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Master thesis

Come as you are! Approaches to practice in three community music activities in Western Norway

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Master in music education

Department of Music

Faculty of Education

2015

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Abstract

This master's thesis looks at the work of a selection of music teachers who choose to work in non-curricular music education settings providing open-access music making opportunities, defined by the author as community music activities, for various groups in the population. These activities may be said to have affordances beyond the aims of music learning, teaching, rehearsing and performance.

Following a brief introduction to the relatively new academic field of community music and its ethos of cultural democracy, the research question – **What approaches to practice can be found among professional leaders of three community music activities in Western Norway?** – is investigated through semi-structured qualitative research interviews with four informants, all of whom might be said to be pioneers in their respective fields.

Using thematic analysis of the empirical material the researcher identifies a number of approaches to practice. The approaches identified in this thesis are: offering a warm welcome, creating a path of no mistakes, unleashing latent resources (resource-oriented teaching methods), planning for the unknown, and facilitating listening skills and entrainment. The analysis also reveals findings on the role of the leader, approaches to quality, relational aspects in group music making, and the subject of music as a kind of language.

The informants' practice is analysed in the light of two works of community music theory. Lee Higgins' *Community Music* presents a theoretical framework that understands community music activities as acts of hospitality. Jane Bentley's *Tuning in: Towards a Grounded Theory of Integrative Musical Interaction* is a grounded theory in three parts, addressing the problem of musical disenfranchisement, identifying facilitation strategies used by leaders of participatory music making, and investigating the affordances of musical participation.

The author discusses the possible relevance of the approaches identified to more formal music education settings and looks at whether the term community music is a useful one in a Norwegian setting.

Key words

Community music, non-curricular music education, cultural democracy, hospitality, integrative musical interaction, facilitation, musical disenfranchisement, participatory music making, resource-oriented teaching methods, entrainment

Sammendrag

I denne oppgaven forsker jeg på tilnærminger til praksis hos musikkpedagoger som har valgt å jobbe utenfor formelle musikkundervisningsinstitusjoner. Informantene mine legger til rette for lavterskels musiseringstilbud for ulike grupper i befolkningen, såkalte *community music*-aktiviteter, der musikalske mål går hånd i hånd med utenommusikalske mål. Begrepet *community music* har vokst frem internasjonalt de siste tiårene med røtter i en kulturdemokratiseringstanke.

Følgende problemstilling er valgt: **Hvilke tilnærminger til praksis har profesjonelle ledere av tre community music-aktiviteter på Vestlandet?** Problemstillingen søkes belyst ved hjelp av halvstrukturerte kvalitative dybdeintervjuer med fire informanter som alle har gjort nybrottsarbeid på feltet.

Gjennom tematisk analyse av datamaterialet identifiserer jeg flere tilnærminger til praksis hos mine informanter. Kategoriene som kommer frem under analysen er som følger: å yte en varm velkomst, å legge til rette for samspill 'uten snubletråder', å forløse musikalske ressurser hos deltagerne (ressursorientert musikkpedagogikk), å planlegge for det ukjente, og å fasilitere lytteegenskaper og *entrainment* i musikalsk samspill. Analysen frembringer også funn om lederens rolle, tilnærminger til kvalitet i informantenes aktiviteter, det relasjonelle i den mellommenneskelige musikken, og musikk som språk.

Informantenes praksis sees i lys av to teoretikere innen community music-feltet. I boken *Community Music* konstruerer Lee Higgins en teoretisk forståelsesramme der *community music*-aktiviteter sees på som et utslag av gjestfrihet. I doktoravhandlingen sin *Tuning in: Towards a Grounded Theory of Integrative Musical Interaction* utvikler Jane Bentley en *grounded theory* om strategiene brukt av ledere av musikkgrupper der folk med svært ulike musiseringserfaring og –ferdigheter integreres i musikalsk samspill med andre.

Jeg diskuterer hvorvidt tilnærmingene hos mine informanter har overføringsverdi til musikkopplæring i mer formelle settinger og spør om *community music*-begrepet er nyttig i norsk sammenheng.

Stikkord

Community music, kulturdemokratisering, gjestfrihet, integrative musical interaction, ressursorientert musikkpedagogikk, facilitation, entrainment

Foreword

The process of writing a master's thesis has had me alternately excited, worried, despondent and elated. Mostly, though, I have felt a huge sense of gratitude for the opportunity to immerse myself in a project with so many interesting alleys to pursue. The past two years have been challenging, stretching, and energising.

Special thanks go to my supervisors, Tiri Bergesen Schei and Catharina Christophersen, for their support and encouragement, and to my informants Lars Kolstad, Ingunn Frøyland, Ole Hamre and Sissel Saue for sharing their thoughts and insights – and their warm personalities. A huge thank you to friend and former colleague Roger Martin for invaluable proofreading help and challenging discussions related to the research topic.

To Tonny, Anita, Thomas and Emily, who have tackled having a full-time student in the family for the past four years, with exams and deadlines overshadowing nearly everything else at times, and thesis writing taking priority over family holidays – thank you!

Singing has been a hugely important part of my life since as far back as I can remember. I doubt that I would have found the inspiration to complete this thesis without the knowledge that every Wednesday evening would bring me back to Bergen Domkor, under the inspiring leadership of Kjetil Almenning. The pursuit of excellence in choral music is as close to my heart as is the task of creating open-access music making for all members of the community. In my view these two musical discourses complement one another, and I am thankful that this choir has been my musical home for the past six years.

Last, but by no means least, my heartfelt thanks go to my parents, Paul and Olive Burbridge, for a lifetime of joyful music-making in the very safest of settings.

Felicity Burbridge Rinde

Bergen, 15 May 2015

Table of contents

Table of figures

1 Introduction

The starting point for my thesis was a desire to identify and investigate more closely examples of community music activities in Norway, which I initially defined as open-access music making and learning opportunities and non-curricular music instruction outside of formal educational settings. The term 'community music' as distinct from the more familiar 'community arts' was not one I had encountered until I came across upon a number of articles on the subject in the first year of my master's course. These articles showed me that there was already an established English term for the field in which I was interested. I was aware of a number of projects in Western Norway in which there appeared to be dual aims of music learning and other, paramusical objectives, explicit or implicit. These activities appeared to me to encompass more than simply musical instruction, and I was keen to explore why certain music teachers opt out of schools and municipally-funded arts schools as their workplace, sacrificing job security and a regular income for more entrepreneurial projects with music in the community.

In section 1.1 I present three complementary definitions of community music, but a general introduction to the term can be found in the following description compiled in 1989 at Making Connections, the first nationwide event in the UK bringing together people involved in community music activities. This description says that community music is about non-exclusive, community-led activities with professionals as resources who facilitate group activities that invite participants to full participation, where the main commitment is to further access to music for all, and process is often as important as product (Deane & Mullen, 2013, p. 27).

Since I am a student of music education, I have chosen to focus on community music activities led by trained music teachers. As I will go on to explain, not all community music activities necessarily have to do with music education. The activities investigated in this thesis may be regarded by some as being at the periphery of the field of music education. Certainly, the target groups for my informants' activities range from new-borns to residents of old people's homes, implying a lifelong perspective on music teaching and learning rather than the limited age group often seen as the core recipients of formalised music instruction as taught at teacher training institutions. It might also be said that the educational element in the activities I investigated is not the main, or only, objective. Through my presentation, analysis and discussion of the empirical data I also hope to investigate whether there is anything to be learned from community music approaches in more formal music education settings. I will return to this in chapter 7, where I will also discuss how broad a definition of music education is needed to encompass community music activities.

As I position these activities within the field of music education, albeit close to the intersection with other fields, it will be necessary to explore the boundaries between community music and other musical discourses. I will try to draw up demarcation lines between community music and formal/informal music education and community music therapy, respectively, and attempt to pinpoint where these fields may overlap in content, organisation and purpose, and see what defines them as discrete disciplines, as well as addressing the issue of possible competing territories between these different academic fields.

At this point it may be useful to state what my thesis does *not* include. There are many interesting avenues of research that I could have explored. One possible approach would have been to investigate what participants in open access music groups think about taking part in these activities; why they find it meaningful and what benefits they believe are to be derived from participation in activities of these kinds. There have been many such surveys recently, including a cross-national study on the perceived benefits of singing in community choirs (Clift et al., 2008). Recent Nordic research includes a comparative Icelandic study of the perceived benefits among older and younger mothers of taking part in music groups for parents and infants (Gudmundsdottir & Gudmundsdottir, 2010). In Norway too, there has been increasing interest in the health benefits of active participation in cultural activities, including Balsnes' study of the health benefits of singing in choirs (Balsnes, 2011). I will touch briefly on the affordances of musical participation, in terms of why it might be important to broaden access to music making, but otherwise this is outside the realm of this thesis.

I initially considered focusing on what motivates trained music teachers to work in this entrepreneurial way rather than within more formal music education settings. I was curious as to whether their interest had been sparked by theoretical writings, their teacher training or personal experience (good, bad or indifferent), and why they consider this kind of work important, but I decided this might not produce particularly useful new knowledge. As the term community music is relatively little used in Norway, I also considered a more general charting of community music activities in Norway, but I rejected this due to time limitations.

Before presenting my research question and my informants, I will now look briefly at 'community music' as a term and as an academic field, and ask what community music might mean in a Norwegian context. I will also try to position community music in relation to the closely related discourses of music education, music therapy and amateur music making. This does not imply that my thesis is primarily a theoretical treatise on community music. Quite the reverse, the major part of it is data-driven, based on my findings relating to my four informants' approaches to practice. Nevertheless, I feel it necessary to paint a larger picture of the

community music discourse as a backdrop to my research question.

1.1 Community music – contested concept and emergent academic field

In this section I explore definitions of the term community music, and try to sum up the essence of community music, as I understand it, based on three approaches in the research literature. Community music is something of a contested concept internationally. As Kari Veblen writes in the article *The Many Ways of Community Music*, it is impossible to sidestep the "inherent diversity of community music programmes, their situated natures and the fluidity of this global phenomenon" (2007, p. 5). Quite simply, the term community music is used to mean different things in different places. There appears to be a consensus on one point only – that there never can be a single definition of community music which will fit adequately in all settings. This stems partly from the very name 'community', since the concept of community naturally differs from place to place and from culture to culture. Most international forums tend towards identifying common traits in community music activities rather than trying to agree on a set definition. I have selected three descriptive definitions to present here.

The first definition comes from the book *Community Music Today* edited by Kari Veblen, Stephen Messenger, Marissa Silverman and David Elliott (2013). In chapter 1 Veblen writes that community music (CM) defies any authoritative definition, but is about the place of music in people's lives and the many ways in which music unites and marks communities:

> CM consists of, but is not limited to, informal music making, which includes teaching and learning dimensions. These activities weave their way through amateur and professional, formal and informal, institutional and non-institutional contexts. Projects may be occasional, one-time or ongoing. Thus the CM tapestry is local, personal, political, multifaceted, and, above all, fluid. (Veblen, 2013, p. 1).

This is to my mind a very inclusive, all-embracing description which provides a helpful introduction to the concept of community music. Veblen notes that the prevailing cultural perspectives of each locality colour individual visions of what community music is and can be, and that while some community music activities include marginalised or disadvantaged populations, others are designed to celebrate and entertain (Veblen, 2013, p. 4). The book is compiled of chapters by experts from around the world describing community music activities in their region. In the UK chapter of the book Kathryn Deane and Phil Mullen describe community music as creative activities with "deliberate social purposes" (2013, p. 25), and argue that community music has more to do with an attitude towards the arts than focusing on the product of the work. It is about professional musicians "carrying out interventions intended to have consequences other than musical" (Deane and Mullen, 2013, p. 26).

The second definition, by *Sound Sense*, the UK organisation for those defining themselves as community musicians, describes how community music is about further access to music for all. In 1994 *Sound Sense* attempted to define the field as follows: community music (1) involves musicians from various disciplines working with groups of people to develop active and creative participation in music, (2) is about putting equal opportunities into practice, (3) happens in all types of community and reflects the context in which it takes place (Veblen, 2013, p. 2).

The third description of community music is taken from the book *Community Music* by Lee Higgins (2012). Higgins writes that community music "involves an active intervention between a music leader and participants, with emphasis on people, participation, context, equality of opportunity, diversity" (Higgins, 2012, p. 4). It is based on cultural democracy, which challenges the dominant culture's articulation of the nature and purpose of music and advocates people's need to create culture actively rather than have culture made for them. It is also about cultural diversity. I summarise the traits of community music listed by Higgins in the figure below.

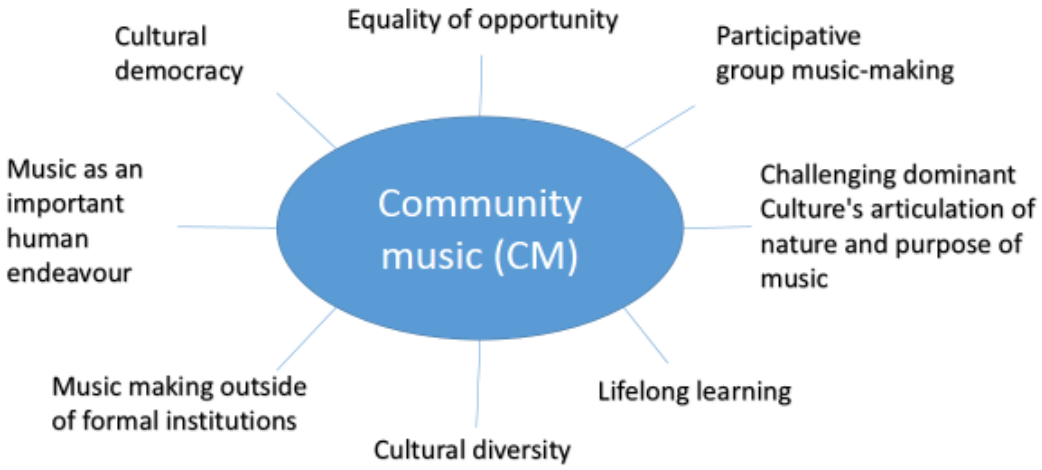

Figure 1: Characteristics of community music, based on Higgins (2012)

According to Higgins, participation in community music activities, understood as collaborative music making, may provide participants with an outlet for creativity, connectivity (a sense of belonging), agency, ownership, empowerment, finding their own voice and a chance to be seen as a contributor or producer rather than a receiver or consumer. Building on the philosophy of Derrida, Higgins sees the provision of community music activities as acts of 'hospitality' issued in the form of a welcome (2012, p. 133). I come back to this in section 2.2.2.

No introduction to community music, however brief, can avoid tracing the lines back to the

community arts movement that originated in the late 1960s/1970s in the UK and around the world. This movement was a form of political activism deeply committed to cultural democracy. In community arts professional artists collaborate at grass-roots level with people who might not otherwise engage actively in the arts, bringing people together to voice concerns through communal artistic processes in the hope of triggering change. In the 1980s the Greater London Arts Association defined community arts as follows:

> Community arts is an arts activity defined by its method of work and aims, rather than by its art form. It is an arts practice in which artists and communities work in creative art in order to articulate, engage and address the needs, experience and aspirations of those communities, and which has as its final aim the creation of a culture of equality. (Higgins, 2012, p. 36).

To summarise, community music is a term that encompasses many different things, and its very nature varies from context to context. My understanding of community music includes a wide range of activities and ideals, including, but not confined to, collaborative music making and work in marginalised communities and music making opportunities for individuals suffering from various types of social alienation. There are always social aims hand in hand with the musical aims in community music, some explicit, others more implicit. Since my thesis is within music education, I chose to focus on community music activities that err on the side of music teaching and learning (in environments with no set curricula).

My understanding has been coloured by the theoretical framework offered by Higgins (see section 2.2). In essence community music is about unleashing latent creative and musical potential in the population at large, by providing people of all ages in widely varying circumstances with opportunities for active participation in music making. It is based on a philosophy that all humans deserve the chance to create their own culture rather than being relegated to a role of passive consumer of culture created by others. Not least, it is founded on the conviction that active participation in creative activities can be beneficial to personal growth and wellbeing, and may produce positive effects in local communities and in some cases social change and empowerment, through letting the voice of various groups be heard through music.

1.2 Community music in a Norwegian context

This thesis grew from a desire to investigate community music in a Norwegian context. 'Community music' is not a term widely used in Norway, and it is one that often requires explanation to a Norwegian audience. Despite a growing body of academic research into community music internationally, there appears to be little research in the field in Norway.[1]

[1] This lack of research is underlined by the lack of a Norwegian translation of the term 'community music'.

There are some notable exceptions. Higgins mentions the contributions of Norwegian scholars Einar Solbu and Sidsel Karlsen to the International Journal of Community Music (Higgins, 2012, p. 80). In *Community Music Today* four Scandinavian researchers – Sidsel Karlsen, Heidi Westerlund, Heidi Partti and Einar Solbu – contributed a chapter on community music in the Nordic countries, complete with illustrations of practice. This represents one of few published writings on community music in the Nordic countries. They state that while the term community music is not widely used in this region, the field very definitely exists (Karlsen et al, 2013, p. 42).

Characteristic of their understanding of community music activities are: a wide range of musics, focus on lifelong learning, an open-access attitude, optional participation, and the fact that the act of participation is as important as the musical outcome (Karlsen et al, 2013, p. 42). So far this seems to fit with all three of the definitions presented above. However, the illustrations of practice they choose to present are the Ole Bull Academy (describing the shift from informal to formal learning environments in the transmission of folk music and the revitalisation of the Norwegian folk music scene); music festivals as an arena for music-related identity formation and situated learning processes; and self-expression and identity construction in a Finnish online music community. In other words, the authors of this chapter seem to have an understanding of community music that differs from the active participation in music making that I see as central to community music practice. Instead they have a strong emphasis on the perspective of knowledge creation. This difference in focus illustrates what widely disparate activities the term 'community music' can embrace. They also focus on opportunities for formal music education to learn from community music practices, which they appear to equate with innovative, participatory learning environments.

In this thesis I focus on community music practices in Norway with a high degree of active musical participation. In 2001 Åse Festervoll published a collection of accounts of the benefits of active cultural participation seen in a public health perspective, which show that there need be no tension between culture 'for the sake of culture' and cultural initiatives employed in the service of improving public health. Festervoll states that public health work is about participation, mastering skills and feeling in control of one's situation; that being proactive and taking initiative in cultural participation can combat feelings of powerlessness; and that in our society it is up to the individual to seek out activities that can have these positive effects (2001, p. 132). She goes on to point out that people with disabilities or health problems of various kinds often encounter obstacles to cultural participation – most cultural activities are designed for healthy, able-bodied people, and are not equally accessible to all (2001, p. 135).

Like the above authors, I felt confident that I had seen many examples of activities in Norway

that resounded with the descriptions in section 1.1, albeit in very different ways. These examples range from the unifying voice of various LBQT choirs, such as Oslo Fagottkor, which front gay rights while performing choral music to a high standard, and community choir Lyderhorn Songlag in Bergen, which in addition to its local concert programme has made a commitment to long-term funding of the Botshabelo orphanage in South Africa, to drum circles where people are invited to join in an hour of improvisatory group music making on a drop-in basis, and pre- and post-release prison music groups aimed at easing inmates' reintegration into society. A pamphlet published last year by Norsk kulturforum entitled *Godt lokalt kulturarbeid* documents a wide range of local cultural development projects across Norway, including many examples of typical community arts projects (Melien & Norsk kulturforum, 2014).

It is not only the way each culture sees and labels phenomena that varies enormously, affecting what are considered to be community music activities. The musical contexts also differ between countries, and throughout my research and my explorative discussions with music teachers and music therapists, I had to consider whether the musical contexts in the UK and Norway are too disparate to warrant simply adopting Higgins' definition in a Norwegian perspective. There are many differences between Norway and the UK when it comes to cultural policy, music education and developments in music therapy. I will look briefly at some of these factors here.

Whereas the UK has had a long elitist cultural tradition, and educational and cultural institutions have tended to favour fine arts, Norway emerged as a new nation state in the twentieth century and therefore had to invent its own national standards and cultural institutions. According to Duelund, the last century saw five main objectives of cultural policy in the Nordic countries: an enlightenment perspective, an element of liberty, an egalitarian element, social welfare aims and national aims (Duelund et al., 2003, p. 489). Against this background, elitist traditions in music exist, but widespread efforts have been made by the authorities across the Nordic region to make the arts accessible to all. Facilitating a rich cultural life for the entire population has had varying degrees of political and economic priority, but there has been a broad consensus for widening access to culture, and for state funding of amateur music activities and municipal arts schools, with the intention of ensuring equal access to the arts for all.[2] Norway has a strong tradition of amateur choirs and bands. Many of these ensembles clearly state their objectives as binding together local communities. Recent years have also seen a rise in interest in connections between active participation in cultural activities and promotion of public health, including government-funded initiatives.

[2] It is questionable whether these activities are as accessible to all in practice as intended, as pointed out in Bamford's report on arts and cultural education in Norway 2010/2011 (2012) and by two of my informants.

One substantial difference between Norway and the UK is the early and determined entrance of informal and praxial music learning in schools that took place throughout the Nordic region several decades ago. Whereas in the USA, school music has long been almost synonymous with band, choir and orchestra classes, and in the UK, classical Western music held its hegemony in the classroom until well into the 1990s, in Scandinavia democratisation of the arts and culture from the 1970s onwards quickly reformed music in schools, bringing in its wake a revolution of pop and rock-based practical music making and informal learning practices in the classroom.

Another notable factor is that Norway is a world leader in community music therapy, thanks to the pioneering work in community music therapy at the GAMUT department of the University of Bergen. In Even Ruud's foreword to *Community Music Therapy* he explains how community music therapy challenges traditional boundaries and definitions of music therapy, and asks whether music therapy "in aligning with other practices of music making, could vitalise the healing, empowering, self-regulatory functions of music. Thus music therapy could reclaim music back to the everyday life, as a central force in humanizing the culture" (Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004, p. 14). This is close to the aims of many community musicians, and it may be noted that many community music projects in the UK might be regarded as the domain of community music therapy here in Norway. I will return to this overlap in professional 'territories' in section 1.3.

While I have stated that community music has received relatively little attention in Norway, the fact that Lee Higgins was invited to hold a keynote speech at the inaugural conference of the Centre for Educational Research in Music (CERM) at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo in November 2014 suggests a significant placing of community music on the map of music education research in Norway. It will be interesting to see what this could lead on to.

1.3 Boundaries and territories

According to Higgins, community music lies at the intersection between music education, music therapy and applied ethnomusicology, and he refers to those working in this area as 'boundary walkers', a term he borrows from Kushner, Walker and Tarr (2001, p. 4 in Higgins, 2012, p. 6) as I will explain in section 2.2.1. In order to plant my thesis firmly within music education, I feel it necessary to explore where the boundaries go between community music and community music therapy, music education, and amateur music making, respectively.

A helpful starting point in this respect may be found in the introductory chapter to MacDonald, Kreutz and Mitchell's *Music, Health and Wellbeing*, where the authors include a diagrammatic representation of the partially overlapping discourses they consider to be involved in the

conceptual framework of music health and wellbeing: music education, music therapy, community music, and everyday uses of music (2012, p. 8).

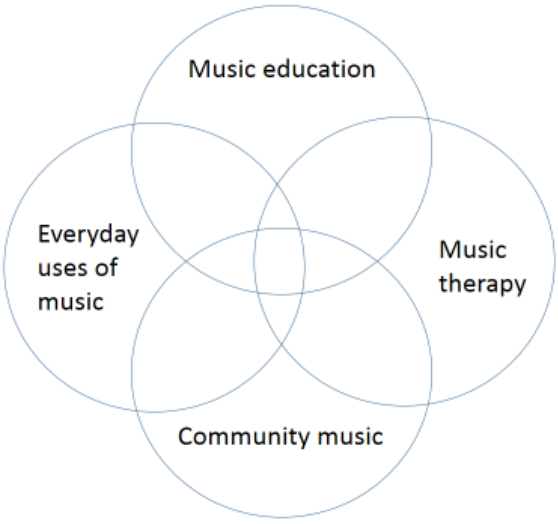

Figure 2: Overlapping musical discourses, based on MacDonald, Kreutz and Mitchell (2012)

Community music and music therapy

I will start by considering the overlap between music therapy and community music. There is a marked similarity between certain community music activities and some types of music therapy. All academic fields are in a constant state of development, which can sometimes lead to a field subdividing, while at other times two related fields may develop in such a similar direction that a certain convergence takes place between activities in what were originally two discrete discourses (Schei, Espeland & Stige, 2013). To a certain extent this may describe what has happened in the overlap between some areas of non-curricular music education and community music therapy. A number of activities in Norway, such as pensioners' choirs, are led along very similar lines by music therapists and music teachers. Likewise, one of my music teacher informants works with residents of dementia wings in old people's homes and groups of adults with learning disabilities, two areas increasingly served by community music therapists working in group sessions rather than solely in one-to-one clinical relationships.

In the early days of community music therapy, UK music therapy scholar Gary Ansdell (2002) wrote about the distinction between community music and community music therapy in a British setting. He describes how two professions arose in Britain in the twentieth century in the areas of music and health: clinically-based music therapy, whose practice became increasingly individual, and workshop-based community music, whose practice remained social. As music therapy moved out of individual, clinical settings, the line between the two fields became blurred:

> What makes community music therapy different from community music? […] Music therapists have built up a body of experience and expertise in working with pathology and its manifestations in the service of giving people access to musicing. This skill is relevant across the individual-communal continuum. But equally, the skills and knowledge community musicians have generated over the years in the areas of their expertise cannot but enrich music therapy. Now is the time for dialogue. (Ansdell, 2002).[3]

Twelve years later at the British Association for Music Therapy conference in Birmingham in February 2014 this dialogue was well underway, and a panel discussion on *Music, community and wellbeing: Community music and music therapy perspectives* contributed to cementing the links between the two professions (email correspondence, Kathryn Deane, 30.09.14).

A delegate at the Grieg Research School in Bergen in November 2014 asked Professor Stige what distinguishes similar activities as belonging to the field of music education on the one hand or to community music therapy on the other. Whilst Stige agreed that there certainly could be an overlap in some cases, his answer was to point out that in (community) music therapy, the therapist is obliged to think about specific proposed clinical outcomes of a therapeutic intervention, whereas in community music activities, while there may well be secondary effects, specific steps are not taken to achieve specific outcomes.

I believe it is necessary to develop interdisciplinary awareness and discuss the boundaries between related disciplines, for political, professional and practical reasons. Otherwise it could be difficult to know which professional background is 'entitled' to enter the field. Take for instance the question of music in old people's homes, an issue receiving attention in Norway recently. Is this a job for musicians, music therapists, music teachers or nursing staff? Just as music therapists in Norway have entered the music education arena in schools/arts schools, there may be a case for the use of music teachers in some areas of music, health and well-being. This does not mean that each profession needs to defend its territory. As Stige writes*:*

> This does not suggest, however, that music therapists have monopoly on working with music, health, and wellbeing. Many different music activities could be experienced as therapeutic and could promote health in various ways. There are some shared territories, then, and possibilities for developing shared frameworks across practices and disciplines should be explored. (Stige, 2012, p. 184).

