*Article*

# Negotiating individuality and collectivity in community music. A qualitative case study

**Andrea Schiavio[1,2], Dylan van der Schyff[3], Andrea Gande[4] and Silke Kruse-Weber[4]**

## Abstract

In this paper, we report on a qualitative study based on the "Meet4Music" (M4M) project recently developed at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Austria. M4M is a low-threshold community-based program where participatory sessions dedicated to different artistic activities are freely offered to people from different social and cultural backgrounds. Our study explores how M4M promotes self-expression, creativity, social understanding, and artistic development through a number of interviews that we collected with the "facilitators"—those who help guide the heterogeneous ensemble of participants without being committed to a fixed and pre-defined teaching content. Our data focus on three aspects of M4M: "mutual collaborations," "non-verbal communication," and "sense of togetherness." Taking the "enactive" approach to cognition as a theoretical background, we argue that M4M helps to promote a sense of community that goes beyond the distinction between "individuality" and "collectivity." M4M encourages participants to meaningfully engage in collective forms of artistic activities, and develop new perspectives on their cultural identities that can play a key role for their flourishing as musical beings. In conclusion, we briefly consider possibilities for future research and practice.

The transforming social and technological environments we inhabit in the 21st century pose new possibilities and challenges for music education and community music programs (Borgo, 2007; Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Higgins, 2012; Kenny, 2016). Advances in online

[1]Centre for Systematic Musicology, University of Graz, Austria
[2]Department of Music, The University of Sheffield, UK
[3]Faculty of Music, University of Oxford, UK
[4]Institute for Music Education, University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Austria

**Corresponding author:**
Andrea Schiavio, Centre for Systematic Musicology, University of Graz, Merangasse 70, Graz 8010, Austria.
Email: andrea.schiavio@uni-graz.at

communication platforms have allowed for new forms of musical learning that go beyond the traditional settings of one-to-one instruction (Gaunt, 2008) or even the necessity of physically "being there": two or more musicians can now play together and learn from each other across great geographical distances thanks to the Internet (e.g., via Skype; see Dammers, 2009; Kruse et al., 2012). And in the pop, rock, and metal communities (among others), a growing number of artists and bands offer online lessons and master-classes (e.g., via YouTube; see Kruse & Veblen, 2012; Waldron, 2012). But this does not mean that environments where participants interact in person have lost their relevance. In fact, such contexts may take on a new importance in face of the significant changes in cultural demographics that are occurring due to migration, where music educators are asked to respond to the challenges posed by an increasingly heterogeneous and intercultural society (e.g., Westerlund et al., 2015). This, indeed, is no easy task. It requires the ability to navigate modern social and cultural complexities, and to promote positive and inclusive learning environments (see Berry, 1997). As such, it also involves enhanced conceptions of what meaning-making and social cognition entails. Moreover, because the bias still leans heavily towards Western academic music in many institutional contexts, the kinds of music-making that arise in other cultural environments often tends to be marginalised, or framed relative to established Western norms and assumptions (Small, 1998; van der Schyff, 2015). Accordingly, it has been argued that emerging collaborative and improvisational pedagogies have a great deal to offer as they could help in negotiating difference, fostering collaboration, and aid in stimulating trust and shared forms of social understanding (Campbell, 2003; Green, 2008; Heble & Laver, 2016; Higgins & Mantie, 2013; Kenny 2017; O'Neill, 2010, 2014; Sawyer, 2007; van der Schyff et al., 2016).

In this paper, we aim to contribute to the development of this orientation for music education and community music through an explorative qualitative study based on the "Meet4Music" (M4M) project recently developed at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Austria (see Gande & Kruse-Weber, 2017). M4M is a low-threshold community-based program initially dedicated to improvisation, musical learning, dance and social inclusion.[1] The project currently involves participatory sessions dedicated to singing, instrumental improvisation, acting and a drum circle, where "musical/artistic leaders" *facilitate* (we shall call them "facilitators") collaborative activity with a heterogeneous ensemble of participants. We report on a number of interviews conducted with the facilitators to help clarify how, for them, M4M can promote a sense of community that goes beyond the distinction between "individuality" and "collectivity." We consider the main themes that arise from the interviews through the "enactive" approach to cognition (Varela et al., 1991). In doing so, we discuss how this embodied and relational perspective might help us better understand the processes of communication and meaning-making involved in programs like M4M.

## Meet4Music

In March 2016, the Institute for Music Education at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Austria, established a community music project named Meet4Music (M4M; Gande & Kruse-Weber, 2017). M4M is organised in weekly free sessions of approximately one hour and a half each. The meetings focus on a range of alternating artistic activities (choir, acting, percussion or gamelan). Four facilitators, each with a distinctive background and approach, are part of M4M: they alternate every week to engage in musical activities with the participants.[2] As we will see, this does not involve formal one-to-one or rule-based pedagogical settings. Rather, sessions mainly involve "guided" improvisatory practices, where facilitators help attendees negotiate the different meanings and sonic ecologies being enacted.[3] The invitations

for the sessions are spread out (via social media, flyers and posters on campus and across town) to reach a broad audience; students, pupils, elderly people, refugees, migrants and many more attend M4M sessions. M4M is also established as an elective course for University students, giving future graduates in music education experience in collaborative music-making in different social contexts.

## The enactive mind

The "enactive" approach is a recent perspective in the cognitive sciences—one that provides new understandings of mind and subjectivity (Thompson, 2007; Varela et al., 1991). This orientation goes beyond the traditional view that sees the mind as a processor-like device operating in our head. Instead, enactivists argue that mind is *embodied* (the body plays a constitutive role in driving cognitive processes), *embedded* (the brain-body system can function adequately only if situated within a given milieu) and *extended* (cultural and physical tools of the environment can be exploited to achieve a cognitive task; see Rowlands, 2010). In being *embodied, embedded* and *extended*, the mind is said to be "enactive." In what follows, we consider how such a perspective can help us better understand aspects of M4M central for the co-construction of the shared musical environments described by the facilitators. In particular, we will focus on the notions of "collaboration," "non-verbal communication," and "sense of togetherness." These concepts will be discussed in continuity with relevant excerpts from the interviews, and analysed in light of three enactive principles—"autonomy," "embodiment" and "sense-making."

The term "autonomy" is used to distinguish between the self-generated properties of living systems, and their relationships with the environments they inhabit. As Varela (1979) notes, the organisation of autonomous agents is "characterised by processes such that (1) the processes are related as a network, so that they recursively depend on each other in the generation and realisation of the processes [...], and (2) they constitute the system as a unity recognisable in the space (domain) in which the processes exist" (p. 55). As these processes unfold at various degrees and timescales, they allow the animal to participate in the generation and maintenance of its own survival and wellbeing (see also Varela et al., 1991). An example of an autonomous system is the living body, whose biological properties are "enacted" to establish meaningful relationships with the world over ontogenetic and evolutionary time scales. For a simple organism this might entail developing camouflage to escape from danger, while for more complex creatures like us it could mean developing creative behaviours for different purposes, such as music and art making (Schiavio et al., 2017a, 2017b; van der Schyff & Schiavio 2017a, 2017b). In both cases, living systems develop a concerned "perspective," or a "point of view" about their niche—they form an "identity." Importantly, this identity cannot be understood as separate from the organism's biological complexity, nor as isolated from the environment that sustains it: organism and environment, self and other, are co-arising aspects of the same extended system (Chemero, 2009). As will be discussed later, being "autonomous" and "in-interaction" with the environment is an important feature of M4M, which allows participants to develop and share their musical identity in creative ways—for example through *mutual collaborations*.

This brings us to the second concept, "embodiment." This refers to the capacity of the body to co-constitute the organism's mental life (Colombetti, 2014; Shapiro, 2011; Thompson, 2007), including aesthetic experience (see, e.g., Gallese, 2017; Schiavio, 2012; Shusterman, 2006, 2008). Examples supporting this claim can be found in studies showing how perception evolves as the body's relation with the world changes (see Franklin & Tversky, 1990). For

instance, Longo and Lourenco (2007) found that when a person extends their arm, his or her perception of near space extends further outward. Additionally, related auto-ethnographic contributions that examine the centrality of embodiment for musical experience can be found in recent work by Smith (2017) and in Sudnow's classic book (1978) *Ways of the Hand*, which focus respectively on rock drumming practice and learning jazz piano. In both cases, the interest in a phenomenologically grounded, embodied know-how (see also Dreyfus, 1998; Merleau-Ponty, 1945) offers a shift from the traditional focus on language and abstract reasoning as the main mark of (music) cognition. And indeed, in social contexts (e.g., when considering musicians playing together) we find that *non-verbal communication* becomes a highly valuable resource in the generation and development of musical meaning (Bowman, 2004; Leman, 2007; Schiavio & van der Schyff, 2016). Movements, gestures and coordinated behaviours appear to define a fundamental level of understanding associated with joint music-making, becoming fundamental for collaborative creativity and mutual interactions (see Clarke & Doffman, 2017; Kenny, 2014; Moran & John-Steiner, 2004). Recent work by Walton and colleagues (2014, 2015), for example, highlights the ways performers communicate through adaptive sonic-corporeal gestures: they have empirically explored the dynamics of interacting improvisers, showing correlations between sound-making, bodily gesture and a shared sense of creativity and communication between participants. This orientation appears to offer a promising way of framing the non-verbal aspects of musical communication—that is, how shared musical understandings arise through sustained co-adaptive engagement with the bodily and sonic activities of others.

Similar forms of skilful co-adaptations can be captured by the concept of "sense-making," which enactivists adopt to define the set of meaningful interactions that mutually constraint agents and their niche (see Thompson & Stapleton, 2009). In particular, by self-regulating their own engagements with the environment, organisms develop and employ dynamic patterns of action and perception, which reflect their own organisational (i.e., biological and phenomenological) complexity. When meaning is generated in social contexts, this notion is known as "participatory sense-making" (Fuchs & De Jaegher, 2009). Consider, for example, how young human and non-human primates display imitative and emulative behaviours (Tomasello et al., 1993). The imitator develops meaningful bodily actions to engage in a participatory practice, maintaining at the same time a unique, personal, point of view over it. A similar relational dynamic may happen when two adults engage in other collaborative activities—such as talking, or music-making. While "imitation" is only one of the many possibilities of this interaction, co-performers develop a "sense of togetherness" that involves at the same time (a) the maintenance of an autonomous perspective and (b) a mutually adaptive stability based on the contextual musical event being co-created (Schiavio & De Jaegher, 2017). The notion of "participatory sense-making" can thus help us understand how no fundamental separation exists between agent and environment; these categories are rather best understood as integrated aspects of the same dynamically evolving system (Kyselo, 2014; Torrance & Froese, 2011).

Overall, we suggest that the principles of "autonomy," "embodiment," and (participatory) "sense-making," can inspire a richer understanding of the processes involved in contexts like M4M, allowing us to explore how shared repertoires of relational and adaptive (musical) activity come to characterise the ensemble as whole. Central to these principles is the idea that organisms are at once "autonomous" and "in-interaction" with the environment. This is relevant to M4M as it helps to describe how a person develops his or her musical identity by engaging with others, co-creating and sharing meanings that emerge through the constant negotiation between interacting levels of individuality and collectivity.[4] Focussing on such rich interplay might help us better understand how the open-ended improvisational musical activities involved

in M4M engage basic human capacities, and thus afford forms of communication and meaning-making in contexts where spoken language is not a viable option. Before we move on, however, we should stress that the study presented below is not intended to offer an exhaustive story of the complex processes involved in a program like M4M. It is essentially introductory in scope. Nevertheless, we believe that it is important to make readers aware of this program to inspire future research and practice in contexts where a larger number of participants are involved. Moreover, because recent research in community music (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Higgins, 2012; Higgins & Willingham, 2017; Veblen et al., 2013) increasingly indicates the value of non-hierarchical and cooperative approaches to musical development, we suggest that the enactive approach could offer a useful way of examining and interpreting existing studies in community music, as well as an important framework for guiding future work.[5]

## Method

### Rationale of the study

M4M offers an opportunity to reflect upon the roles of facilitators and how they adapt to the constantly changing situations associated with heterogeneous musical ensembles. How do facilitators engage with participants from diverse backgrounds? What strategies do they use to provide equal access to music-making, considering the differences in expertise, social skills, age, and culture of the participants? What understandings of collectivity and individuality are developed within M4M as a process? Below, we report excerpts from interviews conducted with the facilitators of M4M where they begin to address such topics.[6] Interviews were chosen as the main methodological procedure because they allow us to explore the subjective experiences of the facilitators not only as individuals, but also as part of a community of practice (see Zahavi, 2001). Obtaining qualitative data concerning the contextual examination of the meanings enacted during M4M also aligns with recent work in phenomenological psychology and philosophy, which increasingly adopts such methodology in a variety of contexts (see Kvale & Brinckmann, 2009 for an overview).

### Participants

The interviewed participants were three of the facilitators engaged in M4M. They were chosen for M4M because of their musical background and experience, and because they were recommended by staff members of the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, and by experts in related fields. Facilitators 1 and 3 were contacted by phone and invited for an interview. Facilitator 2 was part of a previous project and was already known to the organisers of M4M. Once the three facilitators were recruited for M4M, and started leading their workshops, interviews were scheduled to take place after they completed the first academic semester. The interviews gave them the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and discuss their observations during the workshops. Here are short descriptions of each facilitator.

1.  Facilitator 1 provided choir workshops at M4M. Her background includes relevant experience as a choir and orchestra conductor, and as a voice-training expert, engaging with both individuals and groups.
2.  Facilitator 2 led the drumming workshops at M4M. He has long-term experience as percussion teacher at music schools and in higher music education. He is also head of a music school and leader of a percussion ensemble.

3. Facilitator 3 was in charge of the dance workshops. She is a music teacher in a middle- and high-level institution in Austria, and is a member of a dance-company.

All facilitators agreed in advance to participate in interviews and they all spoke perfect German (two were native speakers).

## Interviews

Each facilitator was interviewed individually in separate meetings, which took place at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Austria, between June and July 2016. The interviewer (A. G.) is one of the coordinators of M4M. The meetings were carried out in a friendly and safe atmosphere, allowing the facilitators to freely extend the discussion when required. Interviews were conducted in German. These were audio recorded and transcribed *verbatim* in their entirety by A. G. and one collaborator. Parts of these transcriptions were translated into English by A. G. for the present contribution. The interview with Facilitator 1 lasted for 1 hr and 8 min, the interview with Facilitator 2 lasted for 1 hr and 27 min, and the interview with Facilitator 3 lasted for 46 min—for a total of 3 hr and 22 min. The full interview transcripts cover a total 62.5 pages. Some examples of the questions asked include: "How did you deal with interculturality?"; "How did you perceive the communication with the participants?"; "How did you deal with linguistic barriers?"[7] We have included here only excerpts that are relevant to the main aims of the present paper.

## Analysis

Before conducting the interviews, the following guideline categories were selected.

- Attitude and motivation.
- Preconditions for the project.
- Pedagogical aspects.
- Social and communicative aspects.
- Closing statements.

For the present contribution, however, we selected excerpts mostly associated with the fourth bullet point (social and communicative aspects), so that aspects related to "individuality" and "collectivity" could emerge more clearly. Because of this, we focus on three main dimensions that are relevant to this perspective ("collaboration," "non-verbal communication," and "sense of togetherness"), choosing interview excerpts strongly related to these themes. In other words, "collaboration," "non-verbal communication," and "sense of togetherness," served as coding categories that we used to extract data from the passages relevant to the concerns of the present study. To do this, we used MAXQDA as a tool. MAXQDA is an analysis software designed to help researchers in organising and coding qualitative data. After importing raw data to MAXQDA, codes can easily be applied on the text, and a category system can be transformed flexibly. A searching tool within MAXQDA also allows for the quick detection of text passages. We are aware that adopting such methodology cannot allow us to fully capture the complexity of M4M (e.g., it is limited to the reports of the facilitators, it does not include behavioural data, etc.). However, we suggest that considering these preliminary interview reports through the lenses of the enactive approach may nevertheless help to provide new conceptual tools that help to explain how—in the experience of the facilitators—the distinction between "individual" and

"group" fades and shared forms of communication arise as musical participation develops (for a similar methodological procedure inspired by the enactive approach see Schiavio & Høffding, 2015).

## Discussion

### Collaboration

M4M appears to meet the essential characteristics for a "community of practice"—that is, it entails a shared domain of interest (music making) and fosters commitment to the development of collaboratively constructed social ecologies that make a positive impact on the lives of those involved (Wenger, 1998). Indeed, collaboration is central to M4M and may be discerned in various ways. Most obviously, collaborative music-making allows facilitators and participants to play together and negotiate forms of musical communication during the sessions. Additionally, the team members at M4M (including facilitators, students, and the supervisor/coordinator) worked collaboratively on the implementation of the project. With regard to this point, Facilitator 2 describes the importance of collaborative teamwork for M4M:

> Altogether [the main concept of] M4M is definitely teamwork. It wouldn't be M4M if it weren't for the different disciplines involved, for example. The fact that a team decided to implement this should be emphasised, because it was no individual idea conceived by a single person [...]. I regard it as essential that the team exists, because thereby these considerations gain more weight.

This highlights M4M's interactive focus, even at its initial stages. Decisions were negotiated and made as a collective. "Collaboration," moreover, is also an important part of each musical session, where the feelings of working together—and achieving something together—afford a sense of pleasure. On this issue, Facilitator 2 comments:

> It gives me pleasure when I have the feeling that a team is built over the course of a lesson; that the crowd one is working with achieves at some point, to some degree, a sense of being a group.

No individual appears to be regarded as "leader"—despite the role of leadership undertaken by the facilitators. What is described here is a collaborating team—not simply a collection of agents in a fixed hierarchy—where "leadership" involves the ability of agents to take certain initiatives that contribute to the ability of the organisation to function in a positive way. But how then, given the heterogeneity of the groups, do facilitators achieve such collaboration? According to Facilitator 1, "music" itself is what allows this to occur:

> I think this is just possible, because we have a common thread, and that is music. They all came to make music, and that is my [strong point], that is what I am inducing them to.

As it might be argued from this excerpt, participation through music serves a double purpose: it *facilitates* social interaction and *stimulates* further (artistic) interactions. In other words, collaborating through music (in the sessions) and for music (in the organisational phases) is at the same time a means and a goal. It allows for an essential negotiation between individual and collective subjectivity, helping participants experience a sense of community and develop their identity as a group. This recalls the concept of "autonomy" discussed above, where one's identity is formed and transformed by the recurrent patterns of interactions enacted within the (social) milieu. This is particularly relevant when considering that one of the main goals of

M4M is to foster new understandings and communities between individuals from diverse backgrounds through music practice. Here the idea that autonomy is not a fixed, static, phenomenon, but rather a continually enacted process, could help describe how the collaborative activities that characterise M4M result in the construction of new personal and social identities that are based in a shared sense of belonging. Individuals become part of the community by enacting their own identity through forms of collaboration. As we will see next, such collaborations are intrinsically embodied.

## Non-verbal communication

Throughout the interview sessions, facilitators emphasised the need for non-verbal communication between them and the group members. In particular, they discussed how gestures and facial expressions become useful tools to understand and interact with non-German speakers, who may have a very limited (German) vocabulary. In fact, the facilitators were quite surprised by how important this aspect was for the success of the workshops—developing such forms of communication meant they could interact faster and more effectively with all the participants. In their opinion, the focus on non-verbal communication sharpened the attentiveness of the participants. Facilitators, therefore, kept their verbal instructions as short as possible. Consider the following excerpt by Facilitator 1:

> Usually, I deal with people who speak German and with whom I can express many things verbally [...].
> I recognised that I am partly faster [in delivering a message] when omitting spoken language and just
> act, because I raise people's awareness in different ways [...]. The attentiveness is much stronger when
> I don't talk [...]. And I really enjoyed this – I have to admit. I found it fascinating and beautiful.

These insights recall the discussion above regarding the role of the body for cognition. They also align with recent insights in cognitive science that see communication as a phenomenon not fundamentally associated with "the formal encoding of messages but rather [...] [with] the ability to successfully manage interactions to achieve joint (and individual) goals" (Anderson, 2014, p. 259). Concerning the first point, it is worth noticing that during an interview Facilitator 3 mentioned the "joy of moving with other people" as an important component of M4M, one that she aimed to facilitate through her dance-sessions. With regard to the second point, we can appeal again to Facilitator 3, who comments that "motion can be communication."

Research in joint music-making supports such insights. In a recent study by Schiavio and Høffding (2015), for example, the role of pre-reflective and embodied interactivity among musicians was explored through ethnographic and phenomenological interviews performed with the Danish String Quartet, in which the authors asked about the musicians' experiences in given performative settings and situations. What emerged from these interviews is that the expert musicians' experience of collective music-making is primarily rooted in very basic forms of dynamical collaboration that are constantly open and adaptive to the shifting demands of the musical context: no matter how many times the quartet rehearses a piece, there are always new nuances emerging from the interactions of the ensemble—and these nuances are negotiated in real-time among all members, with little or no time for conscious reflection (see also Salice et al., 2017). Accordingly, the "communicative" processes at play in joint musical practices are not reducible to how an individual *responds* to a given stimulus produced by the others. Rather, collective music-making requires in-the-moment *interactivity*—a complex network of reciprocal and non-linear communicative processes that engage a range of bodily, affective, sonic, aesthetic and

socio-cultural dimensions that are negotiated as the music unfolds (Laroche & Kaddouch, 2015; Loaiza, 2016; Schiavio, 2014). And so, while collaborating musicians will certainly develop their own ways of interacting and communicating that become stable over time, such shared understandings and recurrent patterns of sound and movement emerge from the real-time activity of the ensemble itself—and not from some predefined schema. In line with this, recent work in music education suggests that musical development should be explored in terms of the ongoing interactions that occur between pupils, parents and teachers, focusing on the relationality of the (musical) social system itself rather than only on the single components that constitute it (Creech, 2006, 2009; O'Neill, 2012, 2014). Similar insights emerge in M4M. Consider, for example, Facilitator 1's thoughts on how the non-verbal forms of communication present in music-making can be associated with learning and social understanding:

> Maybe because that is a totally different level. I think, the level is much deeper, it is much more personal than words. Words do already imply a connotation for every single person […]. I think I can communicate on another level, that is much older and much more primal than [spoken] language. Because children also are learning, first of all, by imitating. Imitating facial expressions, imitating gestures and so on. And I think that this is why this is working at a much deeper level, where one understands another more immediately.

From the enactive perspective, such forms of interactive cognition may be considered as instantiations of participatory sense-making. By focusing on how bodies in action dynamically coordinate and interact (thus shaping each other's sense-making), this notion highlights the importance of non-verbal forms of communication and meaning construction in social contexts. This is highly relevant in a musical environment like M4M, where participants take on and offload various tasks and roles from and to each other—both in the creation of the music and in the organisation of the project—to keep the shared environment healthy and productive.

## Sense of togetherness

With this in mind, let us now begin to address the last of the three aspects introduced above, the "sense of togetherness." There is a strong sense in which this may be understood as a necessary capacity for the previous two dimensions to arise and develop. As we have considered, in M4M no explicit instruction is usually required for attendees to engage in musical activities and participate in collective practices. Communication and understanding are largely generated "organically" through the dynamic processes of interaction associated with the movements, gestures, sounds and patterns that arise in the ensemble. Here musical meaning evolves and is negotiated in real time, allowing attendees to generate an autonomous identity that is expressed and transformed through meaningful musical (inter)actions (De Jaegher 2009, 2016; De Jaegher & Di Paolo, 2007; Moran 2014). Interestingly, when Facilitator 1 was asked what skills she regarded as crucial for fostering such open-ended forms of musical meaning-making she answered:

> To be honest, […] I think the first and most important thing is perhaps not musical competence but rather an interpersonal, subtle sense: What is the group like? What does the ensemble need? Not only the group as a whole, but also single individuals within the group. And that I […] acquire the ability to interpret [e.g. the behaviour, facial expression, etc., of] them within a couple of seconds: The group is bored; or: they're over-taxed.

Talking about expectations and achievements of the project, she also illustrates that she was hoping to encourage the participants to involve themselves in the music and to have fun when doing so:

> I am happy for myself too, that I achieved this, that I managed to bring people together and make them sound together.

Taken together, these two passages reveal how Facilitator 1 understands the complex interactions occurring between the individual and the collective, as well as her role in guiding them. As Facilitator 3 also notes, this includes understanding the needs of those involved and the developing relations between the participants:

> A basic experience was [...] that depending on which persons were attending, there were different aspects involved. [...] The challenge was not only answering their needs, but also sensing [them].

Not only do individuals explore and develop their own musical abilities, they also influence and adapt to the musical dynamics of the group. Categories like "agency" (the drive for independence) and "communion" (the need to be engaged with and understand others) are negotiated in real time through collective practice (see Creech & Hallam, 2011). Such forms of musical collaboration highlight and may be used to encourage situations where "each of the subjects is taking account of the other's interests and objectives in some relation to the extra-personal context, and is acting to complement the other's response" (Hubley & Trevarthen, 1979, p. 58). In broader musical contexts, however, the question of what this kind of circular, mutually influencing, dynamic between self and other entails has been often under-theorised. Indeed, engagement in musical activity usually takes for granted the fact that we are able to comprehend our own goals and intentions while also perceiving and adapting to those of others— where, again, the distinction between self and other sometimes seems to fall away. However, for facilitators (and participants) in programs like M4M, it seems important to better understand this capacity to help foster healthy environments for communication and collaboration. Consider the following short excerpt, where Facilitator 2 describes one of the most enjoyable phenomena witnessed during practice:

> The feeling inside [the drum circle], when people play together and they notice: Wow, I am part of a good whole.

The "whole" is a necessary element for M4M. And the experience of it is not indifferent: it is a "good" one—one with a particular meaning and feeling. This observation, along with the others reported here, aligns with one of the main tenets of the enactive approach introduced above—again, the idea of "participatory sense-making." The kind of "emotional" collaborative music-making emerging in M4M, indeed, is one of the possible activities that allow participants to: (a) self-regulate their own musical and aesthetic needs; and at the same time (b) recursively shape the music being co-created. Consider, for example, how one might adapt a certain percussive pattern to a musical phrase improvised by others. The shared expressive movements supporting this *creatively adaptive* behaviour explicitly engage bodily and emotional dimensions—allowing new collaborations to develop among people who do not share the same language or cultural background. Here the "sense of togetherness" motivates new participatory musical events, connecting participants, instruments, meanings, and musical identities.

## Conclusion

It is increasingly recognised that co-present forms of musical activity can create and strengthen social bonds, fostering forms of mutual understanding even in situations where linguistic communication is difficult or not possible (DeNora, 2001; Freeman, 2000; Krueger, 2013; Ockelford, 2013). This capacity is especially promising in situations where immigrants and refugees arrive in new cultural environments where they may not understand the language or social customs: shared musical activity can help develop basic forms of trust and understanding between newcomers and established residents.[8] With this in mind, we have provided an introductory look at how M4M fosters environments where this can occur. We have also attempted to offer insights into the collaborative processes involved in M4M by exploring the subjective experiences reported by the facilitators in conjunction with the enactive approach to cognition. While the current analysis remains somewhat limited, we believe that our preliminary discussion of the relevance of the enactive perspective may nevertheless offer important new possibilities for future research on M4M and other similar programs.

As we have suggested, an enactive perspective can offer useful analytical and descriptive tools for understanding the negotiation of individuality and collectivity associated with creative joint music-making. Additionally, the coding categories of "collaboration," "non-verbal communication," and "sense of togetherness" explored above may be understood as *emerging properties* of M4M. On one hand, they describe the basic human social capacities required for a healthy collaboration among music-makers. On the other, they are encouraged and further developed by the dynamics of mutual participation inherent to M4M. In highlighting the continuity between our coding categories and the three enactive principles of "autonomy," "embodiment," and "participatory sense-making" we have expanded on, and interpreted, the excerpts from our interviews in a creative—yet intrinsically pragmatic—fashion. First, we framed the genuine reflections of our facilitators within the conceptual background of a rich philosophical and psychological tradition, developing conceptual bridges between community music and cognitive science. Second, we examined aspects of M4M from a perspective that looks for patterns of reciprocity and mutual engagement between multiple agents. Third, exploring our coding categories through the enactive theoretical lens allowed us to add layers of description to the phenomena being studied. We hope this will inspire research that further develops this approach. For example, future studies might utilise the coding categories discussed above in conjunction with video and audio recordings that document the musical environments being enacted. We expect that future offerings will develop such possibilities and provide richer accounts that include the perspectives of the participants.

Here it is also important to reassert that such research has major practical implications. As such, it complements existing work in community music (Higgins, 2012; Higgins & Willingham, 2017; Veblen et al., 2013). It also aligns with studies in critical improvisation, which seeks to better understand the "decolonising" role collaborative musical practice can play in fostering an openness to difference and diversity (Heble & Caines, 2014; Lewis & Piekut, 2016; see also O'Neill, 2009). Indeed, researchers in this growing field are exploring the practice of improvisation in terms of fostering a sense of agency, understanding, and collaboration among students and teachers—and how this may lead to more inclusive pedagogical environments that highlight creativity and the enactment of new personal, social, and cultural realities (Heble & Laver, 2016; Hickey, 2009; Lange, 2011; Lewis, 2007; Sarath, 2013; Sawyer, 2007; Thomson, 2007). This all resonates rather closely with the experiences of the facilitators, who discuss how M4M may allow individuals to begin to know and trust one another on a different level. As we saw, the facilitators found important socially relevant meanings in what they experienced,

and discussed how much they enjoyed being part of process of making music in such open-ended contexts. As they describe it, being in M4M means to participate in, and to make sense of, the group in an (inter)active way. The excerpts we reported in the section dedicated to *sense of togetherness* are well suited to corroborate the point, as they highlight how each facilitator experienced how mutual understandings and a feeling of community can develop in a collaborative and improvised way. An overriding theme here is that, in M4M, sharp distinctions between "individuality" and "collectivity" become softened—allowing for a healthy negotiation between self and other to occur. As Facilitator 3 comments:

> One gets to know each other differently, in a way that is very primal […]. Music is a universal language […], and I think that when you participate and become part of a whole […] you can perceive individuals regardless of all the elements […], such as origin, age, looks.

Indeed, real-time musical collaboration depends on the remarkable fact that "self and other are able to "enact" each other because a human being's first-person sense of him/herself has the capacity to recognise him/herself relationally […] as another" (Silverman, 2014, p. 2). As we considered at the outset, for researchers, facilitators, and teachers in music education and community music it is important to understand what this entails and how it may be developed in positive ways so that we may better meet the challenges posed by contemporary social and cultural dynamics. The continued development of mutually informing programs of research, theory, and practice through projects like M4M will aid greatly in realising this goal.

## Acknowledgements

## Funding

## Notes

1. After the first semester, "dance" was substituted by workshops based on "theatre."
2. It should be noted that initially only three facilitators were involved, as "gamelan" was introduced only after one semester.
3. Given the specific setting, choir sessions were less oriented than the others to improvisation.
4. As we will discuss, the roles of facilitators here will be fundamental in co-creating the basic teaching and learning conditions for these processes to unfold in a musical sense.
5. This framework has already motivated studied that explored the topics of musical emotions (Schiavio et al., 2017a; van der Schyff & Schiavio, 2017a), music and human evolution (van der Schyff & Schiavio, 2017b), musical development and music education (Elliott & Silverman, 2015; Schiavio et al., 2017b; van der Schyff et al., 2016), music therapy (Schiavio & Altenmüller, 2015), as well as improvisation and creativity (Borgo, 2005; Linson & Clarke, 2017).
6. We should note here that this is only a preliminary study. Because of this, the present contribution is limited in that we address only the facilitators, and not the attendees. It is hoped that future contributions will extend the study to include a wider range of perspectives.

7.  This refers to the fact that a number of M4M participants did not know any German.
8.  This is not to say that online platforms, where musical activity can be enacted from different locations, could not help with such processes, as they certainly can. However, because the kinds of communication and emotional understanding involved are deeply dependent on non-verbal forms of interaction, a shared physical presence is hugely important.

## References

Anderson, M. L. (2014). *After phrenology: Neural reuse and the interactive brain*. Cambridge, MA; London: MIT Press.

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, *46*, 5–68.

Borgo D. (2005). *Sync or Swarm: Improvising Music in a Complex Age*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Borgo, D. (2007). Free jazz in the classroom: An ecological approach to music education. *Jazz Perspectives*, *1*(1), 61–88.

Bowman, W. (2004). Cognition and the body: Perspectives from music education. In L. Bresler (Ed.), *Knowing bodies, moving minds: Toward embodied teaching and learning* (pp. 29–50). Dortrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Press.

Campbell, P. S. (2003). Ethnomusicology and music education: Crossroads for knowing music, education, and culture. *Research Studies in Music Education*, *21*, 16–30.

Chemero, A. (2009). *Radical embodied cognitive science*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Clarke, E., & Doffman, M. (Eds.) (2017). *Distributed creativity: Collaboration and improvisation in contemporary music*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Colombetti, G. (2014) *The feeling body: Affective science meets the enactive mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Creech, A. (2006). *Dynamics, harmony and discord: A systems analysis of teacher-pupil-parent interaction in instrumental learning* (Unpublished PhD dissertation). University of London, London, UK.

Creech, A. (2009). The role of the family in supporting learning. In S. Hallam, I. Cross, & M. Thaut (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of music psychology* (pp. 295–306). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Creech, A., & Hallam, S. (2011) Learning a musical instrument: The influence of interpersonal interaction on outcomes for school-aged pupils. *Psychology of Music*, *39*, 102–22.

Dammers, R. J. (2009). Utilizing internet-based videoconferencing for instrumental music lessons. *Update*, *28*(1), 17–24.

De Jaegher, H. (2009). Social understanding through direct perception? Yes, by interacting. *Consciousness and Cognition*, *18*, 535–542.

De Jaegher, H. (2016). Intersubjectivity in the study of experience. *Constructivist Foundations*, *11*(2), 393–395.

De Jaegher, H., & Di Paolo, E. (2007). Participatory sense-making: An enactive approach to social cognition. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *6*(4), 485–507.

De Jaegher, H., Di Paolo, E. A., & Gallagher, S. (2010). Can social interaction constitute social cognition? *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *14*(10), 441–447.

DeNora, T. (2001). *Music in everyday life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dreyfus, H. L. (1998). The current relevance of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment. *Electronic Journal of Analytical Philosophy*, *4*, 1–16.

Elliott, D. J., & Silverman, M. (2015). *Music matters: A philosophy of music education*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Franklin, N., & Tversky, B. (1990). Searching imagined environments. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *119*, 63–76.

Freeman, W. J. (2000). A neurobiological role of music in social bonding. In N. Wallin, B. Merker & S. Brown (Eds.), *The origins of music* (pp. 411–424). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Fuchs, T., & De Jaegher, H. (2009). Enactive intersubjectivity: Participatory sense-making and mutual incorporation. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *8*(4), 465–486.

Gallagher, S. (2008). Understanding others: Embodied social cognition. In P. C. Garzón (ed.), *Elsevier handbook of embodied cognitive science* (pp. 439–452). London: Elsevier.

Gallagher, S. (2001). The practice of mind: Theory, simulation, or interaction? *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *8*(5–7): 83–107.

Gallagher, S., & Varga, S. (2015). Social cognition and psychopathology: A critical overview. *World Psychiatry*, *14*(1), 5–14.

Gallese, V. (2017). Visions of the body. Embodied simulation and aesthetic experience. *Aisthesis. Pratiche, Linguaggi e Saperi dell'Estetico*, *10*(1), 41–50.

Gallese, V., & Goldman, A. (1998). Mirror neurons and the simulation theory of mind-reading. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *2*(12), 493–501.

Gande, A., & Kruse-Weber, S. (2017). Addressing new challenges for a community music project in the context of higher music education. A conceptual framework. *London Review of Education*, *15*(3). 372–387.

Gaunt, H. (2008). One-to-one tuition in a conservatoire: The perceptions of instrumental and vocal teachers. *Psychology of Music*, *36*(2), 215–245.

Green, L. (2008). *Music, informal learning and the school: A new classroom pedagogy*. London: Ashgate Press.

Heble, A., & Caines, R. (Eds.). (2014). *The improvisation studies reader: Spontaneous acts*. London: Routledge.

Heble, A., & Laver, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Improvisation and music education: Beyond the classroom*. London: Routledge.

Hickey, M. (2009). Can improvisation be 'taught'? A call for free improvisation in our schools. *International Journal of Music Education*, *27*(4), 285–299.

Higgins, L. (2012). *Community music in theory and practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Higgins, L., & Mantie, R. (2013). Improvisation as ability, culture, and experience. *Music Educators Journal*, *100*(2), 38–44.

Higgins, L., & Willingham, L. (2017). *Engaging in community music: An introduction*. London: Routledge.

Hubley, P., & Trevarthen, C. (1979). Sharing a task in infancy. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *1979*, 57–80.

Kenny, A. (2017). "Placing" technology within music education communities. In S. A. Ruthmann, & R. Mantie (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of technology and music education* (Ch. 21). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kenny, A. (2016). *Communities of musical practice*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Kenny, A. (2014). 'Collaborative creativity' within a jazz ensemble as a musical and social practice. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *13*, 1–8.

Krueger, J. (2013). Empathy, enaction, and shared musical experience. In T. Cochrane, B. Fantini, & K. Scherer (Eds.), *The emotional power of music: Multidisciplinary perspectives on musical expression, arousal, and social control* (pp. 177–196). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kruse, N. B., Harlos, S. C., Callaha, R. M., & Herring, M. L. (2013). Skype music lessons in the academia: Intersections of music education, applied music and technology. *Journal of Music, Technology & Education*, *6*(1), 43–60.

Kruse, N. B., & Veblen, K. K. (2012). Music teaching and learning online: Considering YouTube instructional videos. *Journal of Music, Technology & Education*, *5*(1), 77–87.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Kyselo, M. (2014). The body social. An enactive approach to the self. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *5*, 986. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00986

Lange, B. R. (2011). Teaching the ethics of free improvisation. *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, *7*(2), 1–11.

Laroche, J., & Kaddouch, I. (2015). Spontaneous preferences and core tastes: embodied musical personality and dynamics of interaction in a pedagogical method of improvisation. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *6*, 522.

Leiberg, S., & Anders, S. (2006) The multiple facets of empathy: A survey of theory and evidence. *Progress in Brain Research*, *156*, 419–440.

Leman, M. (2007). *Embodied music cognition and mediation technology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Lewis, G. E. (2007). Improvisation and pedagogy: Background and focus of inquiry. *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, *3*(2), 1–5. Retrieved from http://www.criticalimprov.com/article/ view/412/659

Lewis, G. E., & Piekut, B. (2016). *The Oxford handbook of critical improvisation studies, volume 1*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Linson A., & Clarke E. F. (2017). Distributed cognition, ecological theory, group improvisation. In E. F. Clarke, & M. Doffman (Eds.), *Distributed Creativity: Collaboration Improvisation in Contemporary Music*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Loaiza, J. M. (2016). Musicking, embodiment and the participatory enaction of music: Outline and key points. *Connection Science*, *28*, 410–422.

Longo, M. R., & Lourenco, S. F. (2007). Space perception and body morphology: Extent of near space scales with arm length. *Experimental Brain Research*, *177*, 285–290.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1945) *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris: Gallimard.

Moran, N. (2014). Social implications arise in embodied music cognition research which can counter musicological "individualism." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 676.

Moran, S., & John-Steiner, V. (2004). How collaboration in creative work impacts identity and motivation. In D. Miell, & K. Littleton (Eds.), *Collaborative creativity: Contemporary perspectives* (pp. 11–25). London: Free Association.

Ockelford, A. (2013). *Music, language and autism: Exceptional strategies for exceptional minds*. New York: Jessica Kingsley

O'Neill, S. A. (2009). Revisioning musical understandings through a cultural diversity theory of difference. In L. R. Bartel (Ed.), *Research to practice: Vol. 4. Exploring social justice: How music education might matter* (pp. 70–89). Waterloo, ON: Canadian Music Educators' Association.

O'Neill, S. A. (2010). On becoming a music learner: Understanding relationships that foster growth. *Canadian Music Educator*, *51*(3), 26–28.

O'Neill, S. A. (2014). Mind the gap: Transforming music engagement through learner-centred informal music learning. *The Recorder: Journal of the Ontario Music Educators' Association*, *56*(2), 18–22.

O'Neill, S. A. (2012). Becoming a music learner: Towards a theory of transformative music engagement. In G. E. McPherson & G. Welch (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of music education* (Vol. 1, pp. 163–186). New York: Oxford University Press.

Pfeiffer, U. J., Timmermans, B., Vogeley, K., Frith, C. D., & Schilbach, L. (2013). Towards a neuroscience of social interaction. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, *7*, 22.

Ratcliffe, M. (2007). *Rethinking commonsense psychology: A critique of theory of mind and simulation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rowlands, M. (2010). *The new science of the mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Salice, A., Høffding, S., & Gallagher, S. (2017). Putting plural self-awareness into practice: The phenomenology of expert musicianship. *Topoi* doi: 10.1007/s11245-017-9451-2.

Sarath, E. W. (2013). *Improvisation, creativity, and consciousness: Jazz as integral template for music, education, and society*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Sawyer, K. R. (2007). Improvisation and teaching. *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, *2*(2). Retrieved from http://www.criticalimprov.com/article/view/380/626

Schiavio, A. (2014). Action, enaction, inter(en)action. *Empirical Musicology Review*, *9*(3–4), 254–262.

Schiavio, A. (2012). Constituting the musical object: A neurophenomenological perspective on musical research. *Teorema*, *31*(3), 63–80.

Schiavio, A., & Altenmüller, E. (2015). Exploring music-based rehabilitation for Parkinsonism through embodied cognitive science. *Frontiers in Neurology*, 6:217.

Schiavio, A., & De Jaegher, H. (2017). Participatory sense-making in joint musical practices. In M. Lesaffre, M. Leman & P. J. Maes (Eds.), *The Routledge* (pp. 31–39). New York, NY: Routledge.

Schiavio, A., & Høffding, S. (2015). Playing together without communicating? A pre-reflective and enactive account of joint musical performance. *Musica Scientiae*, *19*, 366–388.

Schiavio, A., & van der Schyff, D. (2016). Beyond musical qualia: Reflecting on the concept of experience. *Psychomusicology*, *26*(4), 366–378.

Schiavio, A., van der Schyff, D., Cespedes-Guevara, J., & Reybrouck, M. (2017a). Enacting musical emotions: Sense-making, dynamic systems, and the embodied mind. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, *16*(5), 785–809.

Schiavio, A., van der Schyff, D., Kruse-Weber, S., & Timmers, R. (2017b). When the sound becomes the goal: 4E cognition and teleomusicality in early infancy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*:1585.

Shapiro, L. (2011). *Embodied cognition*. London: Routledge

Shusterman, R. (2008). *Body consciousness: A philosophy of mindfulness and somaesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shusterman, R. (2006). Thinking through the body, educating for the humanities: A plea for somaesthetics. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, *40*(1), 1–21.

Silverman, M. (2014). Empathy in music and music education. In W. F. Thompson (Ed.), *Music in the social and behavioral sciences: An encyclopedia*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Silverman, M. (2012). Virtue ethics, care ethics, and "The good life of teaching". *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, *11*(2), 96–122.

Small C. (1999). *Musicking: The Meaning of Performing and Listening*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Smith, G. D. (2017). Embodied experience of rock drumming. *Music & Practice*, *3*. Retrieved from http://www.musicandpractice.org/volume-3/embodied-experience-rock-drumming/

Sudnow, D. (1978). *Ways of the hand: The organization of improvised conduct*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Thompson, E. (2007). *Mind in life: Biology, phenomenology, and the sciences of mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Thomson, S. (2007). The pedagogical imperative of musical improvisation. *Critical studies in improvisation*, *3*(2). Retrieved from http://www.criticalimprov.com/article/view/353/642

Torrance, S., & Froese, T. (2011). An inter-enactive approach to agency: participatory sense-making, dynamics, and sociality. *Humana Mente*, *15*, 21–53.

van der Schyff, D. (2015). Music as a manifestation of life: Exploring enactivism and the 'Eastern perspective' for music education. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *6*, 345.

van der Schyff, D., & Schiavio, A. (2017a). Evolutionary musicology meets embodied cognition: Biocultural coevolution and the enactive origins of human musicality. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, *11*:519.

van der Schyff, D., & Schiavio, A. (2017b). The future of musical emotions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*, 988.

van der Schyff, D., Schiavio, A., & Elliott, D. J. (2016). Critical ontology for an enactive music pedagogy. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, *15*, 81–121.

Varela, F. (1979). *Principles of Biological Autonomy*. New York, NY: North-Holland.

Varela, F., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (1991). *The embodied mind: Cognitive science and human experience*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Waldron, J. (2012). Conceptual frameworks, theoretical models and the role of YouTube: Investigating informal music learning and teaching in online music community. *Journal of Music, Technology & Education*, *4*(2–3), 189–200.

Walton, A., Richardson, M. J., & Chemero, A. (2014). Self-organization and semiosis in jazz improvisation. *International Journal of Signs and Semiotic Systems*, *3*, 12–25.

Walton, A., Richardson, M. J., Langland-Hassan, P., & Chemero, A. (2015). Improvisation and the self-organization of multiple musical bodies. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *1*, 313.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Westerlund, H., Partti, H., & Karlsen, S. (2015). Teaching as improvisational experience: Student music teachers' reflections on learning during an intercultural project. *Research Studies in Music Education*, *37*(1), 55–75.

Zahavi, D. (2001). *Husserl and transcendental intersubjectivity: A response to the linguisticpragmatic critique* (E. Behnke, Trans.). Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.