musician skilled in assistive music technology leading music workshops with young people with severe physical impairment.

- | A multi-disciplinary community project involving artists, teachers, governors, support staff, children, parents and other specialists (e.g. crafts people, cooks, gardeners, horticulturalists) in the neighbourhood.
- | An experimental community project in a sound and image lab for young musicians, visual artists, singers, DJs and programmers.

Mentoring, then, is just one way of helping arts practitioners, teachers and staff in community organisations to work more effectively together and to enhance the quality of their projects. But the mentoring process can also play a critical role in supporting individuals in their response to the wider challenges of the workplace.

As was indicated in Chapter 1, musicians and artists are now having to diversify, to extend their roles and work more flexibly within a portfolio career. To reiterate, the implications of these developments for musicians are made explicit by Rineke Smilde in her PhD dissertation, *Musicians as Lifelong Learners: Discovery through Biography* (Smilde, 2009a, pp.1-2):

- | Changes in the social-cultural landscape are helping to shape a very different workplace for musicians
- | Flexible portfolio careers require finely tuned transferable skills and a more entrepreneurial attitude towards work
- | Musicians now have to perform different roles as they are expected to respond creatively to cultural and educational contexts that go beyond the concert hall
- | Increasingly musicians have to work collaboratively with professionals in other fields – in cross-arts, cross-cultural and cross-sector contexts

All these changes are having a significant impact on arts practitioners and mentoring can be an effective way of supporting their development throughout their careers. But there are three critical stages when mentoring can play a particularly active role – at college, on entry into the profession and during periods of career transition. Here are examples of ways in which mentoring can foster development at these stages:

Students at college

- | enabling students to shape and reflect on their personal pathway from the beginning of college right into the profession (building up a sense of progression through college and beyond)

- | helping them to identify and reflect on key aspects of their development – e.g. personal, emotional, professional (as a learner and collaborator), technical, artistic, critical perspective on being an artist
- | strengthening their sense of artistic identity in a world of changing practice
- | inviting them to reflect critically on their professional practice in performance and artistic learning
- | making meaningful connections through professional integration in different cultural and social contexts
- | developing a strong entrepreneurial attitude
- | learning to work effectively in collaborative teams
- | deepening their understanding of documenting the reflective process – for example, writing a reflective log and self-reflective account of their development

Entry into the profession

- | confronting the practicalities of the workplace (e.g. funding, budgeting, networking, negotiating, initiating projects, creating and seizing opportunities, self-management)
- | managing a balanced work portfolio within a diversified career
- | managing work-life balance
- | understanding and coping with performance anxiety
- | responding to the challenges arising from working in different community contexts

Career transition

- | clarifying possible future direction
- | re-kindling motivation
- | shifting from performing and teaching to management
- | developing new roles
- | building up leadership skills
- | extending repertoire of skills
- | deepening and broadening perspective and awareness

A framework for mentoring

In both her own research and that of the Research Group in Lifelong Learning in Music and the Arts, Rineke Smilde (2009a, pp.92-93) takes the view that if lifelong learning is to become a dynamic and relevant force in the lives of musicians and artists, a process of mentoring must be pivotal at those critical stages of an individual's personal, artistic and professional development. The questions raised in the research are now being addressed by many institutions across Europe with the support of networks like the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC) including the ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music 'Polifonia' (also see CUREE, 2005a, 2005b, 2007).

In 2005 Rineke Smilde invited me to conduct a study of mentoring within the context of lifelong learning for musicians. I produced a Framework for Mentoring which has subsequently been modified in the light of my role as evaluator of REFLECT, the Creative Partnerships National Co-mentoring Programme for creative practitioners and teachers. This programme was led by The Sage Gateshead (see Renshaw, 2009, pp.94-102; Renshaw & Smith, 2008).

The Framework for Mentoring draws on those forms of learning that are central to reflective practice in the areas of continuing professional development, informal learning and adult education. The principles that helped to shape the study are rooted in a body of knowledge that is shared by such disparate areas of professional practice as nursing, general practice, social work, education and the visual and performing arts.

Such a shared philosophy of practice can only strengthen the work of those conservatoires, Higher Arts Education and training organisations that are beginning to realign their priorities within a culture of reflection and responsiveness. Within this context of renewal and development, mentoring is just one of several processes that can be used to help arts practitioners to engage in their own lifelong learning.

The core of the Framework rests on the following areas:

- | Definitions of coaching, mentoring and co-mentoring
- | Principles underlying a mentoring process
- | Relationship between mentor and mentee
- | Relationship between reflection and reflexivity in the mentoring process
- | Characteristics of effective mentors

Definitions

Coaching

Coaching is an enabling process aimed at enhancing learning and development with the intention of improving performance in a specific aspect of practice. It has a short-term focus with an emphasis on immediate micro issues (e.g., How can I improve my performance in this particular area? How can I strengthen my workshop practice? What are the most appropriate ways of making my team work together more effectively?).

Mentoring

Mentoring is a more developmental process, including elements of coaching, facilitating and counselling, aimed at sharing knowledge, and encouraging individual development. It has a longer-term focus designed to foster personal growth and to help an individual place their artistic, creative, personal and professional development in a wider cultural, social and educational context (e.g., Why am I doing what I do? How do I perceive my identity? In what ways does this impact on my professional life and work? Where am I going? What determines my long-term goals?).

Co-mentoring

Co-mentoring entails a collaborative learning process in which both partners (possibly in a cross-arts or cross-sector context) engage in an equal exchange of knowledge, skills and experience in relation to a clearly defined shared focus. It constitutes a form of peer-learning.

Principles underlying a mentoring process

- | Developing a non-judgemental, non-threatening working relationship based on empathy, trust and mutual respect
- | Establishing a safe, supportive learning environment
- | Creating conditions that encourage openness, honesty, informality and risk-taking
- | Defining boundaries and ground rules before commencing the process, by drawing up a mentoring or learning agreement
- | Building rapport and a clear understanding of who does what and why
- | Allowing the person being mentored (the mentee) to determine their own agenda, to select their shared focus and shape their process of learning

Relationship between mentor and mentee

- | A one-to-one relationship in which the mentor has the knowledge and skills to empathise and understand the position of their mentee

- | When mentoring arts practitioners it might be more appropriate to include non-verbal dialogue or exchange. Most artists have chosen their art form as their primary means of communication. In general, they connect with each other through making music together or engaging in shared creative practice, rather than through verbal, analytical, reflective processes. This can affect the dynamics of a mentoring relationship
- | A reciprocal relationship in which the mentor respects their mentee's potential for personal and professional development, and acknowledges their motivation for engaging in critical self-review and further learning rooted in practice-based evidence and experience
- | An effective relationship depends in part on the strength and integrity of a working partnership that is bound by a mentoring or learning agreement in which mutual roles, responsibilities and expectations are made explicit
- | A mentoring relationship should be time-based with a beginning and an end. It should not be ongoing as compared with peer professional relationships or peer mentoring

Relationship between reflection and reflexivity in the mentoring process

This section on reflective and reflexive practice draws on the seminal work of Donald Schön (1987, pp.26-31) and Anthony Giddens (1984, p.1).

Reflective practice or '*reflection-on-action*' entails adopting a critical perspective about the reasons and consequences of what we do in different contexts. By focusing on the why rather than the how, this process of self-observation and self-review, rooted in evidence and experience drawn from their practice, enables a person to evaluate their starting point and to redefine their future actions. A reflective conversation helps a person to shift their perspective, change their behaviour and develop a sense of responsibility and ownership of their professional practice in a wide range of social and cultural contexts.

The main elements of a reflective conversation include:

- | Making connections – asking open questions – active listening – absorbing – rephrasing – reflecting – mirroring back – responding by leading and challenging mentee in a non-directive way
- | Using different levels of conversation by moving between social, personal, analytic, what-if, strategic and integrative questions
- | Deepening the mentee's awareness and conviction in what they are doing by fostering a greater understanding of context and place

- | Empowering the mentee by asking neutral, open questions that encourage critical self-reflection, curiosity and a sense of enquiry
- | Strengthening the mentee's ability to challenge their preconceived views, to take risks, to make new connections and to shift their perspective

Reflexive practice or '*reflection-in-action*' focuses on how the quality of a person's inner listening, attention and awareness can help them clarify their purpose and motivation. Using empathy and being reflexive in a conversation can strengthen a person's sense of identity, deepen their self-awareness and enable them to understand how their personal motivation, values and emotions can affect their professional practice and learning. Being able to connect ones own inner listening to that of others is central to a sensitive mentoring relationship.

The main elements of a reflexive conversation include:

- | Helping the mentee to clarify their motivation and to identify their core purpose
- | Enabling the mentee to find their own voice and to deepen their understanding of who they are
- | Encouraging the mentee to explore and verbally articulate the emotional interconnections between their identity, motivation and professional practice
- | Assisting the mentee to develop an understanding of their relationship with their own creative learning (e.g., What does it mean for you? Why do you do what you do? What do you care about in your creative learning?)
- | Helping the mentee to connect their self-awareness and sense of identity to their outer world – i.e., to the context in which they work and live
- | Encouraging the mentee to reflect on their own story, their own biography, as a means of clarifying and deepening their understanding of themselves, their history and their personal and professional journey
- | Connecting the mentee's tacit or implicit understanding with their explicit knowledge of their particular situation
- | Creating the possibility for the mentee to engage with their emotional intelligence by:

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- ↳ becoming emotionally self-aware
- ↳ developing the ability to manage their emotions and feelings
- ↳ understanding how to use emotions for the benefit of their self-motivation
- ↳ recognising and responding to emotions in others through the use of empathy
- ↳ strengthening their interpersonal skills and understanding

The importance of reflection and reflexivity in mentoring

Effective mentoring conversations have to take into account the importance of the dynamic relationship between reflection and reflexivity, between the outer and inner thought processes of the person being mentored. By drawing out the interconnections between the mentee's artistic, creative, personal and professional development, fundamental questions regarding identity, motivation, meaning and personal creativity become the heart of a continuing reflective and reflexive dialogue (Renshaw, 2009, p.101).

Characteristics of effective mentors

- | Being willing to let go of ego, status and authority in order to understand the work of your mentee and to adopt a listening, supportive role.
- | Using empathy and interpersonal skills in order to ask appropriate questions regarding the personal development of your mentee.
- | Having the skills and insight to act as a sounding board for your mentee. This is central to any learning or developmental process aimed at enabling a person to clarify their sense of direction, to identify their strengths and realise their potential.
- | Aiming to develop a flexible range of language registers in order to frame appropriate questions, respond to different personal narratives and communicate meaningfully, understanding where your mentee is coming from.
- | Learning to listen actively, including respecting silence, reading body language, focusing on the substance of the conversation and, where necessary, reframing and reinforcing what has been said.
- | Developing the ability to be self-reflective and self-aware in order to nurture these qualities in others (e.g., questioning motivation; separating out professional from personal issues).
- | Being open and non-judgemental in relation to your mentee's individual and professional context.

The place of co-mentoring in collaborative work

The REFLECT Creative Partnerships National Co-mentoring Programme

Throughout this enquiry it is clear that most arts projects within the community involve collaborations between different sectors and sometimes between different disciplines. The Case Studies have demonstrated that such collaborations can act as a creative crucible for shared learning and development for all participants. Nevertheless, as discussed earlier in this section, the complexity and richness of these multi-layered projects can generate issues for the practitioners who can then benefit from mentoring support. But due to the collaborative nature of these projects, further support can also be provided through co-mentoring between practitioners from the contributory sectors – for example, between artists and partners in schools, health care, prisons, social work, youth clubs, hospices and psychiatric hospitals.

In England special attention has been given to the relationships between education and the cultural sector. The most extensive work in co-mentoring can be found in the REFLECT pilot programme led by The Sage Gateshead as mentioned earlier in this section (see Renshaw, 2008). The main aim of REFLECT was ‘to provide one-to-one structured co-mentoring support for emerging leaders from schools and creative and cultural organisations and businesses to develop more innovative partnership practice and enhance creativity at the heart of their organisations’. The objectives of the programme were:

- | To strengthen and develop innovative and sustainable partnerships between schools and the creative and cultural sector
 - | To build the capacity of the education sector to work effectively with the creative and cultural sector through inter-organisational learning and reflective practice
 - | To give emerging leaders the opportunity to develop innovative partnership practice through the process of one-to-one co-mentoring
 - | To offer opportunities for collaborative professional development for the co-mentors
 - | To promote the effectiveness of mentoring in developing co-learning and reflective practice within and across organisations
 - | To enhance the importance of creativity and innovation at the heart of schools, organisations and businesses
- (The Sage Gateshead, 2007, p.33; also Renshaw, 2008, pp.23-24)

The purpose of the programme for the participants was clearly articulated at the beginning of the REFLECT Handbook (The Sage Gateshead, 2007).

This helps to demonstrate what might be achieved in other co-mentoring programmes.

REFLECT will enable you to engage in an equal exchange of knowledge, skills and experience aimed at sustaining innovative partnership practice and embedding creativity and creative learning at the heart of your organisation or your business. Your co-mentoring relationship will be centred around a self-identified focus based on your needs and those of your organisation. Through a series of creative conversations you will engage in a dynamic, collaborative learning process giving you space to think and reflect on your own practice. You will have the opportunity to share your learning with colleagues in your organisation and beyond and to consider what impact that might have on children and young people (p.1).

The legacy of REFLECT in the development of partnerships

The REFLECT programme not only helped to strengthen understanding about co-mentoring but it also raised crucial questions about the creation and sustainability of partnerships between organisations in different sectors. The Evaluation Report was clear about the legacy of the programme.

The legacy of REFLECT is that it has developed an interactive model of reflective learning between practitioners who wish to extend their horizons by engaging in cross-sector collaborative dialogue. The strength of the co-mentoring process described and examined in this Report lies in the capacity of creative conversation to transform personal and professional practice. It is underpinned by a framework of principles and procedures whose main purpose is to guide but not to impose. Moreover, the cross-sector aspect of this process has been enriching because it has opened new doors, shifted perspectives and resulted in some unexpected outcomes (Renshaw, 2008, p.78).

Four themes kept recurring during REFLECT and they could well inform the planning of future projects and development programmes between other partnership organisations:

- | What are the necessary conditions for ensuring an effective co-mentoring relationship?
- | What are the necessary conditions for enabling cross-sector co-mentoring conversations to facilitate personal and professional learning?
- | What are the necessary conditions for strengthening creative learning through cross-sector co-mentoring?
- | What are the necessary conditions for using the process of cross-sector co-mentoring as a vehicle for organisational change? (ibid, p.78)

The interactive process developed by REFLECT is a creative challenge to any organisation but the outcomes of the programme demonstrate the transformational potential of cross-sector engagement. In a global world increasingly aiming to develop interdependent and interconnected ways of working, the need to create effective models of co-mentoring is becoming critical across the whole workforce. The arts and cultural sector is no exception.

5.3 Reflective learning, evaluation and assessment

Reflective learning and context-based evaluation

Reflective learning or reflective practice lies at the core of Rineke Smilde's research on Lifelong Learning (see Smilde, 2009a, p.51). In my study of mentoring (Renshaw, 2009, pp.16-30) I outlined those modes of learning that are most closely connected to reflective practice – for example, experiential learning; action learning; situated learning, context-based learning; work-based learning; problem-based learning; collaborative learning; transformative learning; learning through self-assessment; learning through reflective conversation, learning within communities of practice, reflexive learning and tacit knowledge (see Tavistock Institute, 2002). All these processes generate a strong form of engagement and understanding because the learning arises from and is connected to the context and experience of the participants.

In its discussion of context-based learning, the Tavistock Institute Report (2002) highlights the importance of situated learning, which is rooted in the notion that "the context in which learning takes place is an integral part of what is learned (p.126)". This implies that because the knowledge, understanding, insight, skills and attitudes are acquired from engaging in a particular context, in a collaborative setting, it follows that such joint ways of working generate a shared sense of belonging and knowing within that particular context. In such situations meaning is socially constructed with learning arising from active engagement in a 'community of practice' (see Lave and Wenger, 1991; and Wenger, 1998).

The theoretical perspective developed by Lave and Wenger provides strong foundations for understanding the fundamental principle of connecting to context in a practice of collaborative learning. It helps to broaden traditional notions of 'apprenticeship' from a master/student or mentor/mentee relationship to one of "changing participation and identity transformation in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998, p.11)". Instead of seeing knowledge as an object to be handed down from one generation to another through apprenticeship, collaborative practice is rooted in a history of shared learning in which there is a coherent connection between knowing and

learning, and between the ways in which knowledge is acquired, shared and developed. By positioning learning and knowing in the context of active participation in social communities, arts practitioners are far more likely to deepen their understanding, engagement and commitment to what they are doing. But at all times their growing practical awareness of what it is to be socially engaged has to be underpinned by reflective conversation and critical dialogue within a shared process of collaborative learning. By exposing all practitioners to different contexts and perspectives, this enables them to make new connections, and opens them up to new challenges and a wider range of possibilities in their practice.

It is these factors that have to be taken into account in any evaluation process. Reflecting critically on the quality of engagement, on the quality of collaborative learning in a community context, is the bread and butter of informed evaluation. In his Case Study Joost Heinsius emphasises the importance of artists developing the skills of self-reflection and self-management, along with an active outgoing attitude. For Joost “learning by doing and reflecting on their practice afterwards are essential professional competences for artists when they go out and engage in the world” (6.3 D).

An example of students being encouraged to develop the skills of reflective evaluation is provided by the work of Heloisa Feichas with her music students at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Brazil. With the guidance of Robert Wells, the principles underlying Guildhall Connect were introduced into a course called Music Education and Social Projects. The first phase of the programme culminated in an afternoon project with children from *Projeto Cariúnas*, followed by a performance of the students’ compositions. Heloisa and Robert then led an evaluation process in which the students were asked to divide into three groups and create mind maps focusing on what they felt they had learnt during the whole course. The main categories that came up from the analysis included: composition, leadership, group working, group feeling, teaching and informal learning. The student evaluation was very perceptive and spelt out the following comprehensive points:

Within the *Composition* category there were sub-categories such as creativity, originality, connection of ideas, innovation, adapting musically (acceptance of unusual/unexpected material), sense of collective, detaching from your own ideas, language adaptation, contextualisation. Improvisation was also mentioned as an important area that had been developed.

When discussing *leadership* students pointed out the importance of learning about humility, patience, sharing, making mistakes, knowing when to be passive and active, being ready to act, developing commitment, listening to others, knowing the limits of leading and being led.

When talking about *group working* students considered all the stages of the process including warming-up, collaborative composition and performance. They learned about the importance of humility, of getting on well with each other, having a good atmosphere, compromising, having responsibility towards the group, coping with adversity, trusting and respecting each other, being comprehensive, tolerant and sensitive to the group, having the ability to listen, knowing the limits of ones action, having positive attitudes and a sense of unity, putting yourself in somebody else's place, having a sense of commitment, developing a sense of the group (group feeling), and having an understanding of musical and technical issues. Students also mentioned the pleasure and satisfaction of working in a group.

Other issues mentioned as important in their learning included concentration, teaching strategies, an awareness of their learning processes, body consciousness and music. They also pointed out some characteristics from informal learning practices such as playing by ear, improvisation, sense of liberty and spontaneity (6.3 B).

Engaging in this kind of reflective analysis was a very new experience for these students. It focused largely on the development of new roles and responsibilities, on the acquisition of creative skills and on the quality of interaction within the group. But as one of the main aims of the project is 'to train undergraduate music students as creative music facilitators able to work in a diverse range of social contexts' it is intended that in future projects with the Social Project *Cariúñas*, for example, there would be more emphasis on evaluating the quality of engagement with the community – that is, it would be more context-based. This aim is made explicit at the end of Heloisa Feichas and Robert Wells' Case Study:

During the second semester programme it is hoped that students will engage in longer placements increasing their skills and creating further links between the young people in the projects and the University. There are also increasing opportunities for leaders from social projects to meet and share their practices due to this work, creating a more interconnected community of music leaders across Belo Horizonte (6.3 B).

This statement of intent demonstrates that for context-based evaluation to be effective, it has to arise from and feed back into an interconnected community of practice. In this particular case the reflective analysis would necessarily involve students, tutors, professional musicians, teachers, young people and community leaders. Fostering this kind of reflective learning within such a diverse group of experience and interests requires skilful and sensitive facilitation from the project leader: for example, making contextual connections that resonate within the group; asking questions that foster the development of a critical perspective about the quality of practice; exploring key issues arising from the project; drawing all participants into a conversation that analyses the quality of the collaborative learning process; broadening perspectives and deepening understanding of reflective practice. Such honest reflection that acknowledges the validity of different points of

view, different perceptions and responses lies at the heart of context-based evaluation. It is critical to the quality of community engagement and would aim to explore the many quality issues raised in Chapter 4.

Reflective learning and assessment

For the last decade or more arts practitioners, along with people working in such sectors as education, health, welfare and criminal justice, have increasingly been subjected to the demands of public accountability through benchmarks, targets and performance indicators embedded in Quality Assurance. These mechanistic approaches to controlling and managing knowledge may have succeeded in erecting a model for assuring Quality systems are in operation, but at worst, they effectively fail to *ensure* that quality outcomes are evident in arts practice. It is partly with this in view that this enquiry has focused on examining what might count as 'quality' in many different community contexts.

Time and time again the case studies and testimonies have emphasised the central role of critical reflection in initiatives designed to assess the quality of projects, processes and end-products. Different forms of reflective learning are seen as the bedrock of all aspects of development – personal, artistic, creative, professional – and it is incumbent on arts practitioners to begin devising forms of assessment that have a coherence and connection with a reflective approach to arts practice.

The 'measurement' of any development process arising from reflective learning presents a challenge, because it does not constitute a mechanistic target- or outcome-driven activity. Quantitative data about project, process and product can readily be collected, collated and analysed but the significant outcomes are qualitative in kind. Therefore serious questions have to be addressed in the search for identifying ways of 'assessing' rather than 'measuring' quality. For example:

- | What is the evidence of gain from a reflective learning process?
- | What is the nature of the evidence?
- | How do we assess the gain?
- | How do we generate testimony of gain that goes beyond what is measurable?

A final quotation from Music for Life illustrates the need to retain a delicate balance between measurement and assessment. Linda Rose points out that:

Quantifying changes and outcomes is not easy. This level of engagement aims to encourage less isolation, a sense of being part of something, of being recognised and respected. Staff often report significant changes in behaviour. A lady who

would spend all day every day in bed now gets up and comes out of her room each day to join others. A man who would bark out single words and walk out of the company of others, even frightening staff, now speaks in sentences and allows staff to touch him so he is able to receive hand massage and be led into the garden. Changes may reveal themselves slowly, sometimes noticed after the project has left. They are small and sometimes seen only in the absence of certain patterns, may be a person has less need to search or wander around constantly, for example. There may simply be moments of connection in a workshop, which for that individual is a momentous event.

The project is about endeavour, intention and process. Music for Life is a tool for learning, a place to experience immediacy, to be respected and to give respect. The outcomes of the project are reciprocal; the beneficiaries are not only the person with dementia but the staff and the musicians too. Their personal and professional lives are affected by their relationships with each other, by the challenges they face through those relationships and by the skills they learn together. The interplay between the three promotes change, affects the communities they live and work in and enhances the lives of them all (6.3 K).

The learning outcomes of the staff, musicians and the residents instanced by Linda, together with the subtle yet significant changes in behaviour of the people with dementia, provide clear examples of what might count as evidence that can be assessed. The notion of measurement in such contexts seems highly inappropriate. On the other hand, different forms of assessment can be used where the evidence of gain arises from evidence-based reflective learning that will help to inform future practice.

The place of reflective logs, diaries, journals and testimonies in assessment

As organisations become more receptive and open towards facilitating a culture of reflective practice, they are beginning to introduce assessment procedures that use different approaches to observing, recording, analysing and reflecting on the quality of projects, processes and end-products. Special consideration is increasingly being given to the use of reflective logs, diaries and journals as a way of documenting, reflecting, extending learning, deepening awareness and making connections. A reflective account can then be used as the basis of a personal testimony that can form an integral part of the evidence of a person's reflective learning (as can be seen from the testimonies in this enquiry).

This evidence can be assessed in different ways – through self-assessment, peer assessment and group-based assessment (see Smilde, 2009a, p.89), but it is difficult to see how it can be 'measured' with a grade. For example, how far can fundamental aspects of personal, emotional and artistic development be seen as outcomes that can be measured? How far can the 'tacit', implicit elements of artistic and creative development be given a mark? (i.e., such qualities as inner awareness, inner stillness and the creative spirit are 'caught' in the moment through the act of doing and are likely to remain unspoken.)

One example will be given to illustrate how reflective learning can be fostered through a mentoring process leading to 'self-assessment'. This took place between a mentor and the tutor responsible for instrumental teacher training in a European conservatoire from September 2008 to June 2009. The approach taken included:

- | Face-to-face mentoring conversations that were recorded (each session about 3 hours in length)
- | Follow-up telephone conversations
- | Reflections on progress via email correspondence
- | The tutor kept a reflective diary comprising:
 - ↳ an outline of particular personal and professional issues
 - ↳ a personal impression of factors arising from the issues
 - ↳ the challenge of how to respond to the issues in the future
- | The mentor responded to the reflections in the diary by asking further questions both in writing and verbally
- | The tutor wrote a Mentoring Review comprising:
 - ↳ starting situation
 - ↳ contact and working method
 - ↳ key challenges arising from the mentoring process:
 - personal development
 - professional development (leadership; teaching and learning; research)
 - ↳ outcomes of the mentoring process
 - personal development
 - professional development (leadership; teaching and learning; research)
 - ↳ new goals for the future (personal and professional)
- | The Mentoring Review was fully discussed in a mentoring session followed by a written response from the mentor. Both documents were passed to the appropriate authorities in the tutor's institution – that is, they were placed in the public domain serving as evidence of reflective learning through the mentoring process.
- | The reflective process embedded in both the diary and the Mentoring Review can be seen as a personal testimony, a reflective narrative that acted as a form of 'self-assessment'. This was not graded but the outcomes served as sufficient evidence of quality reflective learning.

A framework for self-assessment

In addition to reflective logs, diaries and journals, practitioners can be encouraged to keep self-assessment profiles that reflect the purpose and

processes of their particular course, programme or project. These profiles can contribute to strong forms of reflective learning that are not graded, but which enhance the quality of individual and collaborative practice and directly inform subsequent action – for example, course development, shifting priorities within a programme, devising new processes and deepening understanding of future projects.

As an example I intend to describe the main features of a self-assessment profile that was designed in 1988-89 for full-time postgraduate students studying Performance and Communication Skills (PCS) at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Initially this was developed with the assistance of the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) at the University of East Anglia, and it was further modified when the course changed into the Guildhall Ensemble and later into a modular Continuing Professional Development programme. (Details of the self-assessment profile can be found in Renshaw, 2005b, pp.22-23; Renshaw, 2007, pp.41-42; and Smilde, 2009a, pp.89-90).

One of the basic premises underlying the approach to assessment taken by the PCS course was that any professional practitioner is constantly making judgements in action – judgements that can benefit from greater clarification, monitoring, evaluation and critical reflection. One of the main aims in evolving a system of self-assessment was to establish a procedure that supported and invited students to develop a more reflective approach to all their activities. Central to this process was the belief that assessment is concerned with improving the quality of learning for both students and tutors, rather than working towards achieving a final grade. With self-reflection at the heart of the course, it was decided that the assessment process should be continuous and collaborative, including elements of recording, evaluation, peer assessment and negotiation with tutors. Self-assessment, then, became an integral part of the curriculum thus reflecting the aims of the course. There were sound logical, psychological and educational reasons for pursuing a system of student self-assessment.

The core elements of a self-assessment profile

The following categories could act as a basic frame of reference for a self-assessment profile focusing on the learning and development of practitioners engaged in creative, collaborative projects in a community setting. The priority placed on different elements within each category would vary depending on the aim and context of the project or programme. For example:

- | quality of project, process and end-product
- | quality of leadership skills

- | quality of communication skills
- | quality of interpersonal skills
- | quality of management skills
- | quality of creative skills
- | quality of performing skills
- | quality of evaluation skills
- | quality of reflective learning
- | quality of personal development

As discussed earlier in this section, an extensive self-assessment profile, further informed by logs, diaries, journals and testimonies, can only strengthen the quality of reflective learning for all participants – students, tutors, mentors, professional practitioners, co-workers, project leaders and managers, for example. Such a comprehensive combined assessment portfolio constitutes the backbone of reflective practice.

5.4 Shifting the culture of organisations

Towards a culture of reflective practice

The main focus of this chapter has been to identify those modes of learning, evaluation and assessment most likely to strengthen the quality of community engagement – always connecting to different contexts, sectors, cultures, organisations and partnerships. But the quality of this engagement is also dependent on creating a climate committed to fostering reflective learning – that is, building up a culture of reflective practice within partnership organisations. As was stated at the beginning of the chapter, a successful learning and development programme has to be rooted in an organisational culture that subscribes to similar values and ways of seeing the world. An important rider was added: “(...)this might well entail the organisation making a fundamental shift in perspective resulting in a re-ordering of its priorities” – for example, making new maps and frameworks that respond to the needs of the changing cultural landscape; to create new ideas, forms of innovation and entrepreneurship that resonate with artistic, social, educational and technological change.

Making such a significant paradigm shift can be threatening to any organisation because at one level it is touching the values, meaning, history and philosophy of that organisation. The following observation regarding Google could be seen as relevant to any sector or business:

We believe that Google and other Clever Collectives face a number of distinct organisational challenges. The first is that the very source of organisational strength – their mission – can become a cultural straitjacket. Over time, organisations need space to adapt to their changing circumstances. The worry for an organisation like Google is that the beliefs of the founding fathers can easily become a cult. Over time, what started out as a simple philosophy can become a rigid doctrine or ideology that is resistant to new ideas and ways of looking at the world. This can lead to cultural and organisational sclerosis. In the end, insiders may become hostile to anyone from outside who challenges the beliefs of the cult. What began as intellectual curiosity and good intentions can easily become dogma (Goffee & Jones, 2009, p.143).

Although the most enlightened arts organisations have become more critically aware and alert to their widening artistic, social and cultural responsibilities, there remains a significant rump of intransigence – exhibiting ‘cultural and organisational sclerosis’ – that is stubbornly resistant to change. This is especially the case within the world of conservatoires and Higher Arts Education, despite the extensive initiatives of the Association of European Conservatoires (AEC), the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) and other international organisations.

In conservatoires, for example, innovation and development rooted in community engagement finds itself positioned in the margins, whilst to a large extent so-called ‘core business’ continues to remain aloof from changes in the outside world. The seriousness of this situation was flagged up clearly by Rineke Smilde in her PhD dissertation:

A dynamic synergy between the conservatoire and the outside world is clearly needed. Often conservatoires still act in an isolated way, but could instead be part of a wider network of professional training and development, challenged to build up a more informed perspective which impinges upon developments in the profession, including cross-arts, music technology and the cross-cultural and cross-sectoral world.

(...) The conservatoire needs to constantly fine tune and adjust itself to the needs of the profession, and vice versa. This requires a reorientation by the conservatoire, where a shift in culture has to be accompanied by a reappraisal of what actually counts in today's world. Portfolio careers are the result of the big changes in the music profession and should not remain on the periphery of the conservatoire, but instead become part of core business (Smilde, 2009a, pp.251-252).

As early as 1993 in a Gresham Lecture I voiced my concern about conservatoires remaining entrenched within the norms and values of a performance tradition that is hermetically sealed from the changes taking place in the outside world. I felt and still feel that many staff and students suffer from a tunnel vision that cuts them off from the creativity, flexibility and breadth of outlook that are necessary for music to be a vibrant force in society (see Renshaw, 1993, p.13). Responsiveness to change and

innovation, underpinned by critical reflection and practice-based research, has to lie at the heart of cultural renewal. But as indicated in the Gresham Lecture:

(...) In conservatoires there is no such resonance because, historically, critical reflection has never played a significant part in their organisational culture. If many staff fail to question the validity of what they are doing and why they are doing it, it is little wonder that students remain culturally and psychologically adrift, often lacking any sense of connectedness, social responsibility or wider contextual perspective (*ibid*, p.13).

Although in 2010 the context is very different from that of the early 1990s, response to change (or rather lack of response) continues to pose a challenge for many conservatoires. Perhaps the following observation continues to have some relevance today:

Change can be bedevilled by the constraints of organisational structures, traditional allegiances and individual attitudes which are closed and ideologically ossified. Continuity with the past has its place in any institution, but when it results in ostrich-like behaviour, some discontinuity is necessary to galvanise it into action (*ibid*, p.15).

Many conservatoires will now claim that they offer students a diversified portfolio of possibilities underpinned by opportunities for critical reflection. In the Preface to a volume of papers prepared by teachers from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama – *The Reflective Conservatoire* – its Principal, Barry Ife, states that “since the early 1980s, the Guildhall School has been leading moves to develop the classic conservatoire model to meet the rapidly changing needs of the performing arts industries (see Odam & Bannan [eds], 2005, p.5)”. The emphasis throughout the volume is on the Guildhall School seeing itself as a crucible for critical reflection and this thrust has led to the creation of the two bi-annual international conferences on the Reflective Conservatoire.

The fundamental question is how far is this spirit of reflection embedded in the whole of the Guildhall School or in any other conservatoire, for that matter? Also how far does it underpin the quality of its engagement within the wider community? It is questionable whether the many initiatives that have taken root within the community, the partnerships that have been developed and sustained over time have had much impact on the core business of the School.

But the future is now looking decidedly more positive with the creation of the Guildhall School and Barbican Centre campus, working in close conjunction with the London Symphony Orchestra. What is most exciting is that learning and engagement, learning and participation, linked to artistic development and changes in performance practice, are now firmly on the agenda. With this shift in culture, with new directions, new maps and new partnerships,

old assumptions are now being questioned as staff and students begin to move forwards into a creative future in which community engagement is a key pillar.

Some aspects of this shared creative future reflect the shift in priorities articulated in the vision statement – *A Continuing Journey* – prepared for the Guildhall School in 2001. It was suggested that existing priorities should be reappraised and realigned in relation to artistic and educational developments that are responsive to different contexts. For example:

- | encouraging innovative approaches to performance which open up access to artistic experiences and engage audiences from broad, diverse backgrounds
- | developing new work, new art forms and artistic languages which resonate with different audiences
- | exploring the value and contribution of the vernacular within contemporary culture
- | using participatory processes to foster the development of creativity in different contexts
- | creating new performance environments and spaces which attract new audiences
- | extending artistic practice through exploring the interconnections between new technologies and different art forms
- | developing the School as a flexible resource for the professional arts community, the education community and the wider community
(Renshaw, 2001, pp.5-6)

Cultural change and connecting conversations

The recent developments at the Guildhall School provide just one example of how the culture of an organisation can gradually become more responsive to change and begin to extend its horizons and make new connections. But a cultural shift of this kind presents a challenge to any organisation. It raises several key questions that need to be addressed. For instance: what are the most effective ways of enabling an organisation to adapt to change? How can an institution and its partners be helped to understand and manage change and uncertainty within a shared vision for the future? What conditions need to be created that will enable new structures, new practices and new styles of management to evolve organically within newly aligned priorities? What form of leadership might best bring about this transformation?

As was mentioned towards the beginning of Chapter 3, at the heart of this complex process lies the central role of 'conversation'. It is partly through sustained critically reflective dialogue that cultural change evolves in an organisation. Through respecting and listening to different points of view, people should gradually let go of cherished assumptions and begin to see themselves and their world differently. They might begin to tell a different story. For this process to work there has to be a sensitive awareness of the different levels of language used by groups when describing their experience and shaping their stories. Discussions also have to be grounded in where people perceive themselves coming from. The psychological climate in which these conversations take place is absolutely crucial to any likely shift in future action.

The key to ensuring that honest conversation takes place throughout any organisation is in adopting a style of leadership that is genuinely open and facilitatory. This involves drawing on the skills and attitudes at the core of a mentoring process (see section 5.2) – the ability to make connections, to let go, to ask appropriate questions, to engage in active listening and to use empathy. Through the process of collaborative reflective dialogue an organisation can be challenged to reappraise its distribution of knowledge and control – to consider the shift from mechanistic management structures to greater opportunities for shared leadership and responsibility. Effectively, processes and procedures become more accountable and transparent, and all staff and students have a voice in shaping their own future. This can only be healthy for the life and work of any organisation (see Renshaw, 2005a, pp.114-115).

Final reflection

Enabling all arts practitioners 'to have a voice in shaping their own future' matters, but each voice has to engage with the world as it is, not as it was. All arts organisations have a responsibility to ensure that they are not locked in a bubble that is culturally and educationally adrift. Community engagement can no longer be seen as an 'optional extra'. It needs to be brought in from the margins and allowed to establish its place as a key player in all future developments. Many professional arts organisations not only see the point of this cultural imperative, but they are also acting on it with imagination and a keen sense of connection. One significant area that needs to reconsider and re-order its priorities lies in the training sector of Higher Arts Education – unfortunately many staff and students continue to remain impervious to changing circumstances in the workplace.

In recent years many commentators have observed how the arts are seen to matter more and more in our present turbulent world. It therefore behoves all people working in the arts to ensure that their engagement resonates with the diversity of needs found in the many different arenas in which they work. As has been argued throughout this book, engagement must always

have integrity and quality at its heart. A commitment to people and to art goes hand in hand. This is the basic dual passion that drives all the practitioners in this enquiry.

A similar philosophy was articulated recently by Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre. "My ethical beliefs underpin everything I do. What I believe, wholeheartedly, is that we still live in an unequal society, and that art is a fundamental right of every human being. That is, and has always been, my guiding principle (Kelly, 2010, p.2).

This principle of entitlement is fundamental to how the arts should be conceived, funded, managed, delivered and evaluated. It should also serve as a guiding principle underlying the quality of community engagement. In practice, entitlement only has teeth if there is a collective commitment to connecting to context, community, collaboration and creativity through conversation. To achieve this remains a major challenge for both individuals and institutions, but it has an urgency that cannot be put on hold. The voices heard throughout this book illustrate what can be achieved when vision, values and motivation connect to creative engagement with the wider community. Perhaps their example will serve as a catalyst for other practitioners wishing to extend and deepen their own community engagement.

6.2 H Sara Lee

Artistic Director, Music in Prisons

Set up in memory of Lady Taylor, the wife of the late Lord Chief Justice, the Irene Taylor Trust 'Music in Prisons' has been working at the forefront of arts and rehabilitation since 1995 under the leadership of Sara Lee. The individuals that Music in Prisons works with are some of the most socially disadvantaged and excluded. Many have faced a range of challenges including abuse, violence, addiction, mental health issues, exclusion from school and homelessness.

My first adventure into Her Majesty's Prisons was slightly unusual but something was right about it. I was wondering what to do when I left college and a chance place on a new course and a fortuitous list led me to HMP Wormwood Scrubs and the start of my life working inside.

The first gig was a memorable one and stands out as one of the most powerful and important musical and personal moments in my life to date. A man who had served many years inside came to the performance with a piece of music he had written but never heard, hoping that we might be able to play it for him. We performed it and to this day I can remember my feeling as we were playing it and his response to that. Instantly this man had genuine respect and kudos amongst his peers - something I know to be important in life but what I quickly realised to be vital to anyone's survival in prison. He had been elevated and looked proud and was very pleased to take the praise.

We were told that the performance had had a big impact and the group was asked if anyone might like to come and teach music for 2 hours a week on a regular basis. I said yes. I had been intrigued by the building and the people in it and wanted to understand more about the feeling I, the man and the audience had experienced that evening. 25 years on and although quite different, my passion is still there. Increased knowledge has only brought more of a desire to make what the man and the audience felt available to more people, as I believe music and the process of creating it makes a massive difference to people's lives. The content of my work may have changed but the same things about it still make me happy, make me angry and drive my motivation to continue.

Over the years it has been amazing to be in a position to offer people who need and deserve it, a voice, the chance to be heard and a new opportunity. For me, the work throws up more than just the challenge of guiding disparate groups of people through a music project. I love music and am

fascinated by people and what makes them tick, so it is a privilege to be able to use these two things in combination in my working life. It is remarkable that you can go into such a dark and austere place yet be able to create something beautiful within it. The combination of containment and musical freedom is a paradox but there is something really exciting if a little bizarre about giving people in prison this metaphorical freedom.

Much of the work is about taking musical risks with people and with yourself. With music there is no way you are going to know everything about everything; the possible musical areas groups can delve in to are incredibly wide and part of the joy of my work is that I can learn new things all the time. Young people especially are privy to genres of music arriving and passing really quickly and almost every time I work I am faced with a new type of music - which in reality is only probably the placement of a cymbal crash away from something I was told a month previously but nevertheless is different enough and important enough to the young person for me to make sure I listen.

To see everyone I work with immerse themselves fully in what is at times a difficult and challenging process for them and to see them responding to me, to each other and to the music they have written affirms why I am so fortunate to work in this way. The inclusive nature of something where everyone's opinion and skills are accepted, valued and combined does wonders for a person's confidence. To see musical skills develop is brilliant but to see self esteem and confidence grow is just amazing.

What matters is that we come out at the end having created something beautiful, something of quality and something of which we can all be proud. The journey can be difficult as well as fascinating as each week I meet different people, some with musical skills but most without them. Some find them along the way but everyone finds something, ranging from feeling safe, feeling challenged, feeling a sense of achievement, having got to the end of something or getting to the end and having people appreciate what you have done.

One of the most exciting aspects of the work is never knowing who you are going to meet, therefore not knowing any of the challenges you are going to face. To this day I still get excited to see what might happen in any given situation and to have to puzzle my way through things with participants and colleagues. I like the fluidity of it as well as the fact it is risky and I love watching people's personal and musical development throughout the week. It is incredibly satisfying to work in a team that pulls in the same direction despite none of us really knowing the direction we are going at the outset. One of the best parts of my work is that my colleagues are people who have the same work ethic and commitment as I do. They are people I totally respect as musicians and people and there is always something to learn

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from them. I love stretching/developing/ finding my musical skills and they help me do this. I am genuinely challenged sometimes and people I work with see this; they can help me, they can come up with ideas and they can show me things. This boosts people and gives them deserved pride - someone has asked for their help and taken what has been offered. Getting to the end of a project and seeing and hearing about the positive changes people have seen in themselves continues to make me smile.

It matters to me that some people in prison come out with no more than they went in with. One of the recurring things I see isn't so much people *not* having skills, just not having the basic human reserves with which to begin to find them. In life you need to start with a firm foundation and for many, that means simply helping them onto the rung where they see they can do something and where they won't be cussed for f***ing it up. The fear of failure for some is often all consuming; some are brave enough to confront it and others are not. Music is the vehicle I use and so much of the confidence and self esteem needed in life can be gained through taking part in a music project. They are not a soft option and not for the faint hearted; certainly not an easy ride. They can be a huge challenge, often throwing up unlikely scenarios where other things are uncovered during the process. Music and the process of creating it touches the deepest of emotions in all of us and somehow the fact we are all going through it together makes it all the more meaningful. We know that when we hear certain pieces of music we either have written or just love to listen to, it gets to us. People in prison are just the same. We all have emotions; it's just that sometimes theirs are more raw and undiscovered.

Many of the people I work with unanimously agree that their Music in Prisons experience is one of the most exciting and challenging projects they have ever undertaken. Some freely admit that the whole process was difficult; simply having to work together as a group and listen and respect other people's ideas is often a new concept but when they make it to the final performance it's great to hear everyone's appreciation and honest acknowledgement of their personal achievements – in many cases they had not realised they had anywhere near the potential to see something through to its conclusion. It is always rewarding to see how people grasp the essence of a project and take the opportunity on offer to them.

It matters to me to strive to always give my best to people and in the vast majority of cases people respond with the same measures. I say to them that I have the same kinds of feelings as they do when I am playing and writing music; I worry that I don't know something well enough or whether I am going to remember something or play it in the right place. I get a good deal of pleasure from working out how on earth to make things work and how to engage people. The process starts on an even playing field which is initially difficult for some to comprehend, bearing in mind that their previous

school experiences and dealings with adults have not always led to such equal and positive relationships. People are more likely to take risks if they feel supported so I have to cultivate and provide a safe and supportive environment for people to experiment.

Maintaining quality has always been at the root of my work and it is my desire to retain that quality that keeps me questioning things. However, my driving force is the same as it has always been – I get an enormous sense of satisfaction creating great music with people and seeing them achieve things they thought were impossible. I love the fact I would not have met and seen the creativity of the people I have worked with and what it has done for me as a musician had I not walked in to prison for the first time. It simply reaffirms the far-reaching and sometimes totally unexpected benefits creative music making has on all of us.

6.3 K Linda Rose

Project Consultant and Founder (1993), Music for Life Wigmore Hall and *for dementia*, London

Brief Outline

Music for Life is a project working with people with dementia and those who care for them. It aims to re-build confidence and trust for people who have become isolated and disempowered through their condition. Central to the work are the music workshops in which 3 musicians encourage communication and connection through the music they improvise together. Both the musical and the interpersonal skills of the musicians are crucial in this work. With support from the senior management of the setting, the musicians work to develop a cohesive group where each participant, whether a person with dementia or a member of staff becomes responsive and open to the possibilities for relating to any other in the group on an equal basis. The workshop space becomes a place for all kinds of exploration, experiences ranging from the most joyful and celebratory to the gently amusing and teasing to the saddest sharing. Both the music and the quiet spaces between the music in the sessions are created and owned by individuals in the group, and responded to in different ways by everyone in the group.

Project structure

After many years of exploration and experimentation, a framework has developed for the project. Each project lasts for 8 sessions, one session a week for 8 weeks. Each workshop lasts an hour and sits between 1 hour of preparation and 1 hour of de-briefing with staff and musicians. Each project involves 8 people with dementia, 5 staff and 3 musicians. The work affects all participants and at times has different emphases. Some projects are geared towards musician development, raising awareness for those new to the area to understand more about the ways dementia can affect an individual and so influence the way they relate in a workshop. Some projects are focused more towards care staff development, helping to develop more reflective practice, and occasionally projects have no formal training agenda but are simply a place where the musicians can develop new ideas and extend their existing work.

In every project the 1-hour workshop for the people with dementia is a protected space. Training, development and reflection go on both within and around this - in the hour before or after the workshop, in the days between

sessions and in the days before the project arrives at a setting and after the project leaves. However, the workshop itself is the most important space for learning and the experience of the workshop provides the material for both personal and professional reflection. Significant changes occur for many of the people with dementia who participate in the project, but its legacy lies also in the extent to which care staff are affected. Staff are increasingly able to notice their own responses and the responses of others in the group and are encouraged to talk about their observations. The outcomes can be better teamwork, raised confidence and self esteem, and greater willingness, even excitement about developing care practice. This leads to a happier more motivated workforce and therefore better care for people with dementia.

The impact of the work spreads when the senior management recognises these changes in both residents and staff and explores ways to sustain the learning. Often this involves finding the time for staff to meet and to continue to talk together in the more personal way that the project encourages. Put graphically, imagine the music workshop without the music, a film without sound. You will see communication and responsiveness through the warmth of body language, the sustained gentleness of eye contact, the carefully organised space, and in many other ways. It is not the role of the staff to model the musical skills of the musicians but they can learn from their ways of working and integrate their learning into everyday care, activities and relationships of their own. Learning here is not about how to run music workshops, but rather about ways of communicating. Person-centred care is currently a central concern for improving practice in dementia care and is modelled in this project.

Case Study of a Staff Development Project

Setting up the project

The location for a particular project is identified by the Music for Life project director or manager, together with the dementia care officer who has an overview of residents' needs in homes in the area. Prior to the start of the project, the manager and senior staff meet with project leaders to share information about the project and the care home. Here staff development needs are discussed as well as practical questions such as appropriate spaces to work in, staff rotas etc. The project makes significant organisational demands on a home or centre and so it is important to establish a trusting relationship early on where managers feel confident about the quality of the investment as well as leaving them excited about the potential of the project for improving the lives of residents.

Meeting the staff team

A second meeting is held to select the people with dementia who are to participate in the project. This meeting again involves senior managers

together with any members of staff who might be interested and available to attend, and in particular the 5 staff identified to be on the project over the 8 weeks. Here they meet the musician who is workshop leader for the project and the dementia care trainer with responsibility for spending time with the staff to reflect on their experiences of the workshops week by week. The focus of this meeting is to help the staff to select the residents to take part in the project and to introduce them to some of the people they will be working with. Again this is also about confidence building as staff are often particularly shy in the company of the musicians, commenting that they lack musical skill and fearful of being exposed in the workshops.

So, it is even at this early stage that the staff development work begins. The project itself is not easy to describe and involves musical experiences that are generally unfamiliar. Staff learn about the project as the meeting progresses. The process of selecting residents together is part of the initiation into the ways and experiences of the project. The lively discussions that ensue as residents are discussed and prioritised for the 8 places in the workshops provide opportunities to talk about examples of work in other homes and centres, where similar behaviours have been encountered and outcomes of the workshops can be described. Staff are already getting to know each other and their residents in new ways, listening to the perspectives of colleagues who may work differently, and who may experience individual residents in different ways. Gradually, as they explore the needs and interests of those in their care, a group of eight emerges. A final check ensures there is a variety of personalities to provide a balance of energy in the group and a balance of needs, leaving the staff with the opportunity to fine tune the list amongst themselves and with other colleagues, ready for the project's arrival a couple of weeks later.

The musicians and the space

Shortly before the project begins, the workshop leader holds a rehearsal with the two supporting musicians. He has also talked with them about the home and the residents they are to work with. The main purpose of this rehearsal is to devise with them the 'opening theme' for the workshop series. This is the framework for the improvised piece, which will mark the cornerstone of each workshop, providing a secure and predictable start and end to each session, but also with the opportunity to be shaped in response to the mood of individuals or to the group as a whole.

On the morning of the workshop, the project room is set up, the circle of chairs carefully set out, the observers chairs carefully placed. The range of percussion instruments is laid out in the centre of the circle, taking account of sightlines, accessibility and interest in the shape of the layout, often with a 'centre piece' maybe a djembe to look inviting and aesthetically pleasing. The musicians then improvise together, exploring the possibilities of their opening theme and developing ideas freely. Here they re-establish their

relationship with each other and sensitivity to each other, in preparation for the workshop with its need for both flexibility and focus.

At all times, the quality of their music-making is paramount. For their music to communicate they need to be at the height of their musical skill. Their playing must matter and mean every bit as much as any public performance on the concert platform. The musicians often comment that it matters more to them and has greater meaning, as the integrity and quality of their playing directly affects the extent to which they will connect with the person with dementia. The demands are great, as they also need to be aware of more than one response or initiative from the circle at any one time and be responsive to each other, sometimes relinquishing a long awaited opportunity to work with a resident as another interaction has already begun. Sometimes the skill involves moulding two pieces together whilst giving a sense of personal attention to each resident. This is a challenge, and is often the subject of discussion in the debriefing. The work requires '360° radar' according to one musician. The musicians need to keep everyone in the group safe enough to cope with unpredictability, risk, trying something new. They need to be prepared to be out of their own comfort zone whilst at the same time inspiring confidence in the group.

The workshops

From the moment that staff bring residents into the room, the workshop begins. Aware of the vulnerability of those in the group, every moment is important, from the warmth of the initial greeting and welcome to both staff and residents, to the care in inviting people to join the circle. Musicians respect the need for space to settle for some people and for others, the wish to engage in social interaction. For residents, this initial connection may involve conversation or hand-holding or for others, quietly 'being' beside someone as they absorb their new environment, the circle of people, the chairs, the instruments. The musicians' interest in them and their care staff, and responsiveness to them all impacts on the confidence any participant may have to even be in the room.

The workshop itself invites people into a musical relationship, in a variety of ways. Initially, the opening tune settles the group, with no requirement to do anything although often there is already participation. This shows in small responses that demonstrate the beginnings of trust. Here a lady takes off her gloves, another puts down her handbag, an agitated person physically relaxes and closes his eyes. Another person smiles, engages in eye contact with a musician, a member of staff smiles at a resident, gently putting her hand on his arms. Each person in the circle is greeted by name in song, accompanied with personalised musical phrases or flourishes. A sense of being in a circle develops and musical relationships grow from here, sometimes instruments played together in duos or trios, sometimes pieces

improvised for individuals, sometimes the musicians being directed formally by others in the group and at other times pieces developing spontaneously.

Musicians pay attention to space, textures, dynamics in their music, taking care not to overwhelm with textures that are too thick, or passages that move too much when not appropriate. They pace the session carefully, allowing time for responses particularly at the end of pieces when silence often allows the space to process what has been experienced and responses may occur, perhaps in comments or smiles or sometimes giggles of recognition. The session moves through different moods in response to gestures, facial expressions, movement, spoken requests: 'I want to fly like the swallow', 'Let's play!', 'I'm the boss'. The session is about enabling people to find something of themselves. For this to happen, the musicians and staff need to 'be themselves'. Integrity, respect, calmness, ability to relinquish control whilst maintaining a safe framework, all contribute to the extent to which connections are made. Hierarchies change in the sessions, where for example, staff can be led by people with dementia or musicians directed by staff. The workshop offers equal status and empowerment to all participants, an unusual position for those who live and work in a care home.

The session ends with the 'closing piece', a repeat of the opening improvisation, which emerges from a piece already being played. This often requires subtle key changes, changes of mood, reorientation in many ways to bring the session to a predictable close. The ending is as important as the opening and supports the transition that is about to happen - saying goodbye, moving from chairs, changing to another environment again, all of which can cause confusion and upset to a person with dementia.

Learning and Development

The pattern of this session is repeated over eight weeks. Each workshop hour is followed by an hour of debriefing both for musicians and for staff. Changes in behaviour and mood are noticed by staff and discussed with the dementia care trainer in the debriefing. Individual staff members are encouraged to share in the discussion, their own vulnerabilities are sensitively drawn out and gradually they may risk talking about their relationships with each other within the workshop or within their teams outside the sessions. Often, tensions are revealed, overlooked promotions discussed, poor teamwork addressed. Also compliments are paid, laughter shared, warmth and trust developed. The impact of the work on themselves is as important as for those they care for. Valuing feeling responses, reaching staff at an emotional level, raising their confidence and self worth has a direct impact on the residents. The trainer needs to work with the same level of integrity and sensitivity as the musicians, recognising that he too needs to improvise, working from the personal experience of each member of staff rather than arriving with a body of knowledge about

dementia that needs to be transmitted. In encouraging questioning and discussion in this way, the trainer is laying new foundations for learning and the quality of life improves for the care staff too

The musicians need a period of debriefing too. It is not easy for them to withdraw from the session and look at it objectively as they too need a time of transition to surface back to life outside the intensity of this experience. A facilitator who has also observed the session, helps the transition and leads the discussion: talking about the detail of the session, the effectiveness of their planning, exploring the ways they have worked together and the affect on each resident. The detail of this discussion will influence the subsequent session and often raises issues which will need further thought and conversations over the next week. Support for the team is vital, just as it is for staff as they cope with the emotional rigours of the work and face the occasions when connections are not made, as well as celebrating the progress of individuals.

Outcomes

Quantifying changes and outcomes is not easy. This level of engagement aims to encourage less isolation, a sense of being part of something, of being recognised and respected. Staff often report significant changes in behaviour. A lady who would spend all day every day in bed now gets up and comes out of her room each day to join others. A man who would bark out single words and walk out of the company of others, even frightening staff, now speaks in sentences and allows staff to touch him so he is able to receive hand massage and be led into the garden. Changes may reveal themselves slowly, sometimes noticed after the project has left. They are small and sometimes seen only in the absence of certain patterns, maybe a person has less need to search or wander around constantly, for example. There may simply be moments of connection in a workshop, which for that individual is a momentous event. The project is about endeavour, intention, and process. Music for Life is a tool for learning, a place to experience immediacy, to be respected and to give respect. The outcomes of the project are reciprocal; the beneficiaries are not only the person with dementia but the staff and the musicians too. Their personal and professional lives are affected by their relationships with each other, by the challenges they face through those relationships and by the skills they learn together. The interplay between the three promotes change, affects the communities they live and work in and enhances the lives of them all.