Community music and music education

Kathryn Deane at Sound Sense, the organisation for community musicians in the UK, describes the relationship between community music and music therapy and informal learning in music education as follows: "Community music activities are often 'educative', but not education, 'therapeutic', but not therapy" (email correspondence, Kathryn Deane, 30.09.14).

[3] No page numbers in this online journal.

The distance appears to be closing between community music and music education in the UK. While community musicians there, coming as they did from the political activism of the community arts movement, used to be unwilling to be regarded as music educators, recent developments have taken the field closer to the established educational settings they historically rebelled against, and there are now community music degree programmes, and focus on what community music practices have in common with informal music education practices. As I will show in section 7.2.4, Higgins finds strong echoes of community music practices in informal music education projects.

Community music and amateur music making

Community music is about making music widely available to all who would like to take part. What is the difference then between amateur music making and community music activities? Community musicians see music as a socially embedded and socially engaged practice, and community musicians are concerned with participants' musical and personal development. According to Higgins, participation in community music settings is encouraged irrespective of skill or talent, often in groups with some collective identity, and the setting is often developed to provide musical opportunities for people who have little other opportunity, for economic or social reasons, to participate in the arts (2012, p. 37).

In addition, I would suggest that the difference lies in intentionality – what is the purpose of the music making? Is it rehearsing for public performance, or the pursuit of excellence? Or is it recognition of the importance of musicality as a human attribute? "To take part in a music act is of central importance to our very humanness" wrote Christopher Small in *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, a book that emphasises music not as a thing but as "an activity, something people do", invested with human relationships (1998, p. 8).

It has been my intention in these opening sections to introduce the field of community music, and through an investigation of definitions and its relation to other musical discourses, to place community music within the wider field of music education. Before presenting my research question, I shall now look at my own positionality in relation to my chosen research topic.

1.4 Reflexivity and positionality

Every qualitative researcher needs to address issues of reflexivity and subjectivity, and my situation requires a high degree of each. I was born and brought up in the UK and received my initial musical training there, but have lived and worked as a music teacher in Norway for many years. My involvement with participatory music making, both as a leader and participant, necessitates a conscious focus on my pre-knowledge and preconceived ideas about this field.

Denscombe writes about the need to bracket oneself off in the research process, and to enter the process with "a minimum reliance on the researcher's own beliefs, expectations and pre-dispositions about the phenomenon under investigation" (2007, p. 81). This process is sometimes described as taking on the role of a stranger. To this end the researcher needs to state her own background and to be open about the choices she has made, and what informed these choices.

The most obvious choice is the choice of topic. For me, active making music, alone and with others, is a hugely life-affirming and meaningful activity, and I assumed that the same is so, or could be so, for other people too. Much of the prescribed reading on the master's course showed that this is borne out by research. I found myself wondering why so many adults claim that they cannot sing or simply are not musical, and how this issue may be addressed by music educators.

As early as 1973 John Blacking wrote about music as a universal human attribute, probing the role of music in our society and the social and musical factors that might determine the growth or atrophy of musical abilities. Blacking asked whether our musical upbringing is attuned primarily to cooperation or to competition and suggested that latent musicality not infrequently goes unnoticed, and is by no means always given the necessary encouragement to develop and mature (1973, p. 44).

I felt drawn to this theme, and chose to write my thesis on a subject that might help address one facet of this issue. "The functions of music in society may be the decisive factors promoting or inhibiting latent musical ability, as well as affecting the choice of cultural concepts and materials with which to compose music." (Blacking, 1973, p. 35). We know that music plays an important role in many people's lives, whether we pursue active musical pathways in our lives (Finnegan, 1989) or make conscious use of music to regulate our emotional lives (DeNora, 2000). Have we assigned the larger part of the population to a passive role as consumers of music and culture, rather than producers? To my mind there is an ethical dimension to this question, to which I shall return in section 3.5.2.

I needed to be sure that I was not using this project simply to look for confirmation of my pre-conceptions. One way I tried to prevent this was by not choosing informants who led activities too close to my own experience. For instance, I initially considered contacting the director of the *Alle kan synge-kor* in Oslo (open-access choir courses targeted at adults who believe they cannot sing). However, since I have worked with community choirs for many years, I feared that it might be too difficult to set aside my pre-conceived ideas about what I might find.

While it is true that I have also led parent/child music groups and been a participant in community drumming circles, neither of these settings has been my main occupation, and I felt

that with the guidance of my supervisor, I could achieve the necessary academic distance to these activities. A related danger I have tried to be aware of throughout the process, was that of identifying too strongly with my informants' ideas and points of view (see section 8.2).

1.5 Research question

This thesis documents my investigation of approaches to practice in three specific musical activities in the region around Bergen that I have chosen to define as community music activities.

My research question is: **What approaches to practice can be found among professional leaders of three community music activities in Western Norway?**

For the sake of clarity, I will break down my research questions into its component parts here. 'Approaches to practice' is taken to include how my informants work, and their thoughts about how they work. The wording 'professional leaders' was chosen to show that, unlike in the UK, where community musicians may have a variety of professional backgrounds or indeed no formal training, I have chosen trained music teachers as my informants. I have already accounted for my understanding of the term 'community music' in sections 1.1 and 1.2. The selection of informants was restricted to two counties in Western Norway for practical reasons (time restraints and cost of travel).

My working research question at the beginning of the year was along the lines of: What might be considered community music activities in Western Norway, and how do leaders of three community music activities in the region view their role? This two-part research question gradually became more focused as the data collection progressed and I considered soberly what I had the data to be able to answer.

The analysis and discussion will look at my findings in the light of community music theory. In chapter 7 I go on to ask what, if anything, can be learned from these community music practices in the context of formal music education.

1.6 Thesis design

My thesis design is intended to reflect the research process, although this was far from as linear or clear-cut as may appear in the end product. Here is a guide to the contents of each chapter.

In this opening chapter I have introduced the topic from which my research question arose and positioned my research topic within the field of music education. I have presented three descriptive definitions of community music, investigated what the term may mean in a Norwegian setting, and looked at the need to draw up boundaries between community music and related fields. This introduction leads up to the presentation of my research question in

section 1.5. Since this thesis is weighted towards the empirical data, I have chosen to present my four informants in the opening chapter, placing them firmly in the foreground.

In chapter 2 I present my theoretical basis: Lee Higgins' (2012) theoretical framework for the emergent academic field of community music and approaches to practice, and Jane Bentley's (2011) grounded theory of community music practice, with emphasis on facilitation strategies.

In chapter 3 I describe the methodology used to answer the research question, and decisions made during the process, for instance relating to the selection of informants and method of analysis. This chapter also describes various ethical considerations I have had to take in my research work, both in term of formal requirements (including decisions relating to the issue of anonymity of my informants and data protection) and the more general ethical question of how to provide everyone with the means to realise their inner musician.

In chapters 4, 5 and 6 I present my empirical data and analysis, starting with four sketches from my observation to serve as illustrations of my informants' practice.[4] Each of these three chapters is structured around a number of categories that emerged as I analysed the data in the light of community music theory. Chapter 4 contains an introduction to the empirical data (including four observation sketches) and analysis, and to my informants' role as leaders. Chapter 5 presents my analysis of specific pedagogical strategies used by my informants. Chapter 6 looks at more overarching issues in their approaches to practice. Together these three chapters form a three-part presentation and systematisation of my findings, and they lead on to the discussion in chapter 7. This being the case, I have chosen not to include conclusions at the end of each of these three chapters, but throughout these chapters I attempt to show briefly how each of the categories identified is underpinned by the theoretical basis in chapter 2.

In chapter 7 I ask what relevance my findings and interpretation may have for the field of music education research in Norway, with particular emphasis on whether the approaches identified may be useful within formal music education in schools.

In chapter 8 I present a concise summary of my findings, offer some reflections on the process I have been through, and suggest possible ways forward for further research.

1.7 Presentation of informants

This thesis will to a large extent be about my four informants. I choose to introduce them here in the opening chapter as I believe it will be helpful for the reader to have a little background knowledge of their activities when reading the theoretical basis in chapter 2. All four have

[4] Readers wholly unfamiliar with the field of community music may wish to jump to the observation sketches in section 4.1 before reading the theory chapter, to provide practical points of reference for understanding the theory.

agreed to being included in this thesis by name, and the use of their full names has been approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (see section 3.5.1 for details).

1.7.1 Lars Kolstad, drum circles

Lars Kolstad is a trained music teacher who runs improvisatory music sessions on African drums and non-tuned percussion in many settings, from kindergartens,[5] teacher training college and workplaces to victim support groups and old people's homes. He also runs drop-in community drum circles, a form of improvisatory participatory music making for all age groups. The following description can be found on his website:

> What is a drum circle? A drum circle is a group of people who make rhythmic improvisatory music together in an informal and playful manner. No previous drumming experience is necessary – there are no wrong notes here! We draw on our innate sense of rhythm while playing drums and percussion instruments to make our very own unique kind of music. Available for school classes, kindergartens, workplaces, patient groups, etc. (TROM, 2015, my translation).

His slogan 'Drum as you are!' expresses his commitment to open-access music with no barriers to participation on the basis of ability or previous musical experience.

Lars is concerned with unleashing the innate potential for music making in every one of us, and facilitating 'safe' surroundings for experimenting with our sense of rhythm and inborn need to express ourselves creatively. He believes that we all have huge, often untapped creative resources which can be released through musical interaction with others, and he is keen to promote active music making as a tool for dealing with our day-to-day lives.

For the purposes of this research project I observed Lars leading two different kinds of activities. The first was group music sessions with three to five year olds in a kindergarten which he visited for one morning a week three weeks in a row. The second was a visit to the dementia wing of an old people's home to run a drum circle with residents and staff there. The focus in both activities is on creating ad hoc music there and then.

1.7.2 Ingunn Frøyland, parent/infant music groups

Ingunn Frøyland is a trained musician and music teacher working mainly at two municipal arts schools, where she runs parent/child music groups for children aged 0 to 4 years old, and music and movement classes with elements of literature and drama for preschool children (5 to 6 year olds). Her parent/infant groups for the under ones are divided into three age groups. The courses for the youngest babies (0 to 5 months) are called *Early Interplay*, and are aimed

[5] Kindergarten in Norway refers to combined day care and pre-school for 1 to 6 year olds. Most children in this age range attend kindergarten five full days a week.

specifically at strengthening parent/infant bonding through the use of music, singing, dancing, nursery rhymes and baby massage, which is an integral part of the course. She runs similar groups at a residential centre run by child welfare services for families with young children where for various reasons the parents need extra help in learning to care for their children. Her courses for older babies and toddlers with parents also build on the idea of bonding through musical activities, while her groups for pre-schoolers provide a basic music education through singing, dancing and storytelling. Her primary task in all these groups is to make music, but in her baby groups especially she is concerned with modelling how parents can learn to bond with and take care of their infants within the framework of active music making.

Ingunn is a longstanding member of *Musikk fra livets begynnelse* (MFLB), the Norwegian association for early years music making. Ingunn has served on the board of this association for many years, as well as attending dozens of short courses organised by MFLB for leaders of early years music groups. The following excerpt from the MFLB website sums up the basic philosophy of the association:

> MFLB is a national association for music making with children aged 0 to 6, committed to promoting the use of singing and playing in interaction between adults and children. All over the world, for centuries, people have made joyful use of singing and playing in their everyday lives and at times of celebration. Making music together provides opportunities for meaningful interaction with others and precious moments together. […] Music is an important means of communication. Before we learn to speak, we can express ourselves through the language of music. Music is movement, sound, rhythm, atmosphere and expressivity. Singing strengthens the all-important close bonds between parent and child. Lullabies at bedtime can calm both adult and child alike. Music can also be used to channel joy or to affirm difficult emotions. […] Musicality is a basic human attribute. The ability to experience music and express oneself through music is an innate part of being human. It is very clear that small children react positively to their parents and other caregivers singing. Musical interaction strengthens the close bond between adult and child. (Musikk fra livets begynnelse, 2015, my translation).

For the purpose of this project I observed Ingunn leading parent/infant music groups with babies under one year old, including her *Early Interplay* course.

1.7.3 Ole Hamre and Sissel Saue, Fargespill multicultural performances

My final two informants, Sissel Saue and Ole Hamre, co-founded the *Fargespill* project over ten years ago. Sissel is a trained pre-school teacher with music teaching qualifications, while Ole is a professional percussionist. Together with a professional choreographer they run *Fargespill*, a music and dance group for immigrant children and young people which puts on high-profile professional performances based on the cultural heritage of the participants. *Fargespill* started up as a one-off performance at the invitation of the Bergen International

Festival in 2004, but quickly developed into a year-round cultural meeting point for youngsters from many cultures interested in singing, dancing and performing. The majority of the participants are first-generation immigrants to Norway, including refugees recently arrived in Norway after fleeing persecution or civil conflict in their native countries. Through Nygård school where newly arrived immigrants in the Bergen area learn Norwegian intensively before transferring to local schools, *Fargespill* has had access to new groups of young immigrants throughout the past ten years. A number of Norwegian children and teenagers also belong to the group. The participants meet each week to make music together, based on snatches of songs and dances from their countries of origin, which they teach to the other participants with the help of the leaders. This forms the raw material out of which Sissel, Ole and the choreographer put together a spectacular multicultural show in collaboration with the participants, which sells out performances on professional stages around Norway.

Fargespill's statutes state that *Fargespill* has two sets of objectives: to be an outlet for cultural activity, and to promote interaction and understanding between different ethnic and religious groups in society (Fargespill, n.d., my translation). This is an explicit example of musical objectives going hand in hand with paramusical objectives, as discussed in section 1.1. The *Fargespill* website proclaims a positive view of cultural diversity:

> *Fargespill* is far more than a performance. *Fargespill* is a deep-rooted conviction that we humans can meet one another as equals, despite coming from extremely disparate cultures. *Fargespill* is that rarest of things – a warm, warm welcome! (Fargespill, n.d., my translation).

Ole and Sissel's aim is to unleash the huge latent cultural and artistic potential waiting to be discovered throughout the multicultural society Norway has become. At the same time they are keen to make the participants aware of the rich artistic resources they have within them, and raise participants' consciousness about the impact they can have on society's attitudes to immigration.

In the *Fargespill* book they make it clear that *Fargespill* is an artistic project with full focus on what participants can contribute to the project, rather than a social project focused on what *Fargespill* can offer them (Hamre et al., 2011, p. 12). The process is described as an exchange of gifts between the participants and the leaders, where the participants contribute the raw materials, while the leaders contribute a professional framework round the project. The *Fargespill* process consists of two distinct phases: the initial phase of making ad hoc music together based on the contributions of each person, and the second phase of rehearsing some of this material for public performance. In the course of my research I observed Sissel and Ole primarily in the second phase, working towards public performances.

2 Theoretical basis

2.1 Introduction to choice of theory

I have chosen two works as my theoretical basis. Both Higgins and Bentley have written in depth about community music, but in very different ways, giving me a firm foundation for my research. Higgins' *Community Music* (2012) represents one of the first scholarly attempts internationally to draw up a theoretical framework for the academic field of community music, as well as tracing its history and giving illustrations of practice. The book is theoretically grounded, but Part II deals with approaches to community music in philosophical and practical terms. This work was my first encounter with community music and provided the starting point for my choice of topic: after reading it I began to look for articles on community music in Norway and could find almost none, so there appeared to be a knowledge gap in the field.

Bentley's PhD thesis *Tuning in: Towards a Grounded Theory of Integrative Musical Interaction* (2011) is a grounded theory of specific pedagogical strategies in musical processes in participatory music making [6], and is thus more centred on practice. I came across her work in my explorative reading during the autumn. Her description of musical disenfranchisement resounded with the issue of community music and cultural democracy described by Higgins, and her detailed descriptions of facilitation strategies seemed highly relevant to my research question that had almost found its final form by that stage.

I have chosen to account for Higgins and Bentley's theory in some detail, since both are relatively new, and Bentley's work in particular is probably unfamiliar to most readers. Reference is also made in the thesis without detailed explanation to more established music education theory, particularly Christopher Small's *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (1998) to which Higgins and Bentley both refer, as this theory is assumed to be familiar to the reader. Small's theory is not included in this theory chapter, as it is less directly related to my research question.

There are many other sources of theory that could have been interesting to draw into this thesis, including theories of musicality, and of health musicking, but the decision on what to include was based on which theory would provide the most relevant input in relation to my empirical data and research question: What approaches to practice can be found among professional leaders of three community music activities in Western Norway? I shall begin with Higgins, who writes more generally and philosophically about approaches to practice in community

[6] Bentley uses the term 'participatory', where others sometimes use the term 'participative'. In this thesis the two are used synonymously.

music, then move on to the more specific strategies identified by Bentley.

2.2 Higgins: Community Music

> As an act of unconditional hospitality, community music is a promise of the welcome, a commitment to a "community without unity", a chance to say "yes" without discrimination against any potential music participant. (Higgins, 2012, p. 142).

One of Higgins' four objectives in *Community Music* is to develop conceptual approaches for describing and analysing community music practices. It is this part of his theory which is most relevant to my research question, and I have selected those parts that I feel add something to my understanding of my informants' approaches to practice. The theory presented here is therefore almost entirely from Part II of the book, entitled Interventions and counterparts. I have chosen to concentrate on the following themes: characteristics of community musicians, community music as acts of hospitality, the music workshop, facilitation, and safety without safety, as each finds echoes in my empirical material. I will start by presenting some of Higgins' statements about characteristic traits of those who choose to lead community music activities.

2.2.1 Characteristics of community musicians

This is the obvious starting point for my presentation of Higgins' theory, since my thesis investigates the practice of four leaders of what I chose to see as community music activities. Higgins says that leaders of community music, or community musicians as he calls them, tend to have the following characteristics in common. They are concerned with the role of music in the everyday lives of people and are committed to making music-making environments accessible to all those who wish to participate. They acknowledge participants' social and personal growth to be as important as their musical growth. They see participants as contributors rather than receivers, and tend to be "radically opposed to the notion that some humans are born musically talented while others are consigned to consumerism" (2012, p. 168).

This emphasis on people being enabled to create culture for themselves that arose with the community arts movement (see section 1.1) challenged the hegemonic position held by fine arts in Western culture for so long. For community musicians, music is understood first and foremost as a human activity, a place to find your voice and make friends, rather than as works of art. In this we note a strong echo of Small's concept of *musicking* with its rejection of the reification of music and its emphasis on music as something people do (Small, 1998, p. 2).

Higgins uses the term 'boundary walkers' to describe how community musicians inhabit the outer edges of the field of music education, pushing the boundaries ever wider to include those who have not traditionally had opportunities to take an active part in creating their own culture.

Higgins believes that this peripheral position gives community musicians a position of strength from which to question and challenge dominant forms of practice (2012, p. 6). These boundary walkers are concerned with cultural democracy and believe that everybody has the right and ability to create and enjoy their own music, whatever their background, age or level of musical training. In extension of this, community musicians are committed to lifelong musical learning, and can be found working with all age groups from cradle to retirement homes. Wherever they work, community musicians practise an open-door policy, extending a warm invitation and welcome to strangers, never knowing where this may lead. In the next section we will see how this warm welcome is described in Higgins' theoretical framework as an act of hospitality.

2.2.2 Community music as acts of hospitality

This central theme in Higgins' theory informs one of the core categories of analysis in chapter 5. Higgins understands the 'community' in community music as hospitality. Acts of hospitality run deeply through community music, he says, and it is first and foremost this that distinguishes community music as a distinct form of musical discourse. He proffers a postmodern understanding of 'community' as something organic and pluralistic, rather than a gated, exclusive group consensus. This is captured in the term 'community without unity', emphasising as it does the importance of diversity in communal relationships (2012, p. 136).

Community musicians aim to stimulate active participation and enable a sense of voice through offering a welcome, which Higgins sees as an ethical action towards a relationship with another.

> The open invitation can become a genuine human expression and an ethical moment that community musicians generate. This can result in an experience of connectivity among participants, and between participants and the music they make and listen to. (2012, p. 141).

Many community music projects attempt to combat the modern challenge of social exclusion – the 'welcome sign' is always lit, dismantling perceived barriers to cultural participation.

> As a gesture towards another, the welcome becomes a preparation for the incoming of the potential participant. […] In this context, the welcome of the community musician refutes the closure inherent within notions of the gated community, enclaves that contain restrictive perimeters that are tightly controlled and which monitor participants' entrances and exits. (2012, p. 137).

Higgins borrows the notion of hospitality from Algerian-born French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). Derrida's hospitality, as described by Higgins, is based on an open invitation and an unconditional welcome. The open invitation means that whoever would like to join in, can, while the unconditional welcome means that everyone can come as they are and contribute whatever skills they have, thereby influencing the direction the group takes on its communal musical journey.

Figure 3: Derrida's hospitality as explained by Higgins (2012)

While Derrida argued that unconditional hospitality is an impossibility, it is something approaching this that community musicians aim for. However, Higgins reminds us that a responsible leader does not relinquish all control over the workshop space, but instead oscillates between conditional and unconditional hospitality (2012, p. 161). There are few expectations to the musical product or process, and the group journeys towards an unknown future. "In short, unconditional hospitality embraces a future that will surprise and shatter predetermined horizons." (2012, p. 140). For Derrida 'unconditional' implied violence towards that which is stable, fixed and comfortable, implying a potential threat to any prior group identity as newcomers are welcomed – as new people come and go, the equilibrium of a group changes. Likewise, Higgins says the welcome "is a challenge to those who are already participants because you must be ready to be hospitable yourself to provide a space for more" (2012, p. 143).

Following this philosophical introduction to the role of the community musician, I will now move on to what Higgins writes about two key strategic approaches in community music, notably music workshops as events, and facilitation.

2.2.3 Key strategies: The music workshop and facilitation

My research question is about approaches to practice, and these two concepts from Higgins' theory are therefore highly relevant to my research project, as they describe central strategies in leading community music activities. Higgins describes the music workshop as a site for experimentation, creativity and group work, a democratic space favourable to creative music making, and a space that is deterritorialised to "foster and harness human desires for musicking" (2012, p. 144). He notes that Small's notion of musicking is particularly relevant in community music contexts because of its focus on the relationships among those who take part in musical events, or as Higgins terms it, the social dimension of the face-to-face encounter. He calls the workshop an event, defined as a "singular, disruptable happening that challenges with intention

to transform" with an unpredictable outcome, and uses an example of group songwriting workshops in local communities affected by natural disasters to show how such events can help rebuild a sense of community and unite groups by giving a voice to local causes (2012, p. 146).

The second strategy is facilitation. The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines a facilitator as "one that helps to bring about an outcome by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision".[7] Higgins gives the following description of facilitation in a community music context: "Facilitation is understood as a process that enables participants' creative energy to flow, develop, and grow through pathways specific to individuals and the groups in which they are working" (2012, p. 148). He describes facilitation of community music activities as a venture into the unknown, with an unpredictable musical outcome, in which the facilitator encourages open dialogue among the participants, celebrating all types of music and all types of participation. Facilitation grew in many fields in the second half of the twentieth century. Higgins traces participatory methodologies back to Dewey and Montessori, with special mention of Paulo Friere, who championed the concept of lifelong learning not governed by set curricula, which echoes many of the traits of community music (2012, p. 147).

According to Higgins, the facilitator needs to negotiate a balance between being *prepared and able to lead* the group on the one hand, and being *prepared but able to hold back* on the other. This is not a question of surrendering responsibility, but of gradually relinquishing control. He likens the role of facilitator to that of a parent who must provide safe boundaries and clear instruction for her children while young, but as they mature the parent must gradually release the reigns and allow her offspring to develop autonomy, while still making sensitive offers of support, guidance, advice and comfort as appropriate (2012, p. 149). Facilitating is about being attuned to the group and being able to offer an appropriate response in any situation.

Higgins notes certain key differences between traditional music teaching and facilitation of group music making, likening teaching to *controlling* and facilitating to *leading*. There is a fine line between the two, he says, yet they can generate very different group outcomes and experiences. Whereas traditional top-down conducting and directing tends to state certain expectations that must be met in pursuit of specific goals, facilitators trust in and submit to the ability and inventiveness of others and therefore to a large extent hand over control of the music making to the group. In formal teaching settings there is a strong sense of a beginning, a middle and an end towards a predetermined destination, whereas a facilitated musical journey starts from a given starting point and proceeds as a venture into the unknown with an unpredictable

[7] Merriam-Webster English Dictionary. Available from: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/facilitator.

musical outcome (2012, p. 148). I note that this does not imply any criticism of formal musical education practices; they are simply two different musical discourses.

2.2.4 Safety without safety

Rather than attempting to present the whole of Higgins' theory here, I have selected the parts most relevant to my empirical data and research question. This last concept of 'safety without safety' emphasises the importance of musical process rather than musical product, a theme that we will see in chapters 4, 5 and 6 crept up regularly throughout the interviews.

For a workshop to generate an atmosphere conducive to creativity, says Higgins, the facilitator must create a safe space for musical conversation, negotiation, inventiveness and play, where everyone can take part at their own level (2012, p. 150). Higgins introduces the notion of 'safety without safety' to denote a space with clear enough boundaries to set this process rolling, but few enough restraints to prevent participants feeling hampered in their musical experimentation. Rather than viewing music as polished performance or a completed product, the emphasis is on music as process, participation and play. This can liberate participants from a range of musical traditions from past parameters that have restricted their sense of free musical play, says Higgins.

> In order to encourage and maintain a frame of mind that enables both participants and facilitator to venture into new territories, judgements tied to old existing definitions of what is viewed as acceptable in each context must be suspended. If the facilitator can create a safe climate for risk taking, then this may release the group, or individual, to try the untried. In these instances "failures" are celebrated and community music becomes, as community musician Martin Milner (2007) suggests, "a path of no mistakes": experiences that are not to be understood as devastating but as important moments of learning within the creative process.” (Higgins, 2012, p. 151).

Higgins binds together the above strategies in an overarching approach to leading community music activities he calls the act of 'gift giving'. The community musician gives of her time, encouragement, empathy, care and skills to create quality experiences for the participants. At the same time Higgins reminds us that according to gift theory, the giving of a gift is rarely entirely free of self-interest, systems of debt or expectations of reciprocity (2012, p. 152). He quotes Derrida who described the circularity inherent in the exchange of gifts: the giving of a gift binds the receiver to a debt of gratitude and enhances the social role of the giver. Higgins warns facilitators to be aware of the circular economy of gift giving and to try to create situations that are beyond debt (2012, p. 153). Otherwise, he says, the gift can become a gift of poison, and the workshop can prove a disappointment, making false claims, raising hopes, perhaps even reinforcing a participant's belief in their lack of musicality.

I will now turn to the Bentley's theory of integrative musical interaction.

2.3 Bentley's Tuning in: Towards a grounded theory of integrative musical interaction

Bentley's PhD thesis *Tuning in: Towards a Grounded Theory of Integrative Musical Interaction* investigates participatory musical practices that are integrative of ability, engaged in primarily for the intrinsic experience of making music, and where musical development is based on nurturing the relational awareness between players (Bentley, 2011, p. ix). The practices investigated are community drum circles, congregational singing in the ecumenical Christian Iona Community that welcomes visitors from all over the world on retreats and week-long residential visits, and instrumental improvisation workshops for people of a wide range of musical experience run by the *Music for People* organisation. Through semi-structured interviews and participant observation Bentley identified pedagogical strategies used in these activities and developed a grounded theory in which she conceptualises these activities as a distinct musical practice termed 'integrative musical interaction'. In her theory Bentley develops the core category of tuning in, a process involving a series of facilitation strategies in group music making with participants with widely differing levels of musical experience.

The grounded theory is divided into three parts. The first part relates to the issue of musical disenfranchisement – a process which can result in people thinking of themselves as being non-musical. The second part details facilitation strategies that she terms integrative musical interaction (IMI), whereby people of all levels of musical experience can be integrated into successful music making with others. The third part examines the outcomes and affordances of the IMI process, i.e. the potential benefits of participatory musical activities. Whilst it is particularly the second part that might appear directly relevant to my research question, the three parts of the theory are closely interlinked, and all three proved to be of relevance in my understanding of the empirical data and are therefore included here.

Bentley is a keen advocate of widened access to musical participation. As she writes:

> Widening access to musical participation is an issue of growing importance, in part due to the increasing interest being shown in the area of music and wellbeing. […] there is now an expansion of both research interest and practical application concerning the potential benefits of music making that could be made available to wider parts of the population. (Bentley, 2011, p. 4).

She notes that there is little academic literature on active musical participation by *non-specialists* outside the main fields of performance, education or therapy. Studies on musical participation tend to be concerned with participants who, though amateurs, have a fairly high degree of musical experience. Bentley's thesis thus represents a new contribution to the field and an important theoretical background for my own study of participatory musical activities.

Bentley's informants were more concerned with raising awareness of the relationships within the group than with teaching musical technique. This points to a different approach from more conventional forms of participation such as learning, rehearsing or performing music (2011, p. 9). Bentley points out that participatory music activities are often engaged in for the service of broader aims, such as building group relationships, communication, support, confidence and listening skills (2011, p. 13). I will now present a brief summary of the three parts of the theory.

2.3.1 The problem of musical disenfranchisement

Bentley investigates the identity formation of people who consider themselves to be 'non-musical', which she terms a process of musical disenfranchisement. She notes a gap between theoretical notions of the innate human potential for music making, and the low level of participation in musical activities in our society. She discusses how musical disenfranchisement can make people doubt their ability to engage in music making, even though many of the same people acknowledge a deep love of music and report that they listen to music a great deal. She charts the issue of musical disenfranchisement under the headings past experiences, present assumptions and future expectations. People have often experienced failure in their past attempts at music making, encountering difficulties singing or learning an instrument, and given up the whole process. Others have not had the opportunity to engage in music making, while yet others were told early in life, with lasting negative effect, that they were not musical.

Assumptions about lack of musical ability can be reinforced, either through comparing oneself to others or to some ideal of what it means to be musical, or through what Bentley calls 'cultural reinforcing' (for instance TV shows that focus on individual talent and publicly condemn many hopeful contestants as musical failures). The dominant assumption in our culture that music is about performance and consumption rather than participation may be another source of cultural reinforcing, says Bentley, as may an exaggerated focus on the pursuit of technical and performative excellence in music making and the corresponding lack of a more participatory musical culture in our society. Bentley's informants made it clear that they are by no means *against* the pursuit of excellence in music making, but that they were concerned that it had become "almost the sole model of musical engagement" in many music making settings (2011, p. 92). This can lead to expectations of music as a boundaried activity for the specially talented, while others avoid music making for fear of failure or exposure of their supposed lack of ability.

The first part of Bentley's theory identifies a problem. She points to findings that even those with a degree of musical expertise, such as keen amateurs in choirs and bands, can be hampered in their enjoyment of musical activities due to their preoccupation with musical excellence. In

short, Bentley questions the privileging of musical product over musical participation, and expresses a hope that "progress may be made towards recovering our innate musical capabilities and creating a culture of everyday musicality, *to complement the excellence that we have been reduced to for so long*". (2011, p. 116, my italics).

2.3.2 Seeking a solution through integrative musical interaction

The second part of the theory looks at how this problem might be solved through integrative musical interaction (IMI), a process in which people with little musical experience are involved in participatory music making alongside people with greater musical experience, using enabling strategies to develop participants' confidence and their listening and awareness skills. In order to answer my research question I find it necessary to present these strategies in some detail.

IMI involves three main stages. In the first stage participants of all abilities are quickly involved in music making through practices that ensure they experience instant success. In the second stage their musicality is encouraged and developed through involving them in more complex musical production (but always at a pace sensitive to their level of experience). At this stage more advanced players are enabled to use their skills more freely, while still supporting the less experienced players. In the third stage the leader takes a step back, allowing the group more and more control over the music making. Bentley describes this phase as follows:

> Ultimately, the facilitator encourages participants to take on responsibility for their own music making, to rely less on overt direction and more on listening and responding to each other, creating space for mutual musical dialogue. (Bentley, 2011, p. 83).

Bentley states that this gradual disappearing into the background is one of the differences between music teaching and participatory music making. She identifies a series of specific enabling strategies, some more prevalent in the initial stages of IMI, some later in the process. I have chosen to summarise the strategies identified by Bentley in each phase, with brief explanations of each, both in order to do justice to her theory, and to create a catalogue to which I can refer back concisely in my analysis.

Enabling participant integration for instant results (first phase)

Music making in all Bentley's informants' activities starts very quickly. The music is simple enough for everyone to join in, yet complex enough to sound like 'real' music. In this early stage the facilitator concentrates on taking care to include those with little musical experience rapidly and with instant success, so that the fears and expectations mentioned above are quickly overcome. Bentley's 'just do it' category involves inviting people to start playing at once with little prior instruction. This requires the facilitator to be a confident model herself, and to exude confidence in the participants' ability to make music.

The next category is 'creating a safe space' where participants feel able to join in without worrying about doing it wrong (cf. Higgins' 'safety without safety' in section 2.2.4). When the facilitator emphasises a 'no wrong notes' philosophy, participants feel that they have permission to have a go, experiment and make mistakes. Maintaining a down-to-earth approach can help dispel the myth that musicians possess some special talent available to the chosen few. Showing that the facilitator is comfortable making mistakes in front of the group is also helpful, as it gives participants an achievable model to follow. It can also feel less intimidating if the facilitator uses everyday language, Bentley says, rather than specialist musical terms.

An important strategy at the outset is 'suspending judgement' about the sounds produced. This means not highlighting mistakes, but accepting them as a necessary part of the experimentation that leads to musical development. As the group gains in confidence, the facilitator uses the strategy of 'bottom lining', which means identifying the skill level at which every participant can succeed, and gradually 'going up together'. This involves music making at all skill levels: advanced players can play a more complex part in the whole, while the attentive facilitator makes sure that less experienced participants are still able to take part at their own level.

The last category in this phase, 'intuitive engaging', refers to music making with little verbal explanation. Corrections to the music take place experientially while the music is being made. Bentley identifies two main sub-categories: 'sensory entraining' and 'indirect imparting'.

'Sensory entraining' is a key strategy identified by Bentley. Drum circle facilitator Arthur Hull uses 'entrainment' to describe the alignment of individual players to a common pulse (Hull, 1998, p. 86).[8] Bentley analyses three facets of entrainment. The first involves establishing an orienting example (a clear pulse) that participants can imitate and join in with. The second is making sure the pulse can be easily heard by managing noise levels and careful positioning of instruments. The third is alignment of participants with the orienting example through modelling, for instance marking the pulse, or indicating pitch or volume with hand signals.

'Indirect imparting' means teaching without teaching (another term coined by Arthur Hull), and is all about developing group skill without the use of direct instruction or explanation to participants, although each intervention has an intentionally focused (implicit) purpose.

Enabling musical development and increased integration and interaction (second phase)

The second phase of IMI is about enabling integration and interaction through the introduction of musical forms and developing the complexity of the music. At this stage the facilitator takes

[8] Entrainment in physics is the process in which two interacting oscillating systems with different periods when they function independently fall into synchrony and assume a common period.

care to 'keep things simple' so that everyone feels that what they are asked to do is achievable, yet at the same time complex enough for more advanced participants to find it satisfying. He builds musical structure through repeating short phrases, founded on entrainment to a common pulse. Once this is established, new layers can be added – a harmony part in singing, or a counter rhythm in drum circles – providing variety and complexity. Each participant plays a modest part in the whole, while hearing themselves in relationship to others. This can be extended to the introduction of dialoguing parts, usually initiated by the facilitator.

There is a sense in which playing by ear creates a level playing field, as it ensures a mistake-free environment for the new beginner. Moreover, aural learning triggers a higher degree of listening to the group than when people are concentrating on reading music. From this stage the facilitator can introduce increasingly complex interventions, through non-verbal signs. The group is becoming more tuned in to one other and more attentive to non-verbal signals from the facilitator, who can now start to build to a larger degree on initiatives coming from the group.

Enabling mutual musical interaction on the road to self-facilitation (third phase)

> The final stage of the process involves developing the activity from integrative participation into mutual musical interaction. […] Gradually, a facilitator will offer less and less direct intervention, until the group is fully able to take on the functions of maintaining, shifting, and developing the music for themselves. (Bentley, 2011, p. 173).

The main approach in this phase is for the facilitator to relinquish control gradually, by tuning in to the group and taking his lead from the responses coming from within the group. He incorporates initiatives from participants, validating the contributions of each, and building from where the group is, rather than leading the group to a pre-determined outcome. He progressively reduces the frequency and level of intervention and lets the group find its own way forward, increasing participant responsibility and mutuality. This constitutes a shift away from facilitation towards enabling the group to co-create its own music through self-facilitation.

2.3.3 Bentley's core category of tuning in

All these individual approaches are summed up in Bentley's core category of tuning in – a process that enables the integration of all levels of musical experience in group music making and guides the group towards greater mutuality and relationality. Taken to its full extent, the process results in a fully 'tuned-in' group which is capable of making music unaided. Tuning in is about concentration, awareness of others in the group and increasing levels of relational correspondence within the group, and applies to both facilitator and group members. We can trace this category across all three stages of IMI.

In the initial stages, facilitators have to *tune in* to the needs of the inexperienced participants.

Participants are enabled to *tune in* to an orienting example, helping them make simple, coordinated contributions alongside more experienced participants.

As the playing develops to the next stage of complexity, the facilitator *tunes in* to the group, reading the participants' capabilities and adjusting the skill level of the activity so that all are able to participate at their own level. Facilitation happens experientially rather than by explicit instruction, which means the participants must *tune in* through relating their contributions to what others in the group are playing, and *tune in* to the orienting example. The facilitator balances (*tunes in* to) environmental and acoustic factors so that participants can hear themselves and hear how what they are playing relates to the group, without feeling uncomfortably exposed. This is combined with less experienced players leaning on the more experienced ones, *tuning in* to their fellow players for cues as to how to contribute to the music.

As the activity progresses, complexity increases and the introduction of dialogued parts requires *tuning in* between group members. The next jump in complexity comes from improvisational orchestrating, in which the facilitator and participants must be highly *tuned in* to one another. In the final stage, as the facilitator reduces facilitated interventions to zero and musical initiatives come entirely from within the group, the whole group must be *tuned in* to one another.

2.3.4 Outcomes and communicative properties of participatory musical activities

Having described the problem of musical disenfranchisement and offered a solution in the form of IMI, Bentley goes on to look at why it might be important to take this problem seriously. She looks at the contextual applications of IMI and the reported outcomes, which she says may be individual, communal (e.g. focusing the attention of a group to some common purpose), or communicative (for instance developing listening and attentive skills) – what she terms "engaging with the broader functionality of music" (2011, p. 15). I choose to concentrate on one aspect of this section of the theory, of particular relevance to my research question and findings, namely what Bentley calls the communicative properties of participatory musical activities.

One trait of the communicative properties of participatory musical activities is that communication in this context is largely *non-verbal*, yet it allows for self-expression, reciprocity, shared construction of intent, and group interaction. Bentley notes that non-verbal group participation is enabled through music "in a way that allows participants to relate to each other – involving less personal disclosure than conversational interaction, whilst still exercising communicative skills such as offering a contribution, listening, and responding." (2011, p. 233).

This non-verbal communication can also have greater *ambiguity of interpretation* than verbal communication alone, Bentley says. This ambiguity of musical communication may actually

ease interaction between people for whom direct conversation is problematic, she says.

Another communicative property Bentley describes is the development of listening and attentive skills through the experience of being heard. "As the degree of listening increases, so does a perception of being listened to, or 'heard' – of recognition within the group that an individual's efforts at participation are a valid contribution to a larger collective undertaking. Participants relate feeling like *every voice counts* when making music together". Bentley believes this can have positive knock-on effects in music making settings – the experience of feeling heard and being encouraged to listen may make the participants less bent on self-expression, allowing them to "progress further into musical relationship" (2011, p. 233).

2.4 Brief summary of theory

Higgins (2012) offers a conceptual framework for the field of community music. In this he suggests a re-imaging of the word 'community' as a gesture towards an open-door policy, a warm welcome extended without full knowledge of its consequences. Drawing on the philosophy of Derrida, Higgins equates community music activities with acts of hospitality. He describes how community musicians attempt to create a safe space for inventive music making for all by means of facilitation and workshop-like events.

Bentley (2011) identifies the issue of musical disenfranchisement as one of the factors holding people back from participation in musical activities. She identifies a series of enabling strategies used by leaders of participatory music activities to overcome this problem, and labels them integrative musical interaction. These strategies are summed up in her core category of tuning in. Finally, she investigates the broader functions of musicality as a participatory process, discussing why wider participation in participatory musical activities might be important. This includes the affordances of the IMI process at the individual and communal level. Bentley also emphasises the communicative properties of participatory musical activities.

All of the strategies described above are relevant to many kinds of participatory music making, and resound with several of the approaches identified in my research project. I drew actively on both these theoretical works in my process of analysis and interpretation of the empirical data gathered in my research project, and reference will be made to them in chapters 4, 5 and 6 where I present my empirical data and my analysis.

In these first two chapters I have presented my topic, research question, informants and theoretical framework. In the next chapter I will account for the methodology used in my research project.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction to choice of method

In this chapter I describe my methodology. My method was to investigate approaches to leading what I thought of as community music activities, using qualitative interviews with professional leaders. I account for my choice of semi-structured qualitative research interviews as the best way of answering my research question, as well as documenting decisions about selecting my informants, which language to write in, and various ethical considerations I have had to take in my research work. I also address my role as researcher, not under a separate heading, but as a recurring theme throughout this chapter. The method is inextricably entwined with my research question: What approaches to practice can be found among professional leaders of three community music projects in Western Norway?

The noun 'approach' is defined in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as "a way of dealing with something: a way of doing or thinking about something".[9] With this definition in mind, in order to answer the research question I needed to find out *how* my informants work, and what they *think about* their work. Our only access to someone's thoughts is through verbal communication, so I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews and let my informants talk reasonably freely about their approaches. I decided to supplement the interviews with observation of each informant in at least one activity to deepen my own understanding of their work, to be able to describe the context for the reader (see section 4.1 for sketches from observation), and to give some triangulation to their account of their activities.

In addition I read extensively on the emergent field of community music, to see what I could find in community music theory that matched or challenged my findings. My methodology therefore consists of qualitative research interviews, supported by observation and secondary sources of data (websites and books) in combination with widespread reading of the literature on community music and on cultural participation as it relates to public health and wellbeing.

At the start of the research project I had assumed that my thesis would be weighted towards a theoretical discussion of what might be considered community music activities in Norway, with interviews serving primarily to illustrate the theoretical discussion. In fact the emphasis shifted *en route* towards extensive empirical data, with thematic analysis supported by the theory.

Nyrnes talks of topography in research, and describes how the researcher is constantly moving between different *topoi* in the research landscape (Nyrnes, 2012, p. 38). This image allowed me

[9] Merriam-Webster English Dictionary. Available from: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/approach.

the confidence to work in different ways in parallel (reading theory, translating excerpts of interviews, or working on the wording of my research question) – confident that all these tasks were important and would come together in the final thesis, provided that theory, research question and empirical data all remained in a close mutual relationship.

3.2 Qualitative research interviews

Qualitative research interviews are academic conversations in which new knowledge is constructed jointly by the interviewer and the informant. In a semi-structured interview, the informant is able to talk quite freely within the boundaries set by the interviewer. Kvale and Brinkmann describe seven stages in the research interview process: thematising, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting, and state that the quality of the initial phases affects the quality of the final phases (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 102). Just as the clear-cut design of my finished master's thesis in neat chapters is not a faithful representation of the disorderly research process, we should not be misled by this linear description into thinking that these phases follow neatly one after another. In retrospect I can identify each of these seven phases in my work, but I also see considerable overlap between them. Each phase had its specific challenges, be it the difficulty of planning the thesis design before the research question had been finalised, or the seemingly insurmountable task of sifting through the extensive empirical material to identify those elements of greatest relevance to the research question, while reluctantly having to eliminate other interesting facts and statements.

3.2.1 Selecting the informants

When selecting my informants I set up a list of criteria. I was looking for three to five trained music teachers working in non-curricular settings providing activities that clearly had paramusical objectives alongside the musical objectives. I was keen to find people who were highly experienced in their fields, who had made a conscious decision to work in this way, and who fitted my understanding of Higgins' description of 'boundary walkers' (see section 2.2.1). I also hoped to find informants catering for a wide age range, since community musicians commonly see music learning and teaching as a lifelong concern (Higgins, 2012, p. 118).

The final selection fell on four informants working on three projects: two women and two men. Each of my informants works as a provider of music activities that fit my understanding of the term 'community music', and each may be regarded as having pioneered their respective sub-fields in Norway. As presented in section 1.7, their activities consist of drum circles for adults, the elderly and children; parent/infant music groups; and music workshops for immigrant children and young people culminating in high-profile public performances, respectively. Each

has aims alongside the musical aims, such as empowerment, integration or encouraging parental bonding through music. These secondary aims are often referred to as extra-musical objectives, but I prefer Stige's term 'paramusical features of a situation', which he uses to avoid the impression that things are either "totally musical or not musical" (Stige, 2012, p. 186). Among potential informants I ended up not contacting were leaders of projects such as a pensioners' choir and a music-in-prison project.

It is important to position informants in qualitative research in relationship to the author, and to contextualise their statements so that the reader can exercise an element of source criticism. I found my informants through a combination of my own network and discussion with others in the field. I was wary of interviewing anyone I already knew. However, I made an exception in the case of Lars Kolstad, since he is the only experienced community drum circle leader in this area of Norway, and I consider community drumming to be very much the epitome of community music. I had previously been a sporadic participant in drum circles and workshops run by Lars, but decided to invite him to participate in the project nevertheless, and to take care to include a note in my thesis on my prior acquaintance with him for the sake of transparency.

There are many potential informants within parent/infant music groups. After doing some background research the choice landed on Ingunn Frøyland, whom I did not know at all. She has been active on the board of MFLB, the Norwegian association for early years music making, and what I read about her collaboration with other professionals and her holistic approach to music making with children triggered my interest in particular.

In the case of *Fargespill*, I knew a little about the project, without any personal connection with the leaders. My initial contact went to Ole Hamre, one of the founders of *Fargespill*. He has lectured widely on *Fargespill* as a concept and on creativity in general, and is a widely known public figure as a musician. As I learned more about *Fargespill*, I soon realised that any investigation of the educational principles behind *Fargespill* certainly ought also to include his co-founder, Sissel Saue. I was keen to get both their perspectives and was delighted when both agreed to be interviewed. The interviews with Ole and Sissel were carried out independently, on different days, and ended up having quite a different focus. Ole talked about the philosophy of the *Fargespill* concept, while Sissel spoke more about her approaches to leading the groups.

3.2.2 Interview guide and conducting the interviews

Semi-structured interviews are neither open conversations nor closed questionnaires. They consist of open questions that introduce topics, and follow-up questions based on the informants' responses. I created a written interview guide (see Appendix C) to give some

structure to the interviews, organised under various themes. I supplemented this with questions specific to the activity of each informant, based on what I had read in preparation for each interview. Some of the questions were linked to the theory (Higgins), but I tried also to include plenty of questions of a descriptive nature that would trigger spontaneous descriptions.

I originally planned to carry out one to two interviews with each informant. In the end, I conducted only one interview per informant, as the material gathered in these five hours generated a rich and plentiful supply of data on my informants' approaches to practice. For practical reasons only one of the four interviews was carried out the same day as observation as originally planned (I had felt this might keep the conversation more closely tied to practice). The observation sessions nevertheless gave me valuable contextual understanding of my informants' responses. All four interviews were conducted on the informants' 'home ground'.

Kvale and Brinkmann point out that while there are few universally applicable rules for conducting qualitative research interviews, it is important to learn the trade meticulously, since the probability that spontaneous interviews will generate worthwhile information is fairly low (2009, p. 15). Conducting research interviews was a whole new skill set for me. It was a process that became easier with each interview I conducted: I learned to pause and wait, rather than jump in at the first two-second silence to fill it with my quest for new knowledge. I discovered that a relaxed pause would often lead an informant to enlarge on their initial response.

Glaser identifies four kinds of answers that can be generated in qualitative interviews: baseline data (honest appraisals which the informant has to think about), properline data (the 'authorised' response the informant thinks the researcher wants to hear), interpreted data (a viewpoint related by a professional with a vested standpoint), and vaguing out (inconclusive responses to questions the informant has no viewpoint on or does not wish to answer (Glaser, 1998, in Bentley, 2011, p. 49). All four types are valid and useful, they simply represent different kinds of response. The interviews with my informants generated a combination of all four types of data.

Kvale and Brinkmann describe how the researcher is the key research instrument in qualitative interviews, and state that she must combine knowledge about the topic with good conversational skills (2009, p. 166). She must build a toolbox of skills for this very specific kind of academic conversation, such as the ability to make on-the-spot decisions about what the informant really meant by a statement, and to choose whether to follow up a response or to steer the conversation in a different direction if it seems to be going off at a tangent to the research question. Not least, she must think far enough ahead to test the reliability of the informant's responses before the interview is over. In hindsight I feel it would have been a strength had I conducted one or two pilot interviews to practise these skills.

When the researcher shares something of the same background or professional standing as her informants, there is a danger of subconsciously looking for confirmation of legitimacy of her own practices, and special care must therefore be taken not to ask questions likely to lead to desired results. After reading the transcription of the first interview, one of my supervisors commented that I seemed to be much in agreement with my informant, and suggested that at times I had asked potentially leading questions, warning me of the danger of leading the informant to the findings I expected the interview to produce. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 131) point out the need to balance thematic considerations (concerned with the theoretical conceptions of the research topic) and dynamic considerations (creating a relaxed, positive interaction in the interview situation). In retrospect I see that my occupation with dynamic considerations may also have led me subconsciously to seek out and dwell on points in which I agreed with the informant's ideas. In addition, this first informant was the one that I already knew, and this may have affected the dynamics of the interview somewhat. My supervisor advised me to take more of a back seat and be open to the unexpected, and I tried to follow this advice in the subsequent interviews.

3.2.3 Data gathering and transcription process

The data gathering period (interviews and observation) lasted from October 2014 to February 2015. Secondary data was obtained from the TROM website, the website of the Norwegian association for early years music (MFLB) including brochures and articles linked to there, and the *Fargespill* website and recently published *Fargespill* book (Hamre et al., 2011).

Each interview was recorded on iPhone and transcribed in a tabular format, with each uninterrupted utterance in one cell in the right-hand column, and assigned a simple numerical code in the left-hand column (A1 for informant A's first response; A2 for informant A's second response, etc). This labelling facilitated finding my way around the raw material. For the sake of transparency I retained these labels in the interview excerpts included in chapters 4 to 6. However, since switching from anonymous informants I have assigned new letters: L for Lars, I for Ingunn, etc, to help the reader distinguish between the informants.[10]

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 134) say that any ambiguities should be cleared up during the interview to make the analysis phase easier, and that this is made easier by listening not only to *what* is said, but also *how* it is said. During the transcription process, I therefore recorded not

[10] The ethics in research guidelines (NESH) state that full access should be provided to the research material unless this breaches data protection rules. Since my informants are quoted by name, full transcripts of the interviews are not appended to this thesis, but will be available on request from the researcher until 31 July 2015, the date by which all raw material in this project is required by NSD to be deleted.

only the words spoken verbatim, but the length of pauses between statements, often accompanied by a brief description of the manner in which I felt a statement was uttered (eagerly, hesitantly, emphatically), with an occasional note on body language where I felt this might add valuable contextual understanding.

The aim of qualitative research interviews is to gather relevant, reliable descriptions that we as researchers can interpret and analyse. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 133) use the analogy of a doctor: it is our role as researcher to answer the 'why' questions on the basis of our informants' responses – much as it is up to the doctor to make a diagnosis of the basis of her patients' description of their symptoms. The next section looks at how I set about interpreting the data.

3.2.4 Analysis and reporting

My chosen method was thematic analysis. Thematic data analysis can occur either inductively, where assumptions are data-driven, or deductively, where assumptions are theory-driven and more closely linked to pre-conceived frames. In my thematic analysis I moved to and fro between the theory and the empirical data, sometimes referred to as an abductive process. This is linked to the fact that I had read Higgins in some detail prior to creating my interview guide, leading to a strong element of deductive analysis, while others categories arose from the rich empirical data generated by five hours of recorded interviews. It should also be noted that I came across Bentley's theory *after* conducting all four interviews, and it was not until then that I discovered a number of similarities between my inductive findings and her grounded theory of integrative musical interaction. I shall attempt to report the analytic process as clearly as possible. There is always a danger of being derailed or shunted into unproductive sidings by assumptions, conscious or subconscious, about what we expect to find in the data. In my analysis I tried to be on the lookout for surprising, unexpected elements in the data, too, and for utterances that appeared to conflict with other utterances or my pre-understanding of the field.

Coding is used in quantitative and qualitative research to facilitate the analytic process by identifying recurring themes, to aid understanding of the phenomena under investigation. In qualitative research the process is commonly broken down into two stages. First the researcher goes through the empirical data allocating unique codes to statements that identify possible themes. This reduces the empirical data to the relevant sections. After that, the researcher starts a more interpretative process, identifying, developing and testing thematic categories and looking for trends, patterns and relationships between the various themes. In keeping with this, I started the coding process by reading each transcription and inserting descriptive codes of no more than a few words in the file every time I found a seedling theme or idea. I then collated

these comments in a list, still sorted by informant, looked for multiple occurrences of similar ideas, and tried to group together related ideas within each interview.

As I reread the transcriptions, patterns slowly emerged, and certain themes became clear, for instance 'offering a warm welcome'. At this stage certain themes that I had initially thought of as discrete appeared to converge, and vice versa. As well as reading the transcribed texts, I listened to the recordings of the interviews several more times during the analysis process. I found that listening to the recordings again reminded me of the context statements were uttered in and the situational factors of these research conversations. The next stage consisted of combining related themes (such as 'a path of no mistakes' and 'playfulness') to form my main categories of thematic analysis. Since the interviews had been carried out in Norwegian, at this stage I also translated all relevant excerpts into English. These excerpts were now collated by category rather than by informant, still bearing their original numerical code.

Then followed the stage of systematising and reporting on the categories identified. In chapters 4, 5 and 6 I present my written report of the analysis. The system I have chosen is to introduce one theme at a time, describe what the theme is all about, then substantiate each theme in turn with excerpts and paraphrases from the interviews to document how I arrived at the categories, while pointing here and there to links with the theoretical framework in chapter 2 to try to show how I arrived at my interpretation.

This section has introduced thematic data analysis. It is important to note that my four informants are in no way compared with one another; my thematic analysis simply seeks out common themes shared by some or all of them. For the categories developed, please see section 4.2.

3.3 Observation

I decided at an early stage that although interviews would be my primary source of empirical data, I would also observe each of my informants at work. There are potential limitations in any empirical data gathered solely through the use of qualitative interviews. Observation used in combination with qualitative research interviews provides an element of triangulation, since it has the potential to support or counter the informants' accounts. As Hebert and McCollum say, "People only sometimes say what they really think, and what they really think only sometimes accurately reflects reality" (McCollum & Hebert, 2014, p. 49). This does not imply that informants wilfully misreport their activities, simply that supplementing interviews with observation gives substance to the empirical data.

My observation sessions were few and I decided beforehand not to take notes during observation but to be present with all my senses, while remaining as unobtrusive as possible. I

was aware of the possibility of an outsider sitting taking notes being a disturbing factor. Instead I wrote a brief sketch from each situation immediately afterwards. Extracts from these sketches are included in section 4.1 to help the reader form an impression of how my informants work.

3.4 Choice of language

From the start of the research process I weighed up the pros and cons of writing my thesis in Norwegian or English, posing three questions that I hoped would help make the decision. Firstly, what is my perspective as researcher when investigating this field? Secondly, who is my target readership? And thirdly, which language would be best suited to my theory and method?

My perspective may be said to be twofold. I have worked as a music teacher and conductor in Norway for many years. I have also led community music activities not unlike some of those in this study. I might therefore be said to be an insider. At the same time, I feel I have retained a certain outsider perspective since I am the product of a very different tradition of music education in England, prior to the introduction of informal and praxial music education practices.

As far as target readership is concerned, I considered that the subject matter might be of equal interest to those involved in community music activities and music education in Norway and to those outside Norway curious as to the position of community music in this country.

Finally, I felt that the choice of language was related to my choice of method and theoretical basis. Kvale and Brinkmann write that knowledge is constituted through linguistic interaction and that the transition from one form of language to another, for instance from spoken language to written language, is not merely a technical question of transcription but raises questions about the different natures of written language versus oral language (2009, p. 55). This must surely be even more the case when translating empirical data into a different language altogether. Since I chose to conduct interviews in Norwegian to investigate community music in a Norwegian context, I felt that there should be weighty reasons for translating the data, as I was worried that the translation process might add undesirable distance to the informants' thoughts. Not least, writing about the field in Norwegian would inevitably require me to coin new words and terms in Norwegian.[11] At the same time, my chosen theory is all in English.

These three considerations pulled in opposite directions, but in the end, the weightiest consideration was that my entire theoretical basis is in English. In the interests of quality assurance I enlisted the proofreading help of an experienced bilingual translator with a music teaching background. In the supplementary consent form sent to my informants in January 2015

[11] Even the term 'community music' is difficult to translate into Norwegian, and my informants occasionally resort to other English words in the interviews, such 'empowerment', 'facilitator' and 'entrainment'.

I also informed them that I would be writing in English, and offered them the opportunity to read through the translation of all excerpts from the interviews to be included in the published thesis.

3.5 Ethical considerations in the research process

3.5.1 Formal requirements

Like all research in the humanities at Bergen University College that contains personal information about informants, this project has been registered with and approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). The project was registered by NSD on 19 August 2014 and assigned the project number 39443. Consent to participate in the research project was obtained from the informants by an information letter and consent form detailing the nature of the study, how I intended to conduct the interviews, how data would be stored, and information about informants' freedom to withdraw from the study at any time (see Appendix A).

In my original NSD application my project outline was based on the assumption that I would be carrying out anonymous interviews. At the same time, I was aware of the fact that the informants might easily be recognised by others in the field through my description of their activities, and included a note to this effect in my application and in the information letter.

It has been suggested that in the case of experts or pioneers in their respective fields, which all my informants may be said to be, it becomes almost a matter of research ethics to accredit information to its sources rather than anonymise them. Bentley quotes Jarvis, who says that it could actually be bordering on plagiarism not to accredit expert informants on a par with expert written sources (Jarvis, 1999, in Bentley, 2011, p. 46).

At the start of the first interview, my informant made it clear that he felt no need to be anonymous. I subsequently asked each informant whether they would prefer to be quoted anonymously or by name. All four were happy to be identified, seeing inclusion of their activities in a master's thesis as a good opportunity to 'spread the word'.

Having said this, the researcher does more than describe or report what the informants said, taking an extra step into analysis, where it is the researcher's own interpretation that is expressed. This raises the question of whether or to what extent named informants should be able to influence how their statements are interpreted. While the subject matter of my research project is not likely to be regarded as controversial, I attempted to address this in part by offering my informants the chance to read through all excerpts from the interviews, observation logs and my descriptions of their activities before publishing, to ensure that they did not feel factually misrepresented (see section 3.4). My interpretation is nevertheless entirely my own.

Since the signed consent forms and original NSD application (submitted 13 August 2014) were

based on the principle of anonymity, I subsequently (6 January 2015) sent my informants a supplementary consent form to sign to confirm that they were willing to be quoted with their full names. The original consent form and email requesting consent to be quoted by name can be found in Appendices A and B. I submitted a revised project description to NSD on 10 April 2015, and received email confirmation from NSD on 15 April 2015 that this change had been approved.

My observation gave me a valuable opportunity to observe how my informants led and responded to the group. Observation of my informants inevitably involved observation of third parties. However, this observation was deemed to be non-invasive and with no chance of third parties being identified by any content in the thesis, so the issue of consent was dealt with simply by my informants explaining to their participants that I was present to observe the leaders at work, rather than the participants. This meant that I also observed a number of potentially interesting points that have not been included in the thesis, since my informants are not anonymous and it might in theory have been possible to identify third parties. For the same reason I have used the slightly clumsy gender-neutral 's'/he' and 'their' instead of 'he', 'she', 'his' and 'her' in the observation sketches, to avoid any chance of residents of the old people's home or children in the kindergarten being recognised. In one case I have referred to a former *Fargespill* participant by forename, as mentioned by name by Ole and Sissel in their interviews. This person has previously been identified by full name in several public contexts, including in the *Fargespill* book (Hamre et al., 2011, p. 18), and in several newspaper articles, with the same content as recounted here by Ole and Sissel.

3.5.2 Ethical implications of choice of topic

It is vital to meet the formal requirements to ethics in research, data protection and confidentiality designed to protect all those involved in research projects, as described in section 3.5.1. However, there is also a more general ethical aspect in research that relates to the ethical implications of trying to make a difference through increasing knowledge in a field. Anne Kjørholt refers to this as expanding the ethical space in research (Kjørholt, 2012, p. 21). As work on my research project progressed, I became increasingly aware of the ethical aspect of combatting musical disenfranchisement (see section 2.3.1), an important task in community music, and the need to investigate ways of reversing the trend by which many people in our society are potentially being deprived of their heritage as musical beings. According to Small this has become a very real problem in Western society:

> I am certain […] that everyone […] is born with the gift of music no less than the gift of speech. If that is so, then our present-day concert life, whether 'classical' or 'popular', in which the 'talented' few are empowered to produce music for the 'untalented majority', is

> based on a falsehood. It means that our powers of making music for ourselves have been hijacked and the majority of people robbed of the musicality that is theirs by right of birth, while a few stars, and their handlers, grow rich and famous through selling us what we have been led to believe we lack. (Small, 1998, p. 8).

As research on music, health and wellbeing is gaining attention, widening access to active cultural participation is becoming more than simply a question of musical heritage – it may be seen as a wider public health issue. A comprehensive introduction to recent research into this field can be found in *Music, Health and Wellbeing* edited by MacDonald, Kreutz and Mitchell, with contributions from leading researchers in musicology, music education, applied musical anthropology and music therapy (2012). Part 2 of this book shares the latest research into activities in which music education is the primary aim, but with secondary benefits relating to health and wellbeing, the effects of musical activities on individuals in clinical and non-clinical settings (so-called health musicking) and growing recognition of the potential benefits of music interventions in the general population, irrespective of individual level of musical training.

Bentley's starting point in her theory echoes the ethical implications of Small's statement. "Are the potential benefits of music to be restricted to the musically able?" she asks (2011, p. 6). Her theory describes an inclusive approach to musical participation that could help a larger section of the community gain access to the benefits of active participation in musical activities.

> If the intent is to extend music making to the broadest possible range of people – or to work in any group of people in a given situation where there is a variety of musical experience present, then the concerns of individuals with little previous musical experience need to be taken into account and explicitly addressed. (Bentley, 2011, p. 84).

As we saw in section 2.3.1, Bentley identifies three main culture-related factors in the process of musical disenfranchisement: our culture regards music to a high degree as a product for performance and consumption; we have to a great extent lost what might be called a participatory culture, and non-experts are not encouraged to participate actively in musical activities (Bentley, 2011, p. 91). Higgins, too, emphasises the ethical side to extending opportunities for music making to a larger portion of the population. "Those who are denied music-making opportunities will always be there, but by virtue of the gift, circles can be opened and change can begin to happen through an ever-widening ring of hospitality." (Higgins, 2012, p. 173). This ethical aspect will form part of the discussion in chapter 7.

The aim of this chapter was to give a transparent description of the methodology in my research project, and to account for some the decisions and challenges encountered en route, including ethical considerations. I will now move on to an introduction to the empirical data gathered in my research project, and my analysis of the data.

4 Findings I: Introduction to empirical data and analysis

4.1 Introduction to the empirical data

My empirical data consists of transcriptions of four semi-structured interviews of between 60 and 80 minutes. The interview guide can be found in Appendix C. In addition to the interviews, I observed all my informants in at least two sessions, as described in section 3.3. In section 1.7 I presented my informants and their activities. In section 3.2.1 I described how and why these particular informants were chosen, and gave an account of how the interviews and observation were conducted. I will now include four sketches from my observation to aid comprehension of the analysis in chapters 4, 5 and 6. These illustrations of practice will be presented without further comment or analysis. This is in compliance with paragraph 18 of the guidelines published by the Norwegian National Committees for Research Ethics (NESH) which states that "the clearest possible distinction should be drawn between the description and documentation of actual courses of events, and interpretations and explanations of those events" (NESH, 2006).

Sigrun Gudmundsdottir reminds us that all responses to interview questions and interpretation of interview data draw on the narrative structures so pervasive in our culture (Gudmundsdottir, 1996, p. 293). Narrative elements influence what informants say, how they say it, and how we hear it. In addition, we use narrative structures when reporting our findings. She quotes Hirsch's iceberg metaphor to show that the explicit interpretation in written research reports is only the tip of the iceberg compared to the vast quantity of implicit, informal interpretation we as researchers employ to make sense of the data (Hirsch, 1967, in Gudmundsdottir, 1996, p. 301). It is my hope that my analysis is transparent enough to show a little of the submerged part of the iceberg.

Gudmundsdottir also reminds us that there can be no one-to-one correspondence between informants' experiences and their recreation of these experiences in words; between their utterances and our interpretation; or even between our written recreation of our findings and our readers' interpretation of our written report. If we as researchers are not aware of this, our research could at worst amount to little more than "an endless hall of faulty mirrors" (Gudmundsdottir, 1996, p. 304). For this reason I believe it is important to focus mainly on the relevance my subjective interpretation of the findings might have for music education research.

In these three analysis chapters the empirical data is collated and sorted by theme rather than by informant. Reference is made throughout these three chapters to the theory, presented in chapter 2, that informed my analysis.[12] The choice to present the data in this way, rather than for

[12] In these three analysis chapters I refer back to the theory in chapter 2, which has informed my interpretation of the data in answering the research question. When referring to specific statements, I cite the primary source in the

instance one informant per chapter, arose as a consequence of the choice of thematic analysis as my method. The decision to divide the findings into three separate chapters came later, when I realised that the empirical data was so rich, with approaches to practice at different levels, that it warranted dividing the analysis into three discrete chapters each with its own focus. None of these chapters contains a summary, but points of particular interest are discussed in chapter 7. The presentation of the data and analysis begins with four sketches from my observation.

4.1.1 Sketch from observation of kindergarten music session

A large room with space for dancing, windows looking out on an outdoor play area. Lars, two kindergarten teachers and a group of pre-schoolers present. There are drums and a 'farm' of percussion instruments behind Lars, including frogs, pigs and a fish behind a 'fence' of claves. The children enter in single file and sit in a circle on the floor. This is their third session, and they seem to know what to expect, and what is expected of them.

The session starts with the regular welcome song. Afterwards Lars, speaking in a quiet voice, completes a round of the children's names. He uses the children's names frequently, when talking to them and in drumming games with rhythmic motifs made of two names at a time.

After a while, Lars starts retelling the same story as in the previous session, with accompanying sounds and movements. One extremely active child remembers the entire story, complete with movements, and is one step ahead the whole way, unable to remain seated in their whole-body enthusiasm. Several times the teachers clamp down gently on the child's enthusiastic participation, although the child is not causing any kind of disturbance.

Lars acknowledges all contributions with a smile, a nod, or a comment. There is a lot of repetition, something Lars has told me before the session he thinks is essential for young children's internalisation of rhythm. When the time comes to go one by one to choose a drum each, the children take their time, oblivious to the impatience of some of the other children.

At one stage each child in the circle is invited to showcase the music his or her drum wants to make. One small child refuses outright, and several times in the session makes loud comments such as "I can't! I'm no good at drumming!"

Another child sits on a teacher's lap throughout the session, apparently not participating. The teacher sits outside the circle, effectively separating the child from the other participants. On closer observation, I notice that the child's gaze is fixed on Lars the whole time. Perhaps the child is participating, although not actively. Others join in whole-heartedly throughout the session. Lars

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normal way, whereas when referring to my presentation of a concept from Higgins or Bentley in chapter 2, I refer to the section in this thesis where the concept is explained.

allows for all levels of participation, provided it does not distract the course of the activity.

4.1.2 Sketch from observation of drumming with dementia patients in a residential home

The day lounge area of a residential home. Residents in a ring. Lars unpacks djembes and other percussion instruments and places them in the circle. The residents show varying degrees of interest. A couple of them appear to be asleep in wheelchairs, but Lars asks for them to be wheeled to the circle in case they wake up. Lars taps drums lightly and asks an attentive looking resident whether s/he thinks it's a nice sound. Yes, smiles the resident. Lars makes his way slowly round the room, introducing himself, shaking hands, and learning names. He spends some time assessing what kind and size of drum and drumstick might suit each resident's motor skills and posture best. As they are handed instruments, a couple of residents tentatively bang on their drum a couple of times, while others appear a little bemused. Lars starts up a beat based on two of the residents' names, and encourages them to imitate the rhythm on the drums.

One resident who is almost entirely deaf, with clear signs of dementia and confusion (asking whether it is bedtime now) and whose body is sunken in and in a state of semi-wakefulness, has been brought to join the circle. This resident has no eye contact with Lars, but is helped to hold a drumstick and beat it against a drum. At first seemingly unaware of what is going on around them, as a groove gets going, s/he becomes noticeably more alert, and after a while joins the music each time it starts and stops, keeping up a gentle but clear and extremely precise pulse throughout. Towards the end of the session, s/he appears to fall asleep again, drumstick in hand.

Lars makes positive remarks during the playing, and jokes with several of the residents. "You must have played in a drumming band before, the way you can play! And with both hands! Fantastic!" He uses their names, and establishes eye contact with those who meet his gaze when playing. They become noticeably more confident with this verbal and non-verbal feedback. One resident is sitting in a wheelchair next to Lars. Lars holds round their hand, helping them grasp the drumstick, and helps them keep a beat. The resident's face lights up in a smile. Later when in a groove which this resident does not join in, their hand resting on the drum (it is difficult to tell whether s/he is awake) Lars plays his own drums but also taps on theirs at regular intervals, so they can feel the vibrations of the beat. The resident stirs, head on one side, appearing to listen.

One resident, who was tipped far back in a chair and looks an unlikely participant in a drumming session, has been wheeled by the staff to the edge of the circle. Lars asks whether s/he would prefer to be helped to a more upright position, which s/he would. Lars finds a tall drum that s/he can reach bent over to one side from the rather high wheelchair, and hands them two drumsticks. At times, s/he drums rhythmically and enthusiastically, at other times s/he

appears to be lost in intent listening, as though not realising that s/he has stopped playing.

Lars intersperses the groove with the sort of songs eighty-year-old Norwegians learned by heart as schoolchildren. One resident, whose speech is so blurred as to be difficult for me as a stranger to understand, joins in every single song. With each new song s/he listens for a couple of lines, nodding slowly as recognition comes, and then sings confidently every line of every verse. Indeed, when Lars stops after three verses of one song, s/he demands that they carry on to the next verse – the song has not ended yet! Lars sings responsively, letting this resident take the lead, adjusting to their tempo and expression.

4.1.3 Sketch from observation of parent/infant music groups for 0 to 5 month-olds

A small group of mothers and babies around four to five months old. The mothers are sitting on chairs with the babies on their laps facing Ingunn. The room is large enough for dancing, with the chairs arranged in a corner with instruments and brightly coloured scarves. The lyrics to two or three songs are displayed on posters on the walls where everyone can see them. One of the regular songs is written in large letters in felt-tip pen on the inside of the closed door.

Ingunn kneels in front of the participants, her face on a level with the babies' faces, with four chime bars (D-F-A-D) in her hand, and sings the welcome song to the baby at the far end of the row. The mothers quietly join in the singing. Ingunn uses sweeping, dramatic arm movements as she strikes the chime bars, and the babies watch, mesmerised, dribbling and blowing bubbles. One baby throws its arms out sideways (almost as if in imitation of Ingunn's movements). Its body is taught, straining towards the chime bars. "They really experience things with their *whole* bodies, these little ones," Ingunn smiles. As the baby puts its hand determinedly on the chime bars, the sound is muffled. Ingunn offers each baby 'foot massage' – placing the baby's feet on a resounding chime bar, so it can feel the vibrations.

Several of the babies coo and vocalise as Ingunn plays the chime bars close to them, and she imitates the pitches they use with her own voice and extemporises a musical response. "Look, they really love it when we imitate them, and when they realise what we are doing, it's really easy to keep the 'conversation' with them going," she remarks. Babies that respond with noises or obvious bodily enthusiasm get a lot of feedback from the group in the form of smiles and acknowledging laughter. One baby is far less vocal or physical in its response, showing no smile or attempt to grab the chime bars, yet is obviously focusing on the sound. Ingunn gives this baby plenty of time to engage with the sounds, then remarks with a smile "Some babies use a huge amount of energy, really *concentrating* on what's going on. We're going to have a great time, aren't we?" The mother smiles proudly.

Halfway through the session the group follows Ingunn to the dancing area, and she drums on a hand drum, moving close in to each baby in arms as they move to the music. The free dancing glides smoothly into an simple group dance in a ring. Ingunn gives no verbal instruction to the group: simple hand gestures and turning her body a little in advance of a change in direction is ample instruction. Whenever one of the babies shows obvious delight and laughter, all the mothers laugh and smile in response. At the end of the dancing, Ingunn carries on singing as she leads the group back to their seats. One activity blends into the next, there is little verbal explanation and no break in the flow.

Back in the group, small hand drums and rhythm eggs find their way into tiny hands and mouths. Ingunn makes up a song about what each baby is doing, to the same folk tune they sang earlier. In this way she draws the mothers' attention to how each child reacts to the music. She sings much of the time, but talks directly to the babies, too, commenting on their responses.

4.1.4 Sketch from observation of full-run rehearsal with the Fargespill company

A cold, large sports hall, with no furniture other than two tiered stage steps, one on either side of the stage area. A band consisting of drum set, African drums, guitar, violin, keyboard. Sissel stands in the middle of the room giving instructions. Ole is at the drum set, liaising with the sound engineer, operating playback tracks used for rehearsal, discussing details with the professional musicians and older participants who form the band: a teenage girl playing an Indian flute, a young man sitting astride a box drum, and a handful of experienced session musicians.

Three adults sit watching: the choreographer, the producer and an assistant. Around sixty youngsters between six and twenty-something are in hectic activity. There are clusters of children and youngsters dotted around the hall. At the centre of this hive of activity a song and dance are being rehearsed. Around the edge there is excited chatter, joking and laughter, as well as signs of some spontaneous rehearsing of a dance here, a song there. Overall a slightly chaotic first impression; full of energy and competing sounds, but the quiet efficiency at the centre of the room is unmistakable. Lists are consulted, and children and youngsters are called in from surrounding changing rooms as each number is rehearsed.

The rehearsal has a clearly collaborative nature, with the team of leaders discussing together at regular intervals. The older participants appearing to be very much in the role of co-leaders, conferring with Ole and Sissel, instructing younger participants, demonstrating dance movements, helping each other count in to tricky entries. Numbers are rehearsed many times in a row. The youngsters continue to practice together around the edge of the room when the focus has moved on to the next item on the list. Sissel and her helpers join in wherever a song needs

reinforcing or there is a hole in a row of dancers, presumably because someone is away that day.

Although the words to most of the songs remain a mystery to me, several of the dances clearly play on the universal theme of male/female attraction and courtship rituals. A line of teenage girls has a flamboyant dance-off with a row of young men, egging each other on to bravado.

One number catches my attention in particular. It starts with a solo song performed by a young Asian man. The language is unfamiliar to me, as is the melody, but the atmosphere is compelling. Suddenly a young girl in Sami traditional costume enters back right, singing a traditional Sami joik. The resemblance in melodic line and mood is striking. The same effect is created later in a Norwegian folksong intertwined with lullabies from Eritrea and Ghana. There are similarities that I would not have guessed the existence of until hearing these tunes juxtaposed, and yet it strikes me how well they match and complement one another.

It is the end of a long day of rehearsing, and the youngest participants are practising their final song and dance. There is a lot of laughter, good-natured pushing and shoving. As the children are collected, most call out "Bye, Sissel!" At least half of them go to hug her, and receive a hug in return, a stroke on the face, or a hand on the shoulder and, always, a warm smile.

4.2 Introduction to analysis

My chosen approach is thematic analysis.[13] This involved reading and rereading the data set (transcriptions of interviews and observation logs) to see what themes seemed to stand out as important elements in relation to my research question: What approaches to practice can be found among professional leaders of three community music activities in Western Norway?

The term 'approaches to practice' was purposely chosen to encompass more than merely techniques or strategies. The use of literature in qualitative analysis can provide a certain direction, but it is also important to let the data speak for itself, not merely look for confirmation of assumptions of what may be found in the data. After transcribing and coding the interviews, I saw that I had richly detailed empirical data that in addition to revealing my informants' specific strategies and techniques could generate other findings concerning my informants' approaches at a more overarching level. One such theme was their thoughts on their role as leader. Others were their take on quality in their activities, and on the relational aspects among participants and between the leader and the participants. In addition I identified a theme arising from the interviews, my observation and my own reflections concerning non-verbal communication in participatory music activities. Each of these themes relates to my informants'

[13] For a full account of the method of analysis, please see section 3.2.4.

approaches and is therefore an important finding in relation to my research question.

I have chosen to systematise the analysis as follows. In section 4.3 I present the role of the leader as described by my informants and interpreted in the analysis. In chapter 5 I present five specific approaches to practice, analysed thematically across the four informants. The approaches that made it into the final analysis are: open access/offering a warm welcome; creating a path of no mistakes/playfulness versus perfectionism; planning for the unknown; unleashing latent resources; and enabling listening skills and entrainment.

In chapter 6 I analyse my informants' statements on the question of quality and on the relational aspects of their activities. In addition, I look at some of my informants' statements about the similarities between non-verbal communication in musical activities and communication via verbal language, and ask whether participatory music making has the potential to be used in lieu of verbal communication.

When analysing and interpreting the data I had to find a way of systematising the information. The process of sifting through the large volume of detailed material, discarding some elements while highlighting others, required stringent data reduction. A lot of potentially interesting material had to be left out to fit the scale of a master's thesis, and this elimination and selection is in fact a 'silent' part of the analysis process. Through reducing, systematising and analysing the data I hope I have revealed findings of relevance to the field of music education. In reporting my findings I have chosen to combine paraphrasing and condensing of the interview material with a relatively large number of direct quotations where I feel these illustrate the categories particularly clearly. I also consider the inclusion of many direct quotations necessary for reasons of transparency, to show how I have arrived at my interpretations, allowing the reader an element of source criticism.

4.3 The role of the leader in community music activities

4.3.1 Introduction to my informants' role as leaders

My research focus is identifying approaches to practice among a selection of professional leaders of community music activities in Norway. As an introduction to the specific practices identified in the analysis in chapter 5, I have chosen to start by looking at what my informants say about their role in more general terms. Since my informants lead very different activities, their roles are of course not identical, but I found many similarities between them.

Higgins says that leaders of community music activities tend to have the following in common (Higgins, 2012, p. 5). They regard music as an important human endeavour, meaning that everyone has the right and the ability to create and enjoy music. Notably, they recognise the

importance of personal, social *and* musical growth. They practise an open-door policy, offering an unconditional welcome (also described by Higgins as an act of hospitality). They take pains to foster the innate, creative musician in all, and in doing this they accept an unknown outcome at each session, taking their lead from the group, and facilitating participants towards an increasing degree of autonomy in their music making. Higgins also notes that community musicians are committed to lifelong musical learning.

It became clear from my data that all of my informants share many or all of these characteristics. While observing their activities I was repeatedly struck by the thought that none of these groups could be led by 'just anyone', however solid their background in music education. My informants' personalities and their warm, open and confident way of relating to other people appeared to me to play a huge role in the process. However, the focus in this section is on what my informants themselves say about their role.

Several of the informants played down their own role. "It's not about me," says Lars. "Too much focus on me as a person gets in the way of the real objective" (L62, L83). He is keen to point out that community musicians are well served by putting brackets around themselves. This is echoed by Ole in relation to all work with music, and to *Fargespill* in particular:

> If it's going to be any good, you must eliminate yourself as far as possible; music is universal, bigger than us, and if we bring our ego into the equation, we end up making the music smaller than it really is. In the whole Fargespill method, the same principle applies – we try to interfere as little as possible with the songs and dances belonging to the young people – what we try to do is to set a high-quality, professional framework around it, and let it shine for what it is, in its authentic version. (Interview with Ole, O1).

Rather than focusing on themselves, each of them has a keen listening attitude towards the participants. "When an opportunity arises, you need to be aware of the inherent possibilities. In the same way, I don't really think that I create music, I *find* music," says Ole (O1).

When asked to describe their role in these groups, all four agree that what they do is a form of music teaching, but also more than simply teaching, from which I read their awareness of the affordances of participatory music.

Lars, for instance, prefers the word facilitator to teacher, and offers a variety of descriptions of his role, ranging from the more philosophically oriented "to facilitate the human spirit" (L8), and "to help participants discover that they are part of a larger whole and to help people give and take in a group" (L23), to the more specific "to facilitate positive synergy effects in improvisatory group music making" (L7) and "to help participants discover the joy of listening in group music making" (L18). This focus on listening in group music making is something we see clearly in Bentley's core category of tuning in (section 2.3.3), and I will return to this in

section 5.5.1. Lars sums up his role as "enabling potential to be drawn out, and creating positive experiences so that this potential can blossom" (L25).

Ingunn is happy to be described as a teacher on the one hand (albeit for two generations at the same time), but her role is wider than that, including "providing participants with a musical experience, and the chance to learn something new that they couldn't pick up just anywhere" (I16, I17). She uses the Norwegian word *formidling*, a difficult word to translate directly into English, but which in this context relates to the passing on of local musical traditions. In her *Early Interplay* courses, she sees music as a tool for taking care of infants, and explains that an important part of her role is teaching parents about everything from object impermanence and turn-taking in 'conversations' to stimulating motor development and language acquisition (I48, I49). Her conscious mirroring of the babies and providing parents with a good model of how to communicate with infants goes far beyond the traditional role of music teacher, yet it is combined with teaching songs and making music together with the participants.

The emphasis on resources in the *Fargespill* project makes drawing out each participant's inner resources and making them aware of these resources a key aspect of Ole and Sissel's role. Ole is clear that their "primary role is to unleash latent resources" (O38). As a professional musician working towards a public performance, Ole describes another aspect of his role as attempting to capture the universal elements in the material provided by the participants (O1), and adding the necessary professional touch to the participants' artistic utterances (O3). Since he sees *Fargespill* as an important vehicle for integration and improved relations between different ethnic and religious groups, a third aspect of his role lies in raising participants' awareness of the social impact of *Fargespill* (O9).

A fourth aspect of Ole and Sissel's role is creating arenas for success in music making for people who have otherwise been effectively eliminated from formalised cultural activities (O61). This commitment to cultural democracy shines clearly through the theory of both Higgins and Bentley. Ole uses the metaphor of "being a good host, both as a teacher and as a society, receiving immigrants and asylum seekers, offering a welcome to newcomers, so that they *feel* welcome" (O53). The concept of the welcome will be investigated in section 5.1.

Both Ole and Sissel see their role as that of a teacher, but Sissel says it depends on your definition of teaching (S34), while Ole emphasises the mutual learning processes at work for pupil and teacher alike (O33), and points to the need to be aware of both the responsibilities and the opportunities inherent in the role of teacher (O40). Ole explains that all relationships are reciprocal, but it is first and foremost the responsibility of the teacher to bring reciprocity to the relationship – so that both parties end up learning and developing (O31).

Sissel describes how her role as music teacher includes helping people understand how much music they have within, and that the music they have inside them is worthwhile (S16). Her approach is dialogic, using her own musical experiences as a starting point, and then encouraging others to follow her lead and share something of their musical heritage (S8). She also sees it as her role to support participants in their attempts to teach their songs to others in the group – she is an intermediary between the 'owner' of the song and the others (S23). She describes her role in the initial process of collecting raw material from the participants as follows:

> You must put yourself in brackets and meet the participants in dialogue. Focus on them. Establish contact, get them to lift their gaze. You need to put yourself in the background. You must be open to whatever comes up in the here and now, and use that as your basis. Record small snatches, learn them as well as possible before the next session, then help the child to sing more and teach the others. (Interview with Sissel, S22).

She describes how in this dialogic teaching process the leader must use herself and her cultural heritage in the encounter with others from a different background, at the same time daring to show herself to be vulnerable and open-handed (S40).

One of Bentley's strategies is that of indirect imparting, or teaching without teaching. I observed this strategy in all of my informants, for instance when Ingunn led the participants from one activity to another without verbal instruction, and when she choreographed a simple group dance as the group danced, with hand movements and bodily gestures showing the way (see the observation sketch in section 4.1.3).

As we will see in section 5.3, all four informants appear to share a view of musicality as something universal, and firm confidence in the fact that everyone has something valid to contribute to others. Lars, who has a Steiner school background, expresses the belief that all humans have a need to express themselves artistically (L77). Not least all four informants appear to view music primarily as a human behaviour, with various affordances beyond the aims of music learning, teaching, rehearsing and performance, as will be seen throughout these three chapters. The third part of Bentley's theory ties closely in with this (section 2.3). I will return to this in section 5.4 on planning for the unknown.

From this introduction I go on to my own interpretation of what my informants' role involves, on the basis of the interviews and my observation. I have identified three categories: having a firm professional grounding as a starting point, the innovative, autodidactic element in my informants' approaches, and their willingness to meet challenge, risk and chaos head on.

4.3.2 Professional grounding

Whilst in the UK setting Higgins comes from, community musicians may or may not be

qualified music teachers or musicians, all my Norwegian informants have formal music training, either as music teachers or performers, or both. Several of them talk about how their professional grounding is important to them. Sissel, for instance, states that her professional training gives her a sense of security and confidence in her role as leader (S39). Ingunn is particularly clear that her (ongoing) professional training is important for her to ensure really good activities, and explains that her training allows her to be flexible and take her lead from the children in her groups (I4, I33, I37). As she says: "With a solid professional grounding you can abandon all your plans for a session, and know why" (I34). She sees her work with infants and parents as a big responsibility, and emphasises that it is important to take opportunities for professional development along the way. This is not limited to formal competence, but also experiential learning, which brings me to the next point.

4.3.3 Innovative, autodidactic process

All my informants are over forty, and have worked in the field for a relatively long time. Each of them works innovatively, and has over the years created and developed unique music-making opportunities for various groups in the community. They have all had to invent the process as they go along, so there is a strong autodidactic element in their work. Each of them talks specifically, without being prompted, about the process they have been through from their tentative beginnings in this kind of work to their present situation, and how, although their professional training provides a solid foundation for this work, they are constantly learning and developing in their role. Lars describes this process as follows:

> Professional training is good to have, but the experience you build up over time changes your perspectives. In the early days I felt I had to be a fount of musical knowledge, but over the years I have come to the realisation that my most important role is to create a safe atmosphere where people's latent potential for music making can blossom and flourish. (Interview with Lars, L9).

I see clear links to Higgins' safety without safety (section 2.2.4) and Bentley's creating a safe space (section 2.3.1) in this utterance.

Ingunn talks of gaining confidence as she built experience, becoming more adept at doing things her own way (I17), and expresses the need to work with materials she believes in (I9). She recounts how initially she used tried and trusted course materials from the MFLB association, but how she gradually built her own resource bank based on local folk music, and developed her own way of presenting it, while staying true to local tradition and dialects (I17). She relates how she has learnt through experience, through participating in numerous courses and workshops, and not least through working alongside professionals in related fields (I26).

The learning process on many levels Ole and Sissel have been through in the 10 years of *Fargespill* is implicit throughout their interviews. Their willingness to dive into uncharted waters leads to the next point, which stood out strongly when coding the data: my informants' confident attitude to challenge, risk and creative chaos.

4.3.4 Welcoming challenge, risk and chaos

In my original project description I stated that I was looking for informants with considerable experience in the field who might be said to have done ground-breaking work, forging new paths in music making opportunities outside formal educational settings. After analysing the data, I believe that all my informants are indeed pioneers. One aspect of their pioneering work is, as their statements show, that they are not easily scared by challenge, risk or chaos. Here I see a link to Higgins' description of the potential threat and unknown future (section 2.2.2).

A confident, experienced teacher, Ingunn points out that when working with children and music, you cannot be afraid of a little creative chaos, nor see it as a failure when things take a different turn than expected in a session. Working with babies, toddlers and young children often produces unknown elements "It's fun when that happens!" she says, and gives a lively account of toddlers in one session breaking out of finger songs to practice their newfound running skills, and how she went home and collected all the songs and rhymes she could about running to meet their need to run – before moving on to the fine motor skills afterwards (I40).

Ole takes the idea of risk a step further, portraying risk not only as something positive, but as an essential element in any process in which one hopes to grow or develop (O55). When asked whether it is scary to start up a new group and not know where it will lead, Ole replies:

> Yes, but scary is a many-facetted word! And it doesn't necessarily have negative connotations – I believe you should always subject yourself to as much risk as you can handle! Because staying secure in your comfort zone is paramount to stagnation, while risk brings development. (Interview with Ole, O55, O56).

Lars, too, emphasises the positive nature of challenges, describing tough challenges as "a gift" to the group (L42). He has adopted the mantra that in any situation he facilitates:

> There is always at least one possible path forward from here – my task is to find it, with the participants I have here and now. […] Originally it could be uncomfortable, even feel like a threat, when challenges arose in a drum circle, but now I am actually drawn to challenges. (Interview with Lars, L40, L46).

This section started with my informants' own statements about how they see their role, followed by three categories identified in my thematic analysis. This introduction to my informants' role as professional leaders of community music activities serves as a backdrop to the more specific strategies and approaches to practice identified in the analysis process presented in chapter 5.

5 Findings II: Approaches to practice

This chapter presents five specific approaches to practice identified in the data material, drawing on all four interviews and supported by my observation. The first four categories were identified in the interviews with all four informants, although some were more prevalent in one or more of the interviews. The fifth category is based on Lars' community drumming activities, without reference to the others. I choose to include this fifth category, though specific to his work, as I believe it is highly relevant to other music education settings.

5.1 Offering a warm welcome – open access

> The task I have set myself is to create a safe environment where anyone can come to play. Many people get a huge amount out of established amateur music life – bands, choirs, chamber groups – but what about all those who for various reasons don't have those opportunities open to them? Must they be relegated to sitting on the sideline, or could they too be given the chance to play a part in group music making, and experience being part of a musical interaction with others? (Interview with Lars, L9).

As we saw in sections 2.2.1 and 4.3.1, one of the key characteristics of community musicians is that they are committed to removing barriers to musical participation, and opening up music making opportunities for a wide cross-section of the community, including all age groups and social and ethnic backgrounds, as stated in Bentley's idea of creating "a culture of everyday musicality" (Bentley, 2011, p. 116) and Higgins' statement about "an ever-widening ring of hospitality" towards those who have been denied music making opportunities (Higgins, 2012, p. 173). This is also true of my informants, who all work in ways that push the boundaries of music education and music making opportunities to a greater extent than music educators working in formal educational institutions. Each of my informants is concerned with extending opportunities for music making to people who are less likely than others to take part in established cultural activities.

This category is closely tied to the key element of hospitality/welcome in the theoretical framework presented by Higgins (see section 2.2). At a keynote speech at the opening conference of the Centre for Educational Research in Music (CERM) at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo in November 2014, Lee Higgins spoke warmly about the importance of extending an unconditional welcome – a 'Yes!' – to people as they cross the threshold to music making and learning activities.[14] I will discuss the relevance of this welcome to formal music education in section 7.3.1.

[14] The programme of the opening CERM conference (2014) at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo is available from: http://tinyurl.com/le4pu5b.

5.1.1 Come as you are!

Among Lars' many drum circle activities, he runs drop-in drum circles for adults and for families in a completely open setting. Anyone can come along and have a go. Some regulars have been coming since he started up over ten years ago, some come and go, but he has a core of semi-regular attendees. Since they are drop-in groups, these semi-regulars are not established as a group, but they form a core. The regulars cannot expect the group to remain unchanged by the arrival of newcomers – Drum as you are! is Lars' slogan, and as he says, it applied to them when they first came, and it must apply to others, too (L41). This echoes Higgins' statements about refuting the notions of a gated community and how the unconditional welcome poses a challenge to existing members of a group (Higgins, 2012, p. 138).

Ingunn works in part through municipal arts schools. These schools are required by law to provide cultural activities and education, and are government-subsidised, but since 2003 there has been no ceiling on course fees, which vary greatly across the country. Her activities are not governed by any set syllabus or curriculum. Ingunn states that she would like absolutely everybody to come to these groups (I44). She works in line with the intention of the MFLB association that it should be an open access course open to anyone who is interested.

There are certain exceptions to my informants' open-door policy. Lars, for instance, specifies that participants may not attend while under the influence of alcohol or drugs (L37). This ties is with Higgins' idea of having enough leadership to create a responsible framework, yet not relinquish control entirely. *Fargespill* was originally open to all, without audition. These days it has become so popular that there has to be certain selection process to restrict numbers, but rather than an audition the leaders try to assess who will get the most out of participation, with full focus on participants' inner resources, assuming that everyone has something to offer.

5.1.2 Not restricted to talented or musically experienced participants

Unlike in many amateur music settings, community music leaders welcome unlikely participants with no prior experience of music making. As Lars puts it, whoever comes along "I think – this is something we don't have yet. How can we help ease this into the group and make it shine?" (L42). Ole goes so far as to say that in *Fargespill* they are interested in participants with particular talent, but that they are absolutely interested in less proficient participants, too, since he equates less than perfect performances with genuine, credible performances, complete with the natural inadequacies and vulnerability that give credibility to a performance (O45).

5.1.3 Moral responsibility to include people at the outer edges of the community

Lars talks about how even for those on the periphery of society, music can be a way of joining

in and feeling part of a community (L71). We saw in the observation sketch in section 4.1.2 what care he takes to include even those who some people might assume would not get anything out of a drumming activity. Ole, too, expresses a belief that music is an incredibly important element in our lives, that almost everyone has the ability to sing, unless this ability has atrophied, and that there is something releasing about singing, making rhythms, dancing (O50).

In the *Fargespill* book Sissel and Ole describe welcoming a newly arrived child at Norwegian school for first time with a song from the child's native country. This kind of warm welcome kick-starts the relationship and makes them feel included in a setting which can be overwhelming.

As well as her courses in the arts school, Ingunn runs parent/infant music groups at a residential home run by child protection services for people in difficult family circumstances, including former drug addicts. "There I reach people who wouldn't normally attend, people who need a little help to be a good parent, and I believe music groups are a good tool for them to learn to take care of their children." (I46).

5.1.4 Cultural democracy and tackling obstacles to participation

Despite the leaders' commitment to open access activities, there will always be obstacles to participation. Most of the participants at Ingunn's courses, run by the municipal arts schools, are well educated professionals. Price can be an obstacle in this setting, she says. In the case of *Fargespill*, cultural differences can cause problems. As Sissel explains, girls from certain cultures are often not allowed by their parents to perform on stage, although Sissel always hopes that at least one family might change their minds and let them perform (S27). As Bentley's theory makes clear, a fear of failure may also keep people away from participating in music making, however much the leaders try to invite them in (see section 2.3.1).

The issue of widened access to cultural activities is deep seated in the community arts movement from which community music has sprung out. Lars articulates his thoughts on cultural democracy quite simply. Every person has an artist within, he says. We all, as humans, have a need to express ourselves artistically – to see things take form through our own creative activity (L77). He is sceptical to the reduction of culture to an elitist approach at the expense of a more participatory music discourse. This resonates with Bentley's statement about music being "reduced" to excellence in music making (Bentley, 2011, p. 116). After all, he says, music didn't arise as an elitist art form, it arose as music within the community (L80).

> If the majority of us walk round believing we have no music in us, and pay thousands of kroner to sit in a concert hall and be passive recipients of music, we are pretty much 'bringing sand to the beach'! […] Some cultures have never lost this participatory approach to music as a daily tool in dealing with life: crises, ceremonies, people, events – living in flow with the ups and downs of life. (Interview with Lars, L79)

Ole, too, is clear that, despite all the talk of cultural democracy and well-meaning schemes for increasing the number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in municipal arts schools, we certainly don't have an inclusive, democratic cultural life:

> We have no other places where asylum seekers and newly arrived young immigrants can make music. None of them are enrolled in the municipal arts schools. We have in effect eliminated these people from the established cultural life of the community. To counteract this, we at Fargespill see that we need to enter the school arena. We must start where everyone is. […] They've no idea what arts school is, and couldn't afford the enrolment fee even if they did. This is a tragic failure on the part of society. (Interview with Ole, O61, O63).

Fargespill is trying to address this and is on the verge of entering schools through a new cross-curricular programme based around songs and dances, film excerpts from *Fargespill* performances and interviews with *Fargespill* participants. The programme, which includes history, geography, religious studies and other subjects, will be available from autumn 2015.

Ingunn also expresses frustration that her activities don't reach more users. She wishes the courses in the arts school could be cheaper, to reach more users, as she believes these groups provide an important tool for parent/infant bonding. However, she doesn't believe groups should be free of charge, as it is more of a commitment to have to pay a little (I7). One way in which the MFLB association is trying to increase outreach is by getting into kindergarten programmes, Ingunn says. It is not just parent/infant bonding that can be helped through music, but all interaction between significant adults and children, for instance at kindergarten. Well-baby clinics could also be a good place to make groups available, she says (I73).

Having invited people in and given them a warm welcome, the next important strategy is to create favourable conditions that give people the confidence and desire to stay and make music. This brings us to the second strategy, which I have chosen to call creating a path of no mistakes.

5.2 Creating a path of no mistakes – playfulness versus perfectionism

> Is making music about achievement? Achieving is a negatively loaded work in my ears – oh no! heart racing, etc. And of course, in *Fargespill* we have to do this too. When you go on stage, you are going on stage to perform and achieve. You need to be focused, and you need to feel – everyone feels that you need to deliver the goods – it's a tough task performing on stage. So yes, we do both things. But I think that the informal, unceremonious phase is very important in *Fargespill*, the phase where it's all about having fun. And it's during that informal stage that you discover who can handle that

> pressure, who can perform under pressure. Which participants can be relied on to walk out onto the stage alone and start off a song. (Interview with Sissel, S44).

This category is closely tied to the task of tackling musical disenfranchisement (see section 2.3.1) as addressed through Bentley's integrative musical interaction, and to Higgins' safety without safety and path of no mistakes referred to in the label (see section 2.2.4). It is all about putting newcomers at ease and keeping things simple. Just as Bentley's integrative musical interaction involves the integration of beginners into a participating musical group without taking the form of a lesson or rehearsal, the participants in my informants' activities simply make music together from the outset (in *Fargespill* this is more predominant in the initial phase). In other words, the intentionality in several of my informants' activities is playing for the sake of playing, rather than learning or rehearsing.

5.2.1 Eliminating the possibility of making mistakes

Lars takes care to make newcomers and beginners feel especially welcome and at ease, and to cater to their needs so they can contribute right from the start (L5). As he says, some of them are completely new to music making, while some are new to *this kind of music making*. Either way, they are in a new setting, and it is important that they feel this is an arena in which they can be themselves, just as they are, with no special criteria or standards to live up to (L6). The key is to remove the possibility of making mistakes which prevents many people from joining in music making. Lars speaks directly to this issue of creating a safe atmosphere in which newcomers are helped to feel successful in music making from the start, and notes that drums/ percussion are an ideal starting point, as there are no out-of-tune notes and it is possible to play with no inkling of technique, so you can get right into making music straight away (L12, L28).

> Many people have previous experience of music making that they failed at, or weren't good enough to make the mark – so they are scared of making mistakes. This is not a good starting point/motivation for being creative. […] If you take away the possibility of playing incorrectly, I believe you remove a huge obstacle in many people's eyes. […] With drums there are no wrong notes. That said, you can also get better at playing and develop your technique as you play with others. (Interview with Lars, L13, L14, L28).

Ingunn stresses the importance of simplicity, so that participants feel empowered to go home and try things out for themselves. This reminds us of Bentley's strategy of providing an achievable model (see section 2.3.2).

> It's very important to me to keep it simple […] it's not about showing off my skills. I use simple instruments so I can go right up close to each child, things like chime bars, rhythm eggs, hand drums, only instruments that don't require a lot of technical skills. So that no one feels they can't go home and do the same. (Interview with Ingunn, I45).

5.2.2 Playfulness

A theme that recurred throughout the interviews was that of playfulness in music making. Unlike Norwegian, in English the verb to play music is the same as the verb for what children do. My informants are all concerned with the idea of playfulness, and several of them touch on the idea that the joy of making music with others can often be lost when the main focus is on achieving certain standards/ideals of perfection. Lars refers to his adult drop-in drum circles as a "musical playground" (L7) and suggests that this kind of music making tends to be more playful in approach than established amateur music life (L11). We saw in section 2.3.1 that Bentley suggests that many keen amateur musicians are hampered in their enjoyment of musical activities by their preoccupation with musical excellence (Bentley, 2011, p. 116). Higgins, too, believes that participants from a range of musical traditions have had their sense of free musical play restricted (Higgins, 2012, p. 151).

Ingunn also says that in her music groups for infants and parents there is less focus on perfection, and more on playfulness (I8). She notes that this playfulness was missing from her own professional training as an instrumentalist, and that she lost much of her joy in music through the continuous focus on achieving perfection in her music studies (I1), while she rediscovered a joy in music through singing and dancing with her firstborn baby (I3). This playfulness does not mean that she cannot address serious elements of musical and motor development and the like in her classes. In her groups with pre-schoolers the element of learning is greater, but the children still just have fun, she says (I29). She also notes that she has often experienced music activities in kindergarten where the playfulness is subordinate to the need for children to conform and follow rules. As she says, children who are expected to sit nicely during music activities expend much of their creative energy just trying to sit still (I41).

Sissel also speaks about maintaining a light-hearted approach to music making and learning with lots of fun, and the importance of lowering the threshold so participants feel able to take part, not focussing on whether they are any good at it or not, but discovering a *joi de vivre* through music making (S4). She distinguishes between two phases in the *Fargespill* process, the initial trying new things out stage, and rehearsing towards a performance, and says that the focus on playfulness extends to the performance stage:

> We take care of the playfulness, even in performance. It's not a matter of life and death! And we always say before a show starts, backstage, we always say: Right, we've rehearsed and rehearsed. But now, when we go out there, we're just going to have fun! We'll probably make mistakes, but that doesn't matter in the slightest. Because we're all in this together, and we'll back each other up! (Interview with Sissel, S47).

This ties in with the *Fargespill* philosophy that sees honest communication as more important than a polished performance (O3), and powerful expressive quality as more important than perfection (O6). "A perfect performance will not be truly credible – the perfect person will always be concealing a lot of things, so it won't be a genuine expressive act," says Ole (O48).

5.2.3 Cultural expectations

In our Western culture music making is often seen as something specialists do, and most people are more likely to listen to music than actively make music themselves. As Sissel points out: "Somehow we've got it into our brains that music making is the domain of professionals – 'I can't sing!' people say. But actually we are all full of cultural heritage, songs and dances that can be important for others" (S16). Ole reminds us (O16) that the ideal of the autonomous artist/genius firmly placed on a pedestal and the related distinction between performers and audiences are by and large Western, European ideals (cf. Bentley's notion of cultural reinforcing described in section 2.3.1). Many of the *Fargespill* participants, on the other hand, come from cultures with no concept of achievement in connection with cultural participation. For them artistic expression is not about accomplishment, it is simply something everyone does, each in their own way, and music is neither seen as something we have to practice or something we can excel at (O14). This caused some confusion in the early days of *Fargespill*:

> At the start, before we realised this, participants could come to a session, play, groove, make amazing music, and then we'd say 'Come back on Friday, and do it again!'. And they might, or might not turn up. Because they didn't get where we were coming from – we have to *rehearse* having fun?! (Interview with Ole, O16).

My understanding is that this category says something important about the intentionality of my informants' activities, namely that the focus is on playing rather than on learning to play, similar to Higgins' emphasis on community music as process, participation and play (Higgins, 2012, p. 150). This distinction dawned on me gradually in the course of my research and helped me reach a clearer understanding of why community music is not merely a new form of informal learning practices in music. This explains to some extent my slight scepticism to the focus in the Nordic chapter in *Community Music Today*, where the focus is very much on learning (cf. section 7.2.3).

By inviting anyone and everyone to join in actively in music making, my informants make an implicit statement that everyone has the potential to be active music makers. As we saw in section 2.3.1, Bentley says there is a discrepancy between this stance and the low musical self-confidence of many non-specialist musicians. A key strategy in bridging this gap appears to be raising people's awareness of their inner musical resources and creating favourable conditions

for them to blossom. This brings us to the next category – unleashing latent resources.

5.3 Unleashing latent resources

> All communication has social consequences, but artistic communication has social consequences that social communication doesn't have […] the thing about artistic communication is that it is resource-focused – one hundred per cent resource-focused. We simply ask: What do you have to offer in this setting? Our objective is to produce a fantastic show. And therefore we are fully focused on people's resources. What contribution can you make? (Interview with Ole, O11).

This category arose from the data material, and was not part of my original theoretical framework. The category appears to be closely related to my informants' views on musicality and the need to express oneself artistically as a universal human trait. The idea of resource-based pedagogy is at the heart of the *Fargespill* method, and is expounded on in the *Fargespill* book (Hamre et al., 2011, p. 12). Lars is also clear in his statements about people's need to express themselves artistically. "I believe that innate musical potential is universal" (L27). He sees his task as creating an arena where participants feel secure to explore this side of themselves. Ingunn did not talk so much about this, but my background reading about the MFLB association shows that this nurturing of innate musicality is a key point in their philosophy. As Nora Kulset says, "active music making with small children is important to prevent children from being socialised into a world of musically silent people" (Kulset, 2002, p. 12). It is natural to start with *Fargespill* when looking at this category.

5.3.1 Universal innate musical potential

The idea of innate musical potential in all people lies at the heart of the *Fargespill* philosophy. As explained in section 1.7.3, the focus in *Fargespill* is on what resources the participants have to offer. These resources are not synonymous with polished, developed talent, but genuine, authentic expressivity and the ability to make music (O45). The entire show originates from the participants' contributions (S18) and the leaders have unshakeable faith in the cultural contribution these young people have to make.

Observation shows that even young babies react in a marked fashion when exposed to singing and music. In Ingunn's groups I observed how babies of around four months display a huge reaction to chime bars played near them – such as a taught body, flailing arms, laughter, smiles, dribbling, and hugely concerted attempts to hold, taste and bang the instrument.

Ole believes that music is important in most people's lives. "These youngsters come in most senses empty-handed to us. And yet they are immensely strong. And despite everything, they give of themselves, and they have an important contribution to make." (O7). Ole and Sissel

stumbled across this realisation in the early days of *Fargespill*. Initially the leaders had no inkling of the vast wealth of resources lying waiting to be discovered in classrooms and asylum reception centres around the country (S6). Both Sissel and Ole describe the aha! moment when they first went into a classroom of immigrant children, armed with Norwegian folksongs, to create a musical performance with children without the nurtured talent of the talent class in the municipal arts schools, only to discover huge resources lurking in every classroom. They were, in their own words, completely taken aback (S6). "Ali was our biggest problem child.[15] In the instant he redefined himself to become our greatest resource, that massive musical and social landslide is a moment you never forget." (O6).

5.3.2 People unaware of their own resources

Part of what Sissel and Ole do is making people aware of how much music they have inside them without realising it, and raising participants' consciousness of how much they have to offer, rather than assuming that music making is the domain of professionals.

> We see again and again that it comes as a surprise to the participants – awareness of the inner resources they possess. No one has ever told them before. Take Ali, who is an outstanding singer. He had no idea that what he did was anything special! They'd always sung at home, and his father, too – 'You should hear my brothers – they're much better than me!' […] Our task is to unleash these resources. (Interview with Ole, O12, O14).

Even trained musicians can be unaware of their inner musical resources. Despite years of musical training, it was only after having a baby Ingunn discovered "*my* voice, *my* song, *my* dance" (I3).

It would appear from my informants' statements that this focus on resources consists of two stages – people need to be made aware of their inner resources, but these resources also need to be given good growing conditions. Lars makes this clear in the following excerpt:

> My job is to draw out the innate potential lying dormant in each and every one of us. […] There is something there, a potential, which might need a little help and enabling to dare rear its head, and once it does so, it requires positive experiences to grow. […]When I say 'Drum as you are!' – come as you are – it is based on a firm belief that you, as a human being, are valuable, and that you have something valuable to contribute to others. By way of being different from others, you have the potential to contribute something that will reflect, enlighten or inspire others different from you. To acknowledge difference as a richness. Everyone should feel that they have something valuable to contribute – that's the whole point. (Interview with Lars, L9, L26, L50).

This focus on resources requires the leader of community music activities to seek to incorporate the individual contributions in the best possible way. Lars describes how he believes each of us

[15] Please refer back to section 3.5.1 for a comment regarding identification of this participant.

has some unique contribution to make, and the synergy effects of combining these inner resources can lead to the creation of something we couldn't do on our own (L7).

Sissel advises music teachers to start small, assuming everyone has something to offer which it is our job as teachers to draw out. We need to turn our thinking around from planning materials to introduce to pupils, to unleashing their inner musical resources, she says (S30).

Lars explains that he sees being allowed to contribute, to give and receive from others, and feel like a valuable contributor as a genuine, universal need (L54, L55). "We have so many innate resources that need to be utilised. It can be healing in many settings to use our inner music" (L79). Sissel echoes this, adding that any encounter with others takes on a different quality when you acknowledge their rich inner resources, and they tend to respond by giving generously of themselves (S11). Lars also points out how the participants act as resources for each other, with more experienced musicians supporting the newcomers (L4, L5).

To sum up, all my informants, to varying degrees, are concerned with drawing out people's innate, sometimes hidden resources. This implies that every time they start up a group, they set out on a journey of discovery of the unique contribution of each participant. In section 4.3 I showed that, although as professionals my informants are well equipped to meet and embrace challenges, they are unable to predict accurately the outcome of any session. Analysis of the data showed this to be a recurring theme in the interviews, and a strategy of planning for the unknown stood out clearly. I will look at this category in the next section.

5.4 Planning for the unknown

> If you've planned a session really well, then you know what you want, and that allows you to set yourself free – if something happens during the session to make you change your plan, then you know why and what your objective is. (Interview with Ingunn, I34).

This category is tied to Higgins' unpredictable outcome (see section 2.2.3). The activities of my informants vary greatly in how detailed planning is possible beforehand. Ingunn is the one who can plan in most detail, as she is basically teaching in an informal setting. Lars' activities vary from teaching in kindergarten with a basic plan in mind for each session, to improvisatory drum circles making music of the moment. The very nature of *Fargespill* lies in a 100% resource-based philosophy centred around a meeting with the participants, where the leader is in a receptive role in the initial stages. The *Fargespill* method is centred around seeking out the unexpected, jogging memories and enticing musical contributions from the participants.

However, all four of my informants talk about the need to prepare, and be prepared for unexpected elements in their sessions. This is a key aspect of professionalism in any formal or

informal teaching setting. What Higgins describes as a potential threat is met head on by my informants, through a professional grounding, a lack of fear of the unknown and greater emphasis on creativity than on conformity or staying in their comfort zones.

5.4.1 Facilitating the unknown

This facilitating of the unknown is particularly strong in improvisatory settings, so I will start this category with Lars' drum circles. Lars' modus operandi is ad hoc music making, so the very core of his activity is welcoming the unknown. There are no special criteria or standards attached to attending his open-access drop-in sessions, and each person comes "as they are" (L41). Lars tries to create an atmosphere in which the innate musicality of each participant can blossom. His philosophy is to let go, and see what happens! (L11).

In improvisatory music groups, Lars explains, we only have the present to guide us. "If you sit clinging to what is familiar, then the present moment – and with it the opportunities for discovery – will pass. You need to listen to the here and now in the group, and within yourself." (L21). Sometimes the group will find a really good groove, he explains, but you cannot reliably predict or plan this, merely try to cultivate conditions likely to help it happen (L31).

5.4.2 Preparing for an encounter

Fargespill has provided plenty of unexpected experiences in the course of ten years according to Sissel, right from the first aha! moment of meeting Ali (see section 5.3.1). Initially, says Ole, we had a tendency to think that everyone else is like us, and it came as something of a shock to discover they're not! (O15, O16). The entire *Fargespill* programme originates from unknown, wholly unexpected contributions from participants.

In the initial stages of the *Fargespill* method, when collecting raw material for a new *Fargespill* show, it is less a case of planning a session in the sense of deciding beforehand what to do, than of preparing for an encounter with someone and something new, and being completely open to what happens there and then, and using that as a starting point. But in order to start the process, Sissel prepares by learning names, finding songs from the native countries of the participants as an opening gesture. In the encounter she hopes to arouse the participants' curiosity in her through her genuine interest in them (S37, S38, S39). She reminds us that the leader must proceed sensitively when opening potential cans of worms, and must respect participants' boundaries of what they are comfortable sharing (S18, S15). Sissel, like Ingunn, notes that her professional training and experience give her confidence in these encounters (S39). In the later stages of the process, the planning is of a different nature.

5.4.3 Finding a way forward

My informants are, as noted in section 4.3.3, leaders that are alert to opportunities, seeing challenges as a gift. Lars is clear that new people coming into the group can take the group in a new direction – often! This used to be daunting in the early days, but now he embraces it. 'Drum as you are!' is meant very literally and constitutes in some senses a threat to the status quo, but he welcomes this (L38, L40). He actually sees the unknown and the unfamiliar as a gift, and regards it as a challenge to make whatever is brought to the session to shine (L40).

He recounts a "pretty scary" experience early on when only two participants turned up – one a semi-professional drummer and the other a new beginner – but he says that over the years he has developed a mantra that "there is always a way forward, and it is up to me to find it, with the people present" (L46). He has gradually built up a stock of experience and confidence in the existence of this way forward and his ability to find it.

One of the sources of the unknown is that group music making produces synergy effects, whereby "what we create together is mind blowing, compared with what I could create on my own". The alchemy in the groups depends on strong connections being formed there and then (L52, L57, L70).

Ole recounts an anecdote where the unknown and the need for improvisation was somewhat extreme, performing at an award ceremony on the main stage of the professional concert hall with the king present, and key performers turning up well after the act has begun (O59).

5.4.4 Thorough planning sets you free

A strong professional base (as presented in section 4.3.1) is a good starting point for planning for the unknown. Ingunn quotes a lecturer on one of the courses she attended:

> 'If you've planned a session really well, then you know what you want, and that allows you to set yourself free – if something happens to make you change your plan, then you know why and what your objective is.' […] I think having a solid professional base is a strength in this respect, because it allows you the leeway not to decide everything in detail in advance, but to follow the group. (Interview with Ingunn, I34, I37).

Ingunn says that each session should be well planned, but with plenty of scope for improvisation. Sometimes, she says, a session will go more or less as planned, while on other occasions it will turn out quite different from what she had thought out beforehand. For this reason, with the exception of the *Early Interplay* group, she does not hand out song sheets to participants, since she never knows quite what direction a group will take (I33, I37).

Ingunn is quick to point out that this freedom is greater outside of schools, where there is no

curriculum. Interestingly, she feels freer to follow the interests of the group off at a tangent if the participants are not paying a course fee, and she describes how she once spent nearly a whole session at a group for at-risk families responding to queries about the use of perfect fifths to accompany songs, canons and nursery rhymes (I46).

In this chapter so far I have presented four categories common to all four informants. The fifth and final category is one that was only explicitly expounded on by Lars, although listening skills are key to all the leaders and the participants in their activities. I have labelled this category facilitating listening skills and entrainment.

5.5 Facilitating listening skills and entrainment

> Music is only created when people start listening. (Interview with Lars, L19).

This last category consists of two closely related facilitation strategies which appear to be an important part of Lars' approach. Not surprisingly, since Bentley studied community drumming circles closely over several years, there are many direct links between Lars' approach and Bentley's theory of integrative musical interaction. I found Bentley's theory after completing the data collection, and reading Bentley in parallel with analysis of the interview data led me deep into this category from the perspective of the practitioner and the theorist at the same time.

5.5.1 Listening skills/tuning in

This category was originally labelled listening skills, but as I read Bentley I realised that it was closely related to her core category of tuning in, which is all about listening in group music making – the leader listening to the group and the participants listening to the rest of the group and to the leader (see section 2.3.3). Bentley states that aural learning triggers a higher degree of listening to the group (Bentley, 2011, p. 171) and talks about the opportunities for developing listening and attentive skills *through* group music making that can be valuable communicative skills in other areas of life (this is an example of Bentley's 'behaviour rehearsal', see Bentley, 2011, p. 240).

The main aim in Lars' drum circles and similar activities is helping people to play together. "My job is not instrumental teaching, but helping the participants discover the joy of *listening*," say Lars. He believes he has found a shortcut to playing together through listening. His explain that within percussion teaching there is usually a lot of focus on listening to the beats and rhythms played, leading to almost exclusive concentration on one's own playing and the technical skills needed to play accurately. When on the other hand people are encouraged to *listen to what is going on in the group*, the main focus is on a musical response to other people's music making, i.e. the relational aspects of group music making:

> I believe I've found a shortcut to making music with others via listening to the group and to oneself. The key idea is to listen, and respond. In this form of music making, technical skills play a secondary role. What's more important is learning to listen to what's going on in the group and respond to what you hear. (Interview with Lars, L19).

This does not prevent participants becoming more technically proficient over time through their participation, but the intentionality is playing, not learning to play, Lars explains (L21).

In these improvisatory groups, the framework for music making is very different from music making in which a previously composed piece is to be performed. As Lars says, all one has in improvisatory music making is the here and now and somehow the group has to find and pursue a musical idea together (L21). This is only possible by listening (or tuning in) to one another. This resembles Bentley' statement about mutual musical dialogue (Bentley, 2011, p. 83).

This need to listen also applies to his own role as facilitator – tuning in to the group as Bentley would say (see section 2.3.3). "Facilitating for me means doing all I can to make sure these positive moments occur as often as possible, by being attentive, listening and being present with my whole being." (L47). This ties in with Higgins' statement that a facilitator must be attuned to the group and able to offer an appropriate response, whatever happens (Higgins, 2012, p. 149).

5.5.2 Entrainment

In chapter 2 I gave a detailed introduction to Bentley's category of 'sensory entraining' based on Arthur Hull's 'entrainment', which describes the alignment of individual players to a common pulse (see section 2.3.2). This is a concept that Lars talked about at some length in the interview. He describes entrainment as something approaching a law of nature, by which rhythms that are not in synch with each other are pulled in towards a common pulse, and refers to a video called *32 Metronomes* as a useful visualisation of the concept.[16]

How can a facilitator enable the process of entrainment? Bentley describes how it is important to establish a clear pulse, make sure it can be heard through other sounds, and model the pulse for instance with visual clues (see the 'orienting example' in section 2.3.2). My observation of Lars showed examples of all three of these strategies. Lars explains that entrainment is "the feeling that there is something shared here, some collective movement that somehow we can latch on to" (L71). He recounts how a strongly autistic adult he had in a regular drum circle suddenly got a regular beat going in one session, after months of enthusiastic but uncoordinated and highly individual banging on the drum. Lars managed to steer the group's common pulse towards this participant's beat so that they all fell – and stayed – in synch. Lars recounts how

[16] For a visualisation of the concept of entrainment, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cptmipPS4Ms.

this person appeared to light up at this experience of connection, and regularly on subsequent occasions managed to tune in and latch on to the common pulse in the group. Lars describes how it might feel for someone normally so isolated from social interaction to suddenly find themselves "in the midst of a group working with a common course and purpose, able to feel that all are pulling in the same direction, and that they were for once at the centre of it" (L71). In this particular case, Lars was able to help this happen by listening and tuning in to this participant, adjusting and steering the group's pulse towards this one participant who was unlikely at that stage to be able to latch on to it themselves. In many cases, he says, entrainment will happen of its own accord, provided that we as teachers realise that time, repetition and patience are key factors.

Lars describes how he believes that the audible results produced by a child learning to play may sound like a shambolic clatter to us, but as long as the child believes it is making music, the child's *inner activity* is of a radically different quality than if it is just banging to make a noise:

> A child who is engaged in making music with others is […] searching for points of connection with others, a kind of entrainment, whereas in the second case it will be an expression of resignation, not communication. (Interview with Lars, L75)

Lars has come to the conclusion, through reflection and experience, that when working with children and drumming, the leader needs to be patient enough to carry on for a long time, swap instruments, try out different things, and repeat the activity over several sessions. Gradually, he says, the children will start to be able to hold a common pulse, and it will start to sound like music. I will return to this point in section 6.1.5. I believe that the concept of entrainment could be highly relevant in school music making.

In this chapter I have presented five specific strategies identified in my informants' approach to practice. In the next chapter I look at more general issues relating to their approaches.

6 Findings III: Overarching approaches

As already mentioned, the term 'approaches to practice' was deliberately chosen to keep my research focus as wide as possible. During the analysis process a number of themes arose directly from the interviews and my observation, too clear to ignore, at a more overarching level than simply identifying pedagogical strategies or methods.

This chapter presents my findings on three such overarching approaches. The first two are based on my informants' statements about the question of quality in their activities, and on the relational aspects in their group music making (in what sense can we identify a community in these activities that I choose to define as community music activities). The third relates to the idea of music as language. Each of these three topics is potentially huge, so I will confine myself to a brief analysis based on my informants' explicit statements about each category.

6.1 The question of quality

> Quality is very difficult to judge in all art since it is subjective. That's why we have art – to be wide open to different interpretations. There are two facets of quality in *Fargespill*: expressive quality of performance, and professionalism. (Interview with Ole, O19).

The question of quality is one that arises in all music education settings, formal and informal. It is an extremely challenging theme to tackle in a short section like this. Nevertheless, it was a recurring theme in the interviews and earned a distinct place in the thematic analysis.

When my informants were asked a deliberately open-ended question about quality in relation to their group activities, they responded by pointing to several different aspects of quality. These included, but were not necessarily restricted to, the quality of the musical process and product in their groups, the quality of materials used, the quality of their own leadership, and the quality of the interaction between themselves and the participants and among the participants.

Of all the categories identified, this is the one I found it most difficult to condense the empirical material on. In addition, I found it difficult to confine myself to the informants' statements on quality, and not impose my own value judgements and interpretations right from the initial analysis. The very question of which statements refer to quality is in itself a matter of interpretation. I am for instance aware that Ingunn won an award for her ground-breaking holistic approach to music groups for children, which I take as a stamp of quality, while the fact that *Fargespill* plays to sold-out concert halls at high ticket prices is also a sign that audiences see it as a quality product. However, my research is on *my informants'* approaches to quality.

6.1.1 Quality of performance/musical product

It is clear from my informants' statements that their concept of quality of performance extends far beyond technical proficiency and the one-sided focus on performative excellence brought under scrutiny by Bentley (2011, p. 116). In the *Fargespill* performances, the only project in this study in which participants work towards a public performance, quality has more to do with eliciting authentic artistic expression, than striving for perfection. Ole's describes quality in *Fargespill* shows as "authentic performances that shine, showing something genuine and universal, put into a professional framework. The story of being us. […] It is a mix of honest communication and professionalism." (O1, O3).

Sissel notes that quality in these performances also has to do with context. When a refugee from Congo sings the popular contemporary Norwegian ballad *Danse, ikke grate nå,*[17] the new context adds something unique. (S19). She adds that *Fargespill* has two phases – the impromptu fun phase, and the lead-up to performances, and quality considerations may vary between the two phases. Like Ole, Sissel is clear that despite their ambitions, there is definitely room for less polished performances in *Fargespill* (S44).

> Obviously our performances are also about achievement – we have high artistic ambitions. The performance has to be good, that's very important to us. But there must also be room to show our vulnerability – we go out there and do our very best, but not everything is perfect. (Interview with Sissel, S46).

Ole expands on this idea that quality is not synonymous with perfection:

> We are also keen to include participants not so good at singing and dancing – a credible, genuine portrayal of us as human beings including our inadequacies and imperfections – when a child is off-key every other note but sings with confidence, emotion and pride, it tells us something very important about living with our own imperfections. If everything in a *Fargespill* performance is highly polished and fault-free, then the natural human vulnerability and imperfection is gone from the performance and something of the spirit of *Fargespill* is gone, too. (Interview with Ole, O45).

The other projects are not concerned with public performance, but create an ad hoc musical product. Lars describes quality in this context as "music that is heartfelt, genuine and authentic, without technical brilliance, but masterful use of the limited technical skills they possess" (L23). This brings us to the next aspect of quality – quality of interaction.

6.1.2 Quality of interpersonal interaction – musical togetherness and the encounter

> The quality of the music you hear in improvisatory, participatory music groups is an utterly true reflection of the quality of the interpersonal interaction within the group. (Interview with Lars, L34).

[17] The titles translates as Dance, now, don't cry.

This type of quality described here by Lars is about more than musical content: it has to do with the quality of interaction within the group and developing people's ability to "listen and find their place in the whole" (L23). Lars describes these sudden moments of great musical togetherness that occur without warning as a gift (L23). The facilitator's job is about helping create conditions where this is more likely to happen, and recognising it when it does happen.

Lars describes musical quality in terms of the alchemy in a drum circle. Non-specialists come together and produce almost magical music, each just doing simple things "because the way they connect to one another is so strong and real," he says (L70). In his eyes, the most interesting aspect of the musical quality lies in what it tells us about the interpersonal interaction in the group (L35). "People might sit there thinking the musical quality is no great shakes, but I can always say with 100% truthfulness 'Thank you for the part you played in making this music! I couldn't have done what we just did together, on my own!'" (L68)

Sissel focuses on the quality of the encounter with participants, for instance how the leader establishes eye contact, shows genuine interest in the participants, and sparks their curiosity, drawing them out (S22, S38). She also talk about the caring attitudes at all levels in the *Fargespill* group as part of the quality of the process, and believes they have succeeded in creating a culture of caring for one another that has spread throughout the group (S56). My observation certainly gave me the same impression (see observation sketch in section 4.1.4).

Ole talks about quality in terms of reciprocity in the teacher-pupil/leader-participant relationship, and reminds us that the teacher/leader bears the primary responsibility for the quality of this relationship (O31).

Many of these facets of quality can be summed in in 'quality of participant experience'.

6.1.3 Quality of leadership

As well as the quality of the product, process and interaction, the data material generated several ideas about the quality of leadership needed for groups to function well.

A good leader of community music activities shares many of the same qualities as any other good music teacher, in terms of professionalism, a watchful eye on group dynamics and being well prepared. We have already seen that the professionalism arising from their professional training stands leaders in good stead. However, an equally important sign of quality leadership appears to be acceptance of all participants as they are. Lars expresses this succinctly in terms of "acknowledging difference as a richness" and "making every contribution shine" (L42). It is interesting that Ole also uses the expression making performances "shine" (O2). In order to do

this, he says, it is necessary to deflect focus from the leader. "To make something of high quality, you have to eliminate yourself. The ego detracts from the quality of the message." (O1). In chapter 7 I will return to how this idea may be transferred to formal music education settings, with the teacher assuming the role of facilitator more than that of instructor.

A related aspect of quality leadership is seeing what the leader can contribute to the activity which will lift the participants' contributions, in the case of *Fargespill* professionalism.

> Professionalism in this context means being in possession of the tools (professional music, lights, sound, stage, choreography) for staging the expressive quality. […] The participants bring the expressive quality, the leaders bring the professionalism. (Interview with Ole, O8, O18).

6.1.4 Quality of materials and content

Ingunn introduced the question of quality spontaneously, when talking about cutting down on perfectionism and introducing a greater element of playfulness in her groups. "I must emphasise that quality has always been an important consideration, too. I have to feel I can vouch for the quality of what I do/sing." (I8). For Ingunn, quality is not least about doing things simply but well, and using high-quality material and instruments (I44). She expresses the need to be free to pick her own materials and methods, which is not always easy for those working in curriculum-based instruction. "I'm not happy to use materials other people have dictated if I do not feel the quality of the materials is high enough," she says (I26). When prompted to enlarge on this, she explained that all songs she uses must have a good melodic line, as well as meaningful lyrics:

> Not in the sense of necessarily being so deep – I love the weird and wonderful texts to so many folksongs – but they must ring true at some level. […] Not like some of the 'educational' songs that were so in vogue for a while, but songs about us, our lives! (Interview with Ingunn, I9, I10).

Both Ingunn and *Fargespill* use Norwegian folksongs in their groups, and they talk about the quality of this rich source of material. Ole talks about a kind of musical Darwinism – folksongs that have survived for two hundred years have stood the test of time, and must surely consist of texts and melodies of the highest quality, he says. (O76).

Sissel, who has used folksongs throughout her professional life in various music education settings, makes the following comment:

> Folksongs often seem to have an innate quality. They are the people's own music, arising from need, not for the purpose of performance or entertainment. They often contain a wealth of information about our own culture, with a special atmosphere of their own, creating exciting rhythms. I want to pass this quality music on to new generations. (Interview with Sissel, S2).

When collecting material from *Fargespill* participants, Ole and Sissel cannot include all the contributed material in the public performances. In making a selection, they look for qualities such as a special atmosphere they can build on, something universally recognisable, perhaps something that can be combined with a Norwegian folksong that shares a similar atmosphere.

6.1.5 Other aspects of quality

In this final section on quality, I will relate other interesting statements by my informants about quality in the activities they lead. One of the most challenging statements about quality in musical processes came from Lars, who sometimes works with very young children. He was talking about quality in relation to young children's music making with drums and percussion instruments, which can appear chaotic and 'unmusical' to the listener. He focuses on the potentially huge chasm between the uncontrolled audible result the children are capable of achieving with their developing motor skills, and the music they experience inside them:

> If children recognise what they're doing as music, it will invoke their inner music. If they think of what they're doing as just making a noise, it will bring out their inner noise. And that's why we have to have patience and plenty of repetition – children must be given the chance to try again and again, until it starts to sound like the music they are imagining. *But in the child's mind, it has probably been music all along*. (Interview with Lars, L74, my italics).

This idea represents quite a challenges to all those involved in music making with children, and I will come back to this in the discussion in chapter 7.

Lars equates the quality of the experience for the participants with them feeling that they are making a valid contribution to the group (L50), while Ingunn places great importance on providing participants with a musical experience in her parent/infant music groups:

> Since these courses are put on by the municipal arts schools, people expect a certain standard – that the courses are led by trained music teachers. […] I aim to give the participants a musical experience. […] And try to make sure that they learn something new they couldn't pick up just anywhere. (Interview with Ingunn, I15, I16, I17).

For Ingunn, quality at *Early Interplay* is about noticing and responding to the infants' communication (I63) and acknowledging the power of music as a tool for parent/infant interaction and bonding. (I75). Over the years Ingunn has collaborated with professionals from related fields, such as a physiotherapist (baby massage and motor development), a dance teacher and a drama teacher. This raises the quality of the group activities she offers, as witnessed by the prize she was awarded for this holistic collaboration.

Ole draws a clear link between quality and risk taking, suggesting that while security is akin to stagnation, risk is akin to development (O53). This relates back to the role of the leader in

section 4.3.

6.2 Community and relational aspects in the informants' activities

> A child who is engaged in making music with others is rather like a seedling facing the sun and unfurling towards the light, searching for points of connection with others. (Interview with Lars, L75).

As I move on to the relational aspects in my informants' activities, I have in a sense come nearly full circle in my thesis, back to the concept of community in what I have chosen to term community music activities in Norway, as discussed in chapter 1. This category relates to how we might understand the prefix 'community' in the community music settings I investigated.

As I read and reread the data, two distinct codes in my initial analysis, 'community' and 'relationships', began to merge to form a single main category, that I finally labelled 'community and relational aspects in the informants' activities'. There is an obvious connection between the two, since any description of a community necessarily includes the relationships (or lack of relationships) between different people. As Ole puts it, "Wherever people are in contact with others, relational issues are always important." (O5).

I find it useful to revisit Higgins' idea of a 'community without unity' – a non-boundaried group – in investigating this category (Higgins, 2012, p. 136). In chapter 2.2 I described how Higgins sees a twenty-first century understanding of community as something constantly fluctuating and contextually determined rather than a fixed, uniform group of like-minded people. With this definition in mind, it is easier to envisage belonging to multiple, non-exclusive communities, which are conducive to a meeting between differences, as is particularly the case in *Fargespill*. Ole describes being part of a community as being in a position to give and take. By reaching out through music, he says, you open for a relationship with the other (O52).

Lars states that as humans we all have a "deep-seated universal need to be able to give and receive with a community of some kind" (L55). He believes that group music making can result in networking, strengthening ties in local communities, and can for instance help immigrants integrate into their new communities (L84). He also see music as tool for strengthening relationships and practicing social skills. This resounds with Bentley's theory that participatory music allows people a rare chance to interact with others (Bentley, 2011, p. 233).

6.2.1 Synergy effects – when one plus one makes three!

My informants are all concerned with the meeting between differences, each in their own way, and the positive synergy effects that occur when everyone makes their own unique contribution in a group setting. As Lars puts it, it is through contact with others that we develop, by listening

and finding our place in the whole (L7). As he says, "What we can create together is mind-blowing compared to what I can create on my own." (L52). Simply, we can do things together where the whole is in some way larger than just the sum of the constituent parts (L67). Lars sees the synergies that arise in a group as an important part of participatory music activities:

> The exciting thing is not the parts each on their own, but how they piece together to make a whole. When the pieces of the whole interlock, something is released. […] I think it illustrates the alchemy in the group well to say that you can get a group of ordinary people together, and suddenly they can make almost magical music, even though each individual is playing something quite simple, because the way they link together is powerful and genuine. (Interview with Lars, L69, L70).

He makes the point that this experience is particularly important for those on the edge of society with limited opportunities for social interaction (L71). The music made in any group or community may be seen as a metaphor for the interpersonal interplay among the members, but it doesn't happen on its own, it requires the guiding hand of a facilitator. As Higgins writes, the facilitator must release control, without relinquishing it (2012, p. 148). Lars believes group music making can provide an opportunity to discover differences between us, but also to recognise that we are just "variations on a theme" (L85).

6.2.2 Leader-participant relationship

The relationship between the leader of community music activities and the participants takes up a whole chapter of Higgins' book on community music. My interview guide did not go into this side of the leaders' work, yet all four informants talked spontaneously about their relationship to group members at some stage in the interviews. Ingunn remarked that it is important for her that the group dynamics are positive, that all the participants feel seen and affirmed (I56). Lars talked about the process of facilitation as one in which the leader enables everyone to participate in a creative process (L57). Sissel spoke about the encounter between herself as leader and the participants, and the need to show genuine interest in the participants (S38). Ole talked about reciprocity in the teacher-pupil relationship:

> We need to understand that all relationships are a two-way thing. Pupils, teachers, musicians, audiences all need to grasp that. But the greater responsibility for the relationship always lies with the teacher, the musician, the boss. We are responsible for making sure that the relationship is reciprocal. And that will enrich us, because we will get as much out of it as the audience, or the pupil. (Interview with Ole, O31).

I asked each of my informants whether there was an element of caring in their work. Despite some reticence, particularly on the part of Lars as to whether caring for others is mostly about helping others, or one's own need to feel helpful, all my informants agreed that there is an aspect of caring for the participants in their work. The idea that caring might be more about the

caregiver's needs than the recipient's struck me as odd at first, but as Ole notes "it often demands more generosity to receive than to give. Receiving implies that the giver is strong, so in some sense you admit that you are weak. It's a very complex process." (O30).

This human need to contribute and give to others is also an important aspect of the next point – the relationships between participants.

6.2.3 Relationships between participants

Sissel agrees that the role of leader involves an element of caring for participants, but is quick to point that they have created a culture of taking care *of one another:*

> The caring attitude the young participants show for one other is part of what makes *Fargespill* what it is today. The power and energy they show on stage comes from being trustful of each other. [...] I think we have succeeded in creating a culture of taking care of one other. (Interview with Sissel, S52, S53).

This was borne out by my observation of *Fargespill* rehearsals both in the many displays of affection, hugs and smiles, and in the way the older participants looked after and taught the younger ones. Sissel explains that some of the teenagers are entirely alone in Norway, with no family. They miss their own family and siblings, and show a huge amount of care for the younger children. She believes it is a huge strength having such a large age range (7-24) in the group, and notes that this is unusual in other established cultural activities. The older participants enjoy helping, encouraging and helping organise the younger ones. They are also very positive role models for the younger ones (S56).

Another aspect of the relationships within the group is the reciprocal learning process, she says. Everyone learns from each other. Girls from Bulgaria learn Tamil songs, boys from Lithuania learn Ugandan dances, and so on (S17).

When I ask Ole how it is possible to create a community when such different people are in one room together, he replies that the meeting between differences is nearly always what sparks development. A certain friction is created, an energy generated:

> The question is, how do we handle that energy? Do we see it as positive or negative? […] There's no denying it can be a really tough task sometimes! […] this necessitates a reconciliation process between people involved in opposing sides in a civil war. […] Getting these people to accept each other, even become friends. […] We have seen that anything can be overcome, even in conflicts with people traumatised on either side. (Interview with Ole, O22, O25, O27, O29).

Ingunn's *Early Interplay* course is all about using music as a framework for establishing and strengthening parent/infant interaction (I13). She believes music can be a powerful tool for learning to take care of and communicate with your child (I48). The group dynamics among

participants is less important to her than the rapport between her and the parent/infants pairs:

> I work according to a sort of hierarchy of interactions: The parent/infant interaction is the most important, then comes the relationship between me as the leader and each parent/infant pair. And then comes interaction between the participants. But first things first. And I don't allow chitchat during sessions, because our focus should be on the babies. And on making the mothers inordinately proud! (Interview with Ingunn, I60).

She makes provision for those who want to stop and chat before or after the session and make friends, and notes that the group dynamics alter if they meet up before or afterwards so the groups become a social meeting place. But, especially in the youngest baby groups, the primary importance is the parent/infant bonding, she stresses (I59).

While baby singing groups in Norway traditionally have been directed specifically at the relationship between parent and infant, using music as a model and tool for bonding, the MFLB association is taking this a step further in looking for new ways to strengthen adult-child relationships in general through the use of music, for instance at kindergarten (I73).

Lars talks at length about the relationships between participants in improvisatory group music making, in a way that echoes Higgins' notion of community without unity. Some of his participants have been coming for over ten years, others joined in much later. There is a core of participants who attend semi-regularly, but it is not an established group, it is a drop-in event which anyone can come to, he explains. When new people turn up, the experienced group members step up in a support function in relation to new ones. If no new ones come, the more experienced players can spend some time going a step or two further, exploring rhythmic variations or structures that could be difficult for newcomers (L3, L4, L5). Lars says the drum circle participants do not see new elements as a threat to the group because the slogan 'Drum/come as you' are applies to everyone. There can be no expectation in the group other than that this will also apply to those who join in at a later point (L41).

This kind of music making is about listening and discovering how you play a part that fits into the whole (L23). Lars teaches them to listen to the group, see the situation, listen to themselves, and play their response (L19). For this reason drum circles are popularly used for teambuilding in large corporations and the like, and school staff (L33). Lars explains the relationships at work in the group as follows:

> Most team efforts take time to bear fruit, and it is not always easy to pinpoint the contribution of each individual participant. But in improvisatory group music making, the quality of the music you hear is a true and unadulterated reflection of the quality of the interpersonal interaction/interplay among us. (Interview with Lars, L34).

Lars also suggests that improvisatory group music making is an ideal arena for training social

skills. He gives an example of an incest victim group, where participants learn to connect and trust in the group through the drum circle activity, without the need to verbalise. This allows for a gradual building up of communication where the players listen, express themselves and respond, and sometimes even reach agreement, just like in a conversation (L72). This idea leads us to the final part of my analysis, relating to music and language.

6.3 Music and language

6.3.1 Introduction

The idea of music as some form of language is one that has been discussed for many years. As an introduction to this final part of the analysis, I will start by presenting what some of my informants say on this theme.

Lars is a firm believer that all individuals have a deep-seated need to express themselves artistically, and that this cannot be done via a logical-analytical language alone, but that we also need a more irrational, emotive, expressive language. He believes that music is one such expressive language (L77).

Ole calls music a universal language that allows us to understand one another, whatever culture we happen to come from (O51). He also refers to music as an open language for expressing ourselves in ways we cannot with mere words:

> Singing, dancing and music are in a way a kind of language – a language of the emotions – and I believe we all need this kind of emotional language. We can't get by with only a rhetorical language, the precise language of the natural sciences and mathematics, and the like. We need an imprecise language, too. An open language, one which contains no words. And I think music is one such language – through music we can come into contact with all those emotions and concepts we can't put into words, but which are such an important part of us. (Interview with Ole, O50).

This is echoed by Sissel, who also talks about an inner language of emotions. Inasmuch as the participants in *Fargespill* have no common language other than a spattering of Norwegian, music speaks to this inner language, she says. "Music, at the centre, speaks to the inner language, the emotions, even when we can't find the right words." (S59). She mentions that storytelling has the same capacity in certain cultures with a strong narrative tradition.

6.3.2 Using music to stimulate language acquisition and language learning

Besides these general statements about music as a kind of language, my informants point to the possible use of music making as a tool for language acquisition and learning.

Ingunn, who has a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to her music groups, incorporates literature and language in her music groups for children. She sees language and storytelling as

an important element of several of her activities (I26), and refers to a large body of research showing that the use of rhymes, rhythm and songs helps stimulate infants' language acquisition (I49). She has also worked with immigrant mothers and infants on programmes aimed at teaching Norwegian language and cultural knowledge, and sees singing as a useful tool in language learning for immigrant adults (I56). In addition she has worked with immigrant children in kindergarten one morning a week over several years, funded by schemes aimed at promoting greater linguistic proficiency in immigrant children. Through weekly music and rhythm workshops these children have increased in Norwegian proficiency – as Ingunn points out, research shows that language and rhythm are processed in the same area of the brain (I69).

Sissel and Ole emphasise the way in which songs provide us with a fantastic learning tool for learning the sound system of different languages. When pupils learn a song in a foreign language, it is fun to learn a little about the language, play with sounds, and not take it too seriously, says Sissel (S30), while Ole jokes that since some of the Norwegian dialects in the folksongs they teach participants are so tricky to understand, it creates a level playing field for foreigners and native speakers alike! (O75).

As well as being a tool for language *learning* and language *acquisition*, my observation of Lars' singing and drumming with dementia patients suggests that music can be a useful tool for language *recall* for those in the latter stage of life who start to lose their verbal communication skills. Whilst not intending to intrude on the territory of music therapy in care for the elderly, I see a strong argument for the use of singing and drumming in participatory music settings with those who have lost their language skills. Once again we are reminded that participatory music, while not the same as music therapy, may be said to have therapeutic effects for participants. This leads to my last, and perhaps most interesting finding: the potential use of participatory music making in lieu of verbal communication.

6.3.3 Music in lieu of verbal communication

In this section I look at whether participants in my informants' activities might be able to use active participation in music making as a way of communicating with others in lieu of verbal communication. After observing and reading and rereading the interviews, I realised that there was a common trait running through many of the activities I had chosen, without my having chosen them with this in mind: lack of verbal language in the participants. In some way or another, many of the participants did not have the wherewithal to express themselves and their feelings through verbal communication with others. Let us look at the participant groups once more from this perspective.

The infants in Ingunn's *Early Interplay* groups from just a few weeks old are clearly pre-verbal. Ingunn places a good deal of emphasis on helping parents bond with their new-borns through learning to read their body language, mimicry and facial expressions. She instructs the parents in turn-taking and giving responses in a conversation-like communication.

Lars' dementia patients are in a sense post-verbal – with a residue of everyday language clearly ill-fitting for expressing abstract feelings or forging new relationships. The participant described in section 4.1.2 lacked verbal language in everyday settings, and yet when Lars sang traditional Norwegian songs, s/he sang along to verse after verse, their eyes fixed intently on Lars as s/he sang, in what can only be described as a display of strong connection through the singing.

The newly arrived immigrant children and asylum seekers in *Fargespill* are in the process of learning the language of their host society. Some have been in the country a matter of only weeks and can scarcely hold a conversation at all. Others have been here for several years, but functional bilingualism at a level where the second language can be used for instance to express emotions and abstract concepts takes several years to achieve.

Even the toddlers and pre-schoolers at kindergarten are still in the process of language acquisition, and have by no means a fully developed verbal language for expressing emotions.

Through my observation and reflection, as the year wore on I began to see similarities between several of my informants' participant groups in terms of their limited ability to take part in verbal communication. This link was not clear to me at the start, but as it became clearer through my observation and my own reflections, I returned to the interview data to see what my informants say about the opportunities in group music making for dialogic communication, listening and responding skills similar to those in a verbal conversation.

Lars points out that in any society some people are not able to take part in verbal communication, and that this lack of opportunity to take part in society's dialogue can often go hand in hand with a loss of dignity, self-worth and sense of belonging to the community. He suggests that a replacement for this may be found in music making together with others (L55). Lars mentions specifically the feelings adults with strong autism may have, when their lack of verbal language banishes them to the outer edges of the community. He recounts an episode (see section 5.5.2 for a fuller account) with an autistic adult in a regular drumming group who over a period of several months was brought to the midst of the drumming group, finally able to hold a shared beat with others via entrainment, that pull on humans and the physical world towards a common pulse (L71, L72).

My informants are all clear that participatory music making may provide opportunities for social training without verbal communication, and a chance to forge new relationships.

Lars sees drumming circles and other improvisatory participatory music groups as particularly well suited to social training – an opportunity for practising interaction with others without the need for verbal communication. The contact with others in a drum circle can be seen as a model for verbal communication with the question, answer, listening, responding required, and the possibility of reaching agreement, as well as the experience of having an impact on and being impacted by others (L72). In his drumming activities with all ages and user groups, Lars is concerned with teaching people to listen to the group, listen to themselves, and respond to what they hear. This is very much like the process in a well-functioning conversation (L19).

Ole says that through music you can forge new relationships, irrespective of what language you speak, and gives examples of the reconciliation process between participants who at first refused to stand next to each other on the same stage, starting to make music together, learning each other's songs, and finally becoming personal friends. "We have seen that anything can be overcome, even in conflicts with people traumatised on either side." (O27, O29).

Small children and babies may be preverbal, but they have many highly developed communicative skills. We adults just need to tune into them and learn to interpret them (I68). In her *Early Interplay* sessions, Ingunn models how to communicate with infants through the use of imitation, taking turns, intonation, mimicry, talking, giving response to the infant's reactions and respecting the infant's setting of limits – all within the setting of a musical interaction. She explains and instructs along the way (I63). Ingunn shows parents how, despite not having verbal language skills, infants communicate through body language, sounds and musical communication (I68).

This finding relating to the possible use of participatory music activities to enable communication in lieu of verbal communication for people who for one reason or another are not able to communicate satisfactorily through spoken language stands out among my findings on my informants' approaches to practice, as well as in the third part of Bentley's theory, relating to the communicative properties of participatory music activities (see section 2.3.4).

In these three analysis chapters I have presented my findings at three different levels concerning the approaches to practice among professional leaders of community music activities in Western Norway. My analysis and interpretation has been supported throughout by the theoretical framework provided by Higgins (2012) and Bentley (2011). In the next chapter I will discuss these findings and some questions arising from them.

7 Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss some of my findings and attempt to point to the new knowledge contributed by this thesis. A large part of the thesis is dedicated to analysis of the empirical material I collected through interviews and observation. It is important to remember that the findings generated from qualitative research interviews are not necessarily generalisable to a wider population. The transcriptions are simply my representation and my interpretation of four conversations at a specific point in time, and are prone to possible bias; despite all attempts to bracket myself off, my understanding will inevitably be coloured by my own experiences and conscious and subconscious preconceptions. Catharina Christophersen describes how capturing interviews in writing freezes fleeting words and sentences into something ostensibly constant and fixed (2010, p. 164). In reality, the substantial amount of data from five hours of interviews and ten hours of observation is both contextually laden and subjective. Christophersen describes the researcher in qualitative research as a filter, and reminds us that while the informants may appear to occupy the foreground, it is the researcher who has defined the situation and who determines the way in which the informants are represented (2010, p. 162).

At first glance there is certainly a sense in which my informants and their ideas take centre stage, and indeed the wording of my research question necessitated letting their voice be clearly heard. However, we should not underestimate the dominant, if tacit, voice of the researcher throughout the entire process, from selecting the informants, leading the interviews, choosing which parts of the empirical material are presented and which are eliminated, and identifying and systematising common themes in the material against the backdrop of a theoretical framework and within the clear focus of the research question, both of which have also been chosen by the researcher. There is thus a strong element of interpretation in the presentation of the data in chapters 4, 5 and 6, well before any explicit discussion is entered into. For instance, since 'community music' is a little used term in Norway, none of my informants are likely to have identified themselves as community musicians before this thesis was published. The label is one of my own suggestion, arrived at through my analysis and interpretation of the empirical data in combination with my reading about the field of community music internationally.

I am aware that I could have made other methodological and analytic choices along the way which might have generated other findings and discoveries. Nevertheless the result of the research process is that I have gained a unique perspective on my informants' activities, informed as it is by community music theory. My perspective may not fully or accurately

represent or coincide with my informants' own views or ideas, but I hope that my findings nevertheless can contribute valid new knowledge to the field that may be of use to practitioners and form a starting platform for further research into community music practices in Norway.

I start the discussion by asking how broad a definition of music education is needed to encompass my informants' activities. I discuss the notions of inclusion and participation, and look at opportunities for developing a common professional identity as community musicians in Norway. I explore similarities between community music practices and informal music education practices, before going on to discuss the possible relevance of my findings, and present some critical perspectives on community music. Finally, I conclude with why I believe the 'community' in community music adds value in a Norwegian context.

7.2 Community music and music education

7.2.1 Broad definition of music education

My informants work in very different ways to many music teachers in schools and arts schools. Although all of my informants see their work as a form of music teaching, based on voluntary participation, their activities are geared towards improvisatory music making, tuition *in and through* music, and creation of an artistic product for performance, respectively, and each has paramusical aims alongside the musical aims. At the start of this thesis I noted that community music might be regarded by some as at the periphery of music education, and stated that I have chosen to concentrate on community music practices that clearly belong to the field of music education. Even this claim could challenge a narrow view of the field of music education research as put forward by Harald Jørgensen some twenty years ago. Jørgensen was keen to maintain clear distinctions between pedagogical and sociological identities in research, and restrict the territory of music education research to intentional teaching and learning processes (Jørgensen, 1995, p. 15). A broader definition of music education is needed to encompass my informants' activities and similar activities. However, I would argue that academic fields are in a constant state of development, and much has happened in our field over the past two decades.

(One example of a new sub-field within music education is parent/infant music education such as that practised by Ingunn. This new branch of non-curricular music education arose in Norway in the 1980s as a grass roots movement, extending music education to the very youngest age range, and it is unique in that it caters to two generations at the same time.)

Previously discrete fields may also converge to such an extent that there is a partial merging and overlapping between them, as discussed in section 1.3 in the case of community music and community music therapy. I therefore confidently place my informants' activities firmly within

the field of music education research.

7.2.2 Inclusion and participation

One reason for this confidence is that my findings suggest that my informants are actually continuing a movement towards inclusive music education practices that can be traced back three decades in Norway to pedagogical responses to reforms to integrate children and adults with learning disabilities into mainstream education in the 1990s. In 1995 in *Samspel og relasjon: Perspektiv på ein inkluderande musikkpedagogikk* Brynjulf Stige expounded the need for more inclusive practices aimed at including mentally handicapped adults and children in school music teaching and amateur music life. Stige highlighted the importance of the music teacher/pupil relationship (1995, p. 21) and the need to meet each pupil against the background of their experience, abilities and expectations (1995, p. 153). He argued that we need to adjust the threshold for musical participation and see music education as part of our communal life, rather than restricting it to some narrow concept of instruction (Stige, 1995, p. 10). In the final chapter Stige discussed practical pedagogical strategies and approaches that bear much resemblance to community music practices (not least Bentley's integrative musical interaction) emphasising for instance the need to enable pupils to play at their own level in a mixed ability group, and the need to teach listening skills to ensure that participants *play together* rather than simply *playing at the same time* (Stige, 1995, p. 156).

It seems to me that Stige's call for inclusive musical education practices twenty years ago bears many resemblances to my informants' practices aimed at generating more inclusive opportunities for musical participation for the population at large. My findings suggest that my informants' activities could be seen as an extension of these inclusive music education practices, expanding the original focus on people with learning disabilities to include infants, pensioners, immigrants and others throughout the entire lifespan not traditionally catered to in formal music education settings. Lars, for instance, is committed to including people of all ages with no prior musical experience who may feel unable to take part in regular amateur music making. Ingunn is keen to include parents in all areas of society, including those with troubled backgrounds, in activities where music acts as a framework and tool for parent/child bonding as well as giving them a musical experience. Ole and Sissel have created an arena for cultural participation that includes immigrant youngsters that have few other arenas for successful music making.

Music therapy and community music share a strong focus on inclusion and participation, and both of these notions were recurring themes in my empirical material. Stige talks about various types of participation in community music therapy, ranging from non-participation, silent

participation, conventional participation (according to ability), adventurous participation ('improving on' the leader's intentions) and eccentric participation (creating a new focus for the activity) (Stige, 2010). I noticed a willingness and ability on the part of my informants to deal with a diversity of participation strategies (cf. the sketches in section 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 / the episode in section 5.4.4) that seemed more relaxed than I have often witnessed in schools and amateur music settings. This acceptance may be in contrast to the norms of permitted behaviour which appear to be of great importance to many adults in more formal educational settings (such as speaking in an 'indoor voice', no running, sitting still with your hands in your lap). I find myself wondering whether this understandable need to maintain conformity of behaviour in kindergarten and school poses a threat to developing creativity and self-expression.

I also noticed forces in my empirical data acting in the opposite direction, but they did not originate from the leaders. Some barriers to active participation were external, although not necessarily conscious. My observation gave food for thought on this point, although I cannot know whether my guessed interpretations are correct. Perhaps the staff at the nursing home might not have considered some of the residents as potential participants if Lars had not specifically suggested bringing those who appeared to be asleep, uninterested or incapable of lucid verbal interaction to the circle (section 4.1.2). When kindergarten staff sat with a silently participating child on their lap outside the ring, it seemed to me this could make it more difficult for the child to make the transition to active participation without drawing attention to themselves, or when they tried to quieten the keen active participation of the child bubbling over with enthusiasm, they may have been more concerned with codes of normal behaviour in that room than with the child's creative input (section 4.1.1). Sissel also mentioned that parents from certain cultures would not allow their daughters to participate in public performances (S27). Other barriers to participation appeared to come from within the participants themselves, such as the small child would not play in front of the others, saying seriously "I can't! I'm no good at drumming!" (see section 4.1.1).

7.2.3 Opportunities for building a common professional identity as community musicians

As stated above, there are many different ways of being a music teacher. My informants have all dedicated themselves to a portfolio career with innovative approaches to music teaching. We saw in section 4.3 how they depend both on their professional training and their innovative streak, but I would suggest a third factor in this 'recipe' for community music leaders – personal qualities. It is my suggestion that not just any music teacher could successfully lead these kinds of activity. Without presuming to delve into the personalities of my informants, in general there

seems to be a particular kind of personality often found in those leading community music activities: they tend to be charismatic, warm people whose view of others tends towards acceptance of people as they are, celebrating diversity. Certainly all of my informants appear to me from my observation to exude a positive energy towards the participants, and whilst they each played down the importance of their role, I am convinced that their activities would not function so well without their warm, charismatic leadership, and their empathy and care for their participants (although the word 'caring' was not a label that all of them felt easy with).

In considering my informants' role as leaders of activities that attempt to dispel the myth of music making as a boundaried activity for the talented few, I became aware of an apparent paradox. While community musicians play down the pursuit of excellence in music making in order to provide open access opportunities for all, leadership of these kinds of activity is dependent on people such as my informants who are highly skilled musicians, and who have thus each attained their own form of musical excellence. On the other hand, perhaps it is not so much a paradox, as a question of plurality, given the view that both musical discourses are worthwhile and meaningful, each in their own context.

The question then arises as to how the skills needed to lead this particular kind of music teaching can be developed. In the case of parent/infant music groups, formal training opportunities have arisen in Norway over the past few years. Apart from this, as we have seen, the concept of community music is not established in Norway, and consequently there is no degree programme in Norway specifically aimed at the use of music in the community. Elsewhere in the world community music programmes have started up at bachelor and master level, with emphasis on inclusive, empowering strategies and facilitation skills for the use of music in the community with all kinds of target groups. Until such time as this should occur in Norway, it might be considered whether music teacher training programmes are preparing students adequately to create opportunities for a culture of everyday musicality and lifelong musical learning. This is becoming particularly relevant given the ageing population in Norway.

This autumn sees the start-up of a short course for trained teachers at the University College in Bergen in collaboration with *Fargespill* entitled Intercultural education – culture and communication in Fargespill. The course combines using pupils' resources as starting point for learning with conscious use of relational pedagogy as a learning tool (Bergen University College, 2015). While this is a programme in general education for teachers working in multicultural learning environments, and not a music programme, the content may be highly relevant for many community musicians.

In identifying common features among my informants which I would label typical community

music traits, it struck me that not only are there limited opportunities for training that focus on community musicianship skills in Norway, but neither is there any kind of nationwide organisation for community musicians. The thriving Sound Sense organisation, for instance, in the UK brings together music animateurs, orchestral outreach officers, music educators, music therapists, musicians and others with an interest in the field, allowing people involved in community music projects and non-curricular music education to exchange ideas and build a community of practice, as well as a shared professional identity. The lack of any such organisation in Norway means that my informants and others working with similar projects have little opportunity to explore any shared professional identity with others beyond those working with exactly the same kind of activities, for instance early years music education. Nor, without some such organisation, do they have access to a forum for the exchange of ideas and professional development relating to non-curricular music education in the community.

7.2.4 Community music and informal music education practices

It may be useful to view community music as a continuum, with music education at one end and community music therapy and health musicking at the other. At the end closer to community music therapy, as described in section 1.3, the focus is on active musical participation as a socially embedded practice. Towards the other end there are certainly many traits in common between community music practices and informal music education practices (cf. the emphasis in the Nordic chapter in *Community Music Today* on community music as informal learning, as mentioned in section 1.2). My informants' activities, which as we have seen they all view as a type of music teaching, can be ranged along this continuum. Recent years have seen the adoption of many informal approaches to music education in schools, as promoted for instance by the Musical Futures organisation in the UK. In Scandinavia this movement started early, with a move away from 'school music' towards 'music in schools'.

Higgins also notes a number of strong similarities between the facilitation process and informal music teaching and learning practices, such as those promoted by the Connect project of the Guildhall School of Music. In this project leaders are expected to be able to work musically in a group with a random selection of instruments; to work effectively in groups of mixed age, technical proficiency and musical experience; to work in a genre-free environment reflecting shared interests of the participants; to engage in music making virtually without musical notation; and to know how to create music collaboratively (Renshaw, 2005, in Higgins, 2012, p. 149). These principles are strongly reminiscent of community music practices.

From this general discussion of community music and education in Norway, I will now move

on to the possible relevance of my specific findings to music teaching in more formal settings.

7.3 Relevance of findings

7.3.1 Approaches to practice

In this section I ask what relevance my research findings may have for the field of music education research in Norway, with particular emphasis on whether the approaches to practice described in the theory and identified in the analysis may be useful within formal music education settings. Many community music practices in participatory music groups fit well with a praxial philosophy of music education, and indeed many such practices are already paralleled in creative group work in school music, as championed by music educators such as the late John Paynter (1931-2010), who saw the music teacher as a facilitator of creative exploration.

I believe Bentley's Integrative Musical Interaction could be a useful approach to adopt in schools, as it offers a method of meeting each pupil at their own level, helping pave the way for feelings of success in those all-important first meetings with music-making. Her method also allows those with musical experience from outside the classroom to feel affirmed and to develop at their own level, while aiding others pupils' development. This is a good example of a practical approach to differentiated learning in music in school.[18]

In my presentation of the theory and the empirical data I focused in particular on the closely related concepts of hospitality and the welcome in community music. I ask now whether they may be useful concepts in school music making. In his keynote at the CERM conference in Oslo in November 2014, Higgins emphasised the importance of the very first meeting with pupils as they cross the threshold to music teaching situations, and maintained that the welcome described in chapter 2 can be immensely useful in schools where all pupils, however unwilling, are required to engage in music making. His emphasis was on the all-important first impression the pupils get of whether they are welcomed and invited in to music making in the classroom.

It is interesting to note that this idea of the importance of the first meeting is also borne out in connection with the development of pupils who go on to display unusual musical talent. In a study by Sloboda & Davidsen, the first meeting with an instrumental teacher proved to be of huge importance in whether or not pupils went on to achieve well in music lessons. If a young pupil felt that their first instrumental teacher was kind and a good player (the children often saw the two characteristics as coinciding), they were more likely to carry on playing and go on to perform well, than if they felt their first teacher was not benevolent or not a good player (Sloboda & Davidson, 1996, p. 185). So, whether the aim is to make everyone feel musically

[18] Teachers in all subjects in Norway are obliged to follow the principle of differentiated learning.

empowered or to encourage talent, it seems there is a huge responsibility resting on the music teacher to meet pupils positively and welcomingly right from the start of their musical training.

It is possible that a Higgins-style hospitality could promote music teaching and learning in schools through its emphasis on meeting each participant where they are and providing all pupils with the opportunity to explore meaningful musical activities and ways of expressing themselves through the medium of music. On the other hand, is it certain that hospitality and an unconditional welcome are ideals to strive for in school music, and if so, are they even attainable? There is a huge difference between groups of adults who choose to attend participatory music activities in their free time and schoolchildren who have no choice as to whether to be there or not. And given the strong goal focus in Norwegian schools today, how could it be possible for the school music teacher to offer unconditional hospitality and be open to whatever creative music making may arise in the classroom, and still satisfy the curricular requirements and be able to evaluate and grade each pupil's contribution? In the instant that the school music teacher is required to set a grade, the setting is significantly different from the non-hierarchical relationship between music group facilitator and voluntary participant.

Nevertheless, I believe there are aspects of the welcome and Higgins' hospitality that have very real transferability to school music teaching, particularly the idea of the teacher as facilitator rather than instructor (see section 2.2.3) and the idea of leading rather than controlling music making in the classroom. Seeing the music teacher as an instigator and enabler of musical processes in an atmosphere that gives pupils responsibility and permission to take control over the musical processes – as identified in my category planning for the unknown in section 5.4 – may have extremely positive consequences. Higgins believes that the self-worth that comes from being facilitated/enabled to invent rather than simply taught is powerfully affirming and quotes Lucy Green who states that "Music becomes an invention personal to the participants, owned by and meaningful to the participants, with the potential to generate an experience that can shape, create and have an impact on identity formation." (Green, 2011, in Higgins p. 148).

One of the key signs of quality leadership in my data appears to be acceptance of all participants as they are, recognising people's latent musical resources, and making contributions shine. This leads me to the conclusion that we need to raise music teachers' consciousness that all pupils have innate cultural resources that can be made use of, but also that it is important that we let participants/pupils act as resources for each other. It was clear from my observation of *Fargespill* (see section 4.1.4) that the older participants acted not only as role models for the younger children, but also as peer instructors. Lars also described how more experienced musicians support the music making of newcomers (L4, L5). This ties in with Bentley's theory

of the third stage, where the facilitator gradually relinquishes control over the musical journey to allow self-facilitation in the group. I believe this has important implications for the role of the music teacher in the classroom, in terms of how much 'space' the music teacher takes. We know that in their enthusiasm to introduce informal learning practices in music lessons in schools, some teachers have abdicated all leadership in the classroom. Perhaps Higgins' hospitality and Bentley's facilitation strategies can help address the balance, describing the teacher's role as they do as actively creating the conditions which *eventually* will make their role as teacher redundant, as the pupils are *gradually* taught to listen to the group and assume responsibility for their own music making. This teaching style is summed up succinctly by Rodriguez in the statement that teachers must "become experts in helping students make things happen for themselves." (Rodriguez, 2009, p. 39).

In schools and arts schools there has traditionally been a privileging of musical product over musical process, with pupils being taught to reproduce accurate performances of some existing musical material, whatever genre, from Mozart to hip hop. In Ole and Sissel's interviews I discovered that their assessment of musical quality was more about authentic expressivity than perfect performance. I see this as related to Small's idea that we cannot judge any form of musicking on purely aesthetic grounds but on whether they successfully articulate the concepts of relationships of those who are taking part (1998, p. 213). I believe that this approach, combined with the concept of creating a path of no mistakes, could be a positive approach in classroom music teaching, encouraging relaxed creative exploration and self-expression. If we see our remit as music teachers as initiating pupils into the world of music, seeing them as artists rather than consumers, and acknowledging their creative power, I believe my informants' approaches give us valuable clues about how to pay more attention to the social aspects of music than to the sonic aspects that could be highly beneficial in the classroom.

Music is a compulsory subject in Norwegian schools from year 1 to year 10, with aims that include mastering technical skills, learning about music, and creative activities. The current curriculum (LK-06) in music has a strong emphasis on musical experiences in all three core areas: Listening, Making Music and Composition (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015). My reading on the benefits and affordances of cultural participation prompts me to ask whether an additional objective might be preparing pupils for lifelong musical learning and active participation in cultural activities. Perhaps the most surprising element in my data was Lars' idea that the music children make, may be very different inside their heads than what we hear (see section 6.1.5 for a full explanation). This reminds me of Small's statement that all musicking is serious musicking, and that "the pieces that are played may be judged to be

frivolous, […] but the act of performing is never so." (Small, 1998, p. 213). If we accept this basic tenet, it must surely affect how we approach music making with children, both in terms of the necessity of repetition, what verbal responses and feedback we give to children in their musical making endeavours, openness to a wide variety of musical genres in the classroom, and not least how we assess performance/quality in music making.

7.3.2 Ethical obligations

My discussion now takes me to the ethical implications of my choice of topic referred to in section 3.5.2, which can be summed up in the phrase 'combatting musical disenfranchisement'. As Stige pointed out in 1995, music lessons in school can actually be a source of musical disenfranchisement (though he did not use this actual term) – too many pupils associate music lessons with failure, he wrote, adding that pupils who are already struggling with literacy and numeracy should be spared from the same feeling of failure in music classes (Stige, 1995, p. 13).

We might blame people's lack of faith in their own musical ability on the society in which we live, with the omnipresent auto-tuned professional sound recordings and seemingly never-ending string of TV programmes designed to weed out 'untalented' would-be singers and musicians from those lucky few that have the kind of musical talent appreciated in our society in the early twenty-first century. Sadly, though, there is anecdotal evidence that lack of belief in their musical ability is something some people actually learned at school. Some of Bentley's informants had been told by a music teacher that they were not musical. Small challenges music teachers to be aware of the negative impact such remarks can have on a child's musical self-confidence, saying:

> The voice is at the centre of all musical activity, but it is all too easy to silence and very hard to reactivate, since those who have been silenced in this way have been wounded in a very intimate and crucial part of their being. In my opinion any music teacher caught doing such a thing or using the epithet tone-deaf of a pupil should be sacked on the spot. (Small, 1998, p. 212).

Small is also clear that music tuition in schools sometimes contributes to what he calls the process of demusicalisation, particularly when music teachers are more concerned with discovering potential professional musicians than acting as "agents for the development of the musicality that lies within each child" (Small, 1998, p. 212). It seems to me that this balance between promoting talent and encouraging the innate musicality of *all* pupils is something that should be on the syllabus of all music teacher training.

7.3.3 Usefulness/potential paramusical outcomes

During the interviews my informants made various suggestions about the potential usefulness of activities they led, besides the purely musical outcomes. As I have chosen to view my informants as community musicians and my understanding of community music is based on open-access musical activities led by professional leaders, *with paramusical aims alongside musical aims*, my thesis would not be complete with a brief summary of these statements. I emphasise that none of my informants made claims that these were generalisable or universally applicable outcomes, and this list represents entirely *my own understanding* of what they said. I do not intend discussing the validity of these potential outcomes as I do not have the means of testing them; my intention is merely to summarise them in order to show how my informants' activities fit with my understanding of community music.

Drum circles

Lars talks about drum circle activities as an arena where people can feel part of a group working together towards a common aim and feel that they have something worthwhile to contribute to a group, which he sees as a universal human need (L9, L23). This includes people who are normally on the outer edges of society, such as autistic adults (L71) or dementia patients. He also sees the need to express oneself artistically and create things as an important part of a healthy, balanced life, whatever one's chosen profession (L77). He believes that many people experience therapeutic effects when they are enabled to take part in creative processes (L56). Not least, he suggests that drum circles are excellent arenas for social training, not least in situations where verbal communication is impossible or problematic (L72, see section 6.2.3). He is frequently asked to hold drum circles at corporate events, and sees drum circles as well suited to teambuilding (L35), building networks and bringing together local communities (L84). He believes that society can benefit from interpersonal music making where music is used on a daily basis to deal with crises, ceremonies, transitions and to celebrate important events, as well as for instance for integrating immigrants into their local communities (L84).

Parent/infant music groups

Ingunn talks about the usefulness of parent/infant music groups in aiding communication between parents/adults and pre-verbal children (I12) and strengthening parent/child bonding (I75). She believes musical interaction between parents and young children that involves singing, dancing and cradling can help develop parenting skills, not least in situations where parents for various reasons have issues with physical contact (I63). Her combination of finger and toe rhymes, dance and baby massage stimulates motor development (I49), while the use of rhythm, singing and nursery rhymes stimulates language development, she says, pointing to

neurological research that shows that the centres for rhythm and language are located in the same hemisphere of the brain and can affect one another (I69). Ingunn also talks about how music teaching of many sorts can have benefits for learning in other areas, and she sees no conflict between using music instrumentally as a tool and music for its own sake (I70).

Fargespill multicultural performances

We saw from the *Fargespill* statutes (see section 1.7.3) that as well as being an outlet for cultural activity, *Fargespill* aims to promote interaction and understanding between different ethnic and religious groups in society. Ole describes *Fargespill* as an important tool for integration of immigrants into Norwegian society, and says that *Fargespill* tries to help the participants realise the important task they are part of in promoting cross-cultural understanding (O9). There may be said to be two sides to the integration process. One side is about immigrants' new dual identity formation, where they can celebrate and be proud of both their roots *and* their adopted culture, with neither excluding the other (O61, O71). The other side is how the host society accepts immigrants. *Fargespill* aims to help this by presenting immigrants' authentic stories (O10). Ole states that the onus lies on the host society to take the initiative to welcome and strike up relations with immigrants, and *Fargespill* attempts to do just this (O53).

Through its focus on resources *Fargespill* empowers young immigrants through raising awareness of their own innate resources (O12, S16) and gives them pride in their cultural roots (S61). Ole also describes the reconciliation process that can take place through artistic projects such as *Fargespill* (O29), and says that the very process of singing and dancing can be very releasing (O50). In extension of this, both Ole and Sissel talk about music as a language that allows participants to express emotions that we cannot express in words (O50, S59) or a channel of communication for people with no common language (O50). Singing Norwegian folksongs is also a useful tool for learning the language, says Ole (O75).

7.4 A critical perspective

It may appear that I have made myself a mouthpiece for my informants' ideas and philosophies relating to opening up music making opportunities for different groups in the community. Community music is a young academic field internationally, and in Norway community musicians have no established collective identity. This being the case, there will inevitably be a certain amount of 'evangelising' to spread the word what these activities are all about.

It is important in all research to see things from two sides. Whilst I acknowledge the large body of recent research into the possible benefits of musical and cultural participation, it can be easy to assume that music is the source of all good, entirely beneficial to everyone in all

circumstances, promoting good health, raising self-esteem and curing all ills. Under the title *Music Can Be Bad For You*, Philpott takes this "oversanitised and romantic vision of music" to task and points out that the relationship between music, the individual and society is highly complex (Philpott, 2012, p. 49). The field of community music cannot claim to be a panacea for all social ills – there is no one size fits all. In her critical exploration of specific claims about links between music and health in *A Music and Health Perspective on Music's Perceived "Goodness"* Jane Edwards takes this theme further, examining the expectation that music participation is innately good and helpful (Edwards, 2011). There are many studies into the positive sides of musical participation, but fewer studies into negative outcomes and experiences. Studies currently being undertaken into the perceived benefits of singing in amateur choirs, for instance, might be balanced by studies that attempt to chart potential problems arising from the same activity – such as feelings of failure, social exclusion from cliques within gated musical activities, performance anxiety or personal conflicts within choirs adversely affecting amateurs singers' quality of life.

As noted in section 2.2.4, Higgins himself mentions the danger of the "gift" becoming a poisonous gift if expectations are driven unrealistically high when inviting people in to participatory music making (Higgins, 2012, p. 153). For those who enter the workshop space full of expectation, but fail to find the musical satisfaction they were looking for, while observing that others feel enveloped in nurturing relationships through music making, encounters with community music activities could end up an enormously negative experience.

There is plenty of research showing how music can be used to manipulate people, and there is undeniably a potential power issue in all community music settings – despite the relatively non-hierarchical organisation of a workshop-type activity, there is an asymmetric relationship between leader and participants. Particularly given the non-regulated, non-curricular environment of community music activities outside of formal education institutions, this could be a potential problem. In the case of a leader of personal and musical integrity, their very personality becomes one of the main assets in community music, yet there can be no guarantee that others do not move into this space for less philanthropic reasons.

Another critical question that could be raised is whether people taking part in the kind of activities my informants provide really experience any musical development or empowerment through their participation? Could the emphasis on inclusion in community music projects lead to disappointingly low musical quality or musical stagnation? We have seen that my informants consider quality to be a many-facetted concept, but these other types of quality may not be enough to meet participants' expectations to their own musical development.

Bentley herself raises the question of how empowering it really is when in music workshops people are facilitated towards musical interaction there and then based on relational awareness and self-confidence, if they are not also taught specific musical skills. In the case of my informants' activities I believe the participants do also develop specifically musical skills through their participation, yet this may not always be the case. Can we really talk about empowerment if participants do not develop skills they can use in other settings? One might even go so far as to ask whether the use of seemingly simple devices in such settings is actually leading people on unfairly to think that they have greater musical skills than is really the case.

Finally, does the 'community' in 'community music' really add any value, especially when it is extended (as at the CERM conference in Oslo) to refer to community music education? Some would argue that all music and music teaching takes place in some kind of community of practice, and that all music educators should feel an obligation to include all potential participants, and that there is therefore no need for a special term such as 'community music'.

In fact, the very word 'community' brings with it implications and associations that, for all Higgins' idea of a 'community without unity', could be perceived by some as gated and exclusive. The power of associations of words should not be underestimated. For instance the use of the word 'intervention' in many definitions of community music could actually be seen as the opposite of empowering – the very idea that a professional is needed to carry out an intervention (a word more commonly associated with clinical therapy) seems strangely at odds with the idea of seeing everyone as a valuable contributor. The use of the word 'intervention' could also set off alarms bells, given the fine line between musical activities led by music teachers that happen to have therapeutic effects on the one hand, and the need for professional training in music therapy to interact with participants that may need music therapy with specific planned outcomes. While there may be a certain intersection between some community music activities and certain community music therapy activities, there is still a clear divide between the two fields. For this reason, community musicians may be wise, as Lars stated, not to promise any particular effects or outcomes from participation (L56).

7.5 Conclusions

For reasons mentioned in section 1.6, I chose not to include any conclusions at the end of chapters 4, 5 and 6. It is time now to see what conclusions may be drawn. Through qualitative research interviews supported by non-participant observation I have investigated the approaches to practice of four informants, looking for common traits and strategies, although their practices differ considerably in content and objective. These findings are presented in chapters 4, 5 and 6

and will be summarised in section 8.1.

Throughout this thesis I have chosen to define my informants' activities as community music activities. In this chapter I have placed their activities firmly within the field of music education, discussing the possible relevance of some of my findings to more formal music education settings. It is important that we consider whether attaching the term 'community music' to certain activities and musical discourses actually adds any value, and that as a new sub-field emerges and is written about that we consider carefully the terminology we introduce. My analysis of the empirical data, with reference to the theoretical framework, uncovered a number of practices more or less in common between my informants, and conclude that despite their disparate natures, all these activities fit with my understanding of 'community music', understood as non-exclusive, community-led activities with professionals as resources who facilitate group activities that invite participants to full participation, in which the main commitment is to further access to music for all, and where process is often as important as product.

Although the term has scarcely been adopted in the Nordic countries, in the UK and elsewhere there are already many organisations, publications and courses in the field of community music. Is the term community music then useful or relevant in a Norwegian context? It seems to me that there could be definite advantages to be had from identifying musical discourses outside curricular musical education and the discourses of amateur music life and performance, activities in which musical aims go hand in hand with paramusical aims, as a distinct musical discourse termed community music in Norway.

I suggest that identifying these activities under the term community music could lead to a greater exchange of ideas and approaches between music teachers who have chosen to work in these specialised activities. Establishing some common identity as community musicians could lead to shared insights and professional development that in turn could lead to new opportunities for musical participation for many groups in the community who perhaps would not otherwise have had access to music making. In this way it may be possible to combat what Bentley terms 'musical disenfranchisement' and re-establish a culture of everyday musicality in our society.

The concept of community music is in its infancy in Norway. This thesis represents a cautious attempt to help fill the term with meaningful content in a Norwegian context. I see a need for further research into activities with the qualities and the types of learning and music making arena identified in this thesis, cutting across the traditional distinction between formal and informal learning.

8 Summary and reflections

8.1 Summary of findings

In this section I provide a summary of the categories found in my analysis of the empirical data in order to answer the research question: What approaches to practice can be found among professional leaders of three community music activities in Western Norway? Through thematic analysis of my informants' responses and in the light of community music theory as set out by Higgins (2012) and Bentley (2011), I identify the following approaches to practice common to some or all of my four informants: offering a warm welcome to all who would like to join in, creating a path of no mistakes so that people with little prior musical experience feel empowered and successful in music making, unleashing latent musical resources in all participants, planning for the unknown, and enabling listening skills and entrainment in group music making.

My findings also show that my informants have a number of traits in common in their role as leader: they are welcoming, innovative, not scared of risk or challenges, and on top of their professional training they show themselves to be autodidactic in the sense of discovering new ways of working with people and music. At a more overarching level, I identify approaches linked to focus on quality of musical process rather than, or as well as, musical product, and to the importance of relational aspects in music making with others. Finally, my findings show that all my informants talk about music as some kind of language, some of them likening musical interaction to verbal communication in terms of self-expression, listening and responding, potentially offering participants who lack verbal language a chance to communicate with others.

In chapter 7 I noted that there are many ways of being a music teacher, and discussed the relevance of my findings to more formal music education settings. I asked whether the approaches identified, as well as Higgins' notion of hospitality and Bentley's integrative musical interaction, could be useful concepts for instance in school music? I also discussed the ethical aspect of broadening access to participatory music activities by encouraging people to explore their musical and creative abilities, given the mounting research showing the benefits of active cultural participation. I also looked at some critical perspectives on community music.

8.2 Reflections on writing the thesis and my own journey of discovery

All research must be based on the existing body of research and contribute new knowledge to the academic community, whilst laying the foundations for further research. Since my chosen topic has not been written about much in Norway, an important part of my research process has been to read as much as possible on the subject of community music internationally, and to position this thesis in the landscape of existing Norwegian research on closely related topics

and fields, as described in chapter 1. It is my hope that this research project is, as demanded by Nygaard, "important, relevant, and appropriate" (2008, p. 18).

While the process has been demanding, having the chance to devote so much time to a single assignment, to dig deep and draw my own conclusions has been the source of a sense of real satisfaction. Setting out on a journey of academic research can be likened to an apprenticeship, and it has felt as if learning the tools of the trade requires at least as much time and energy as answering the research question. I acknowledge a debt to Nygaard who says that through writing we can discover and sift through semi-formulated ideas in our minds (2008, p. 32). Although following Nygaard's advice to start writing before you think you are ready and with no predetermined goals or self-criticism is not necessarily easy, her clear distinction between creative and critical writing processes (which she points out can never take place at the same time) proved extremely helpful and liberating (2008, p. 31).

Following a master's student seminar with my fellow students and supervisors in February, I created the following checklist that I have made active use of over the last few months:

> Is there a clear link between the theory and the research question?
> Is there a clear link between the research question and the empirical data?
> Is there a clear link between the empirical data and the theory?
> N.B. Have I answered the research question?

My assessment is that I can answer yes to each of these questions. I am aware that requirements to rigour in research could potentially be seen to be compromised in this project by my admiration for the work carried out by my informants. Community music activities appear to be gaining impetus in Norway, slowly but surely, and being convinced of the value of this musical discourse makes it difficult not to speak warmly of it – this applies to Higgins, to Bentley, to my informants, and to a certain extent to myself. In addition, the wording of my research question led me to look at my informants' approaches from their own perspective, and each of them is a charismatic and keen advocate of the use of music in the community, as are Higgins and Bentley. I have nevertheless tried to maintain a certain academic 'distance' to the research topic throughout. I hope this issue has been adequately addressed through my exploration of reflexivity in section 1.4, through stating my relationship to my informants and their activities in section 3.2.1, through the contextualisation of my informants' statements in sections 1.7 and 4.1, through my transparent presentation of the empirical material throughout chapters 4 to 6, and not least through the critical perspectives raised in section 7.4.

Working on this research project has given rise to new ideas in my professional development as

a music teacher; in particular the approach my informants have to seeing the resources present in all pupils, and enabling listening skills in music teaching. The project has strengthened my perception of music making as an interrelational activity, and given rise to increasing ambivalence within myself towards any music/instrumental tuition that places an exaggerated emphasis on technical skills, knowledge *about* music, competence objectives and a one-sided pursuit of excellence, while largely ignoring the significance of the place of music making in people's everyday lives. As I noted in my foreword, the pursuit of excellence in music making in certain musical discourses does not detract from the complementary practices of broadening opportunities for musical participation in the community at large, and *vice versa*, so long as there is also room for a culture of everyday musicality open to everyone.

I saw from the data how my informants have a very practical approach to music as human behaviour, as we recognise it from Christopher Small's notion of musicking. Small (1998) rejects the aesthetic reification of music and emphasises the verb 'to musick' as one of human action. Small was not included in my theory chapter, since my theoretical basis was not derived from him, but as I analysed the empirical data, I felt increasingly that Small's musicking is highly relevant to participatory music making and community music as I understand it.

In this final chapter I may perhaps finally tie my colours to the mast. Like John Blacking (1973), I believe that music is a universal human attribute. This has consequences for my pedagogical stance. It takes many years of dedicated practice and hard work to become a professional musician, and our cultural lives are enriched by professional performers in different genres. However, only a tiny percentage of the population pursues a professional career in music and I firmly believe that the rest of the population should not be deprived of opportunities to take part in meaningful musical activities, much less be excluded due to perceptions of music making as a boundaried activity reserved for a select few. As a music teacher I am keen both to encourage talent and to tap in to *all* my pupils' innate musicality and desire to make music with others. I am constantly seeking ways in which to enable creative and explorative arenas in my music teaching, where everyone feels they have something worthwhile to contribute. I believe it is the task of music teachers in schools and municipal arts schools to strike a balance between teaching technical proficiency and what Frede V Nielsen terms *scientia*-type knowledge about music (Nielsen, 1994, p. 106) on the one hand, and preparing all pupils for a lifetime of active musical participation, and to counter a one-sided privileging of musical product over musical process, irrespective of genre. In this way I believe we can help promote a culture of everyday musicality.

8.3 The many ways forward

Echoing the title of Kari Veblen's article, *The Many Ways of Community Music* (Veblen, 2007), I ask what relevance this project has for music education, and attempt to point to possible topics for further research and knowledge creation related to community music activities in Norway. Understanding the 'community' in community music as hospitality, as presented by Higgins (2012), I believe that community music offers a distinct form of musical discourse within music education, where the intentionality is first and foremost playing, rather than learning to play. At the same time I see tie-overs to formal music education settings: I believe my findings could have consequences for how we approach music making with children in schools, with focus on listening skills and relational awareness, and that creating a path of no mistakes could be an effective tool in promoting explorative, creative music making in schools.

Facilitation strategies aimed at drawing out participants' resources and teaching them to tune in and listen to the group, and encouraging a gradual increase in group autonomy in music making as described by Bentley could encourage agency and empowerment in both amateur music life and school music lessons to a far greater degree than the common strategy of simply allowing pupils to choose repertoire on the basis of their existing tastes and preferences. Perhaps most important is the awareness my informants have of the need to lower barriers to participation and deconstruct folk myths of musicality as the reserve of a talented few, allowing everyone access to the joys of active music making, making no promises of particular outcomes, yet in the assurance that for many people active musical participation can have positive effects.

It is my hope that this exploratory foray into the approaches used by music teachers in non-curricular settings in Norway might form a platform for further research into the fairly unchartered waters of community music activities in Norway. Possible topics arising from my findings with relevance for more formal music education settings are resource-based music pedagogy in the classroom, and the development of (student) music teachers' facilitation skills and strategies for enabling listening skills in classroom music making. In extension of this topic which investigates approaches to practice in community music activities with all age ranges, it would be interesting to research music teaching and learning in a lifespan perspective in Norway, not just in terms of what music making opportunities are provided for different age groups, but looking into how musical learning processes change across the lifespan and how we as music teachers can cater for different age groups most effectively.

Not least, I hope that my findings on the potential use of participatory music making in lieu of verbal communication may provide a starting point for further research into the communicative properties of participatory musical activities. This is a topic which I would like to pursue further.

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Appendix A-1: Information letter and consent form sent to informants (Norwegian original)

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet om musikkpedagogisk virksomhet utenfor formelle utdanningsinstitusjoner

Bakgrunn og formål

Jeg er for tiden masterstudent i musikkpedagogikk ved Høgskolen i Bergen, og skal skrive min masteroppgave om musikkpedagogisk virksomhet i Norge utenfor formelle utdanningsinstitusjoner (community music). Formålet med studiet er å kartlegge noe av community music-feltet i Norge og å rette fokus på musikkpedagogen som leder og tilrettelegger av diverse inkluderende musikktilbud rettet mot ulike grupper i samfunnet. Problemstillingen vil bli utarbeidet i forhold til dette fokuset.

Jeg ønsker å intervjue musikkpedagoger som har valgt å jobbe utenfor formelle pedagogiske institusjoner med tilrettelegging for musisering i grupper. Utvalget består av personer med lang erfaring med å lede slike musikkaktiviteter, fortrinnsvis de som har gjort nybrottsarbeid på feltet i Norge.

Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Deltagelse i studien vil innebære en eller to halvstrukturerte intervjuer av cirka én times varighet. Det kan også være aktuelt å observere deg mens du leder den aktuelle musikkaktiviteten, dersom du er villig til det. Intervjuspørsmålene vil omhandle bl.a. innholdet i musikkaktiviteten du leder, dine tanker rundt din rolle som tilrettelegger for andres musisering, og din motivasjon for å jobbe med slike aktiviteter. Det blir viktig for meg å la dine tanker, prioriteringer og betraktninger i stor grad styre innholdet i intervjuet. Jeg kommer til å gjøre lydopptak av intervjuene og ta notater underveis, mens jeg vil kun ta notater under eventuell observasjon.

Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle opplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt, og vil kun bli gjort tilgjengelig for meg og de to veilederne mine, Tiri Bergesen Schei og Catharina Christophersen. Lydopptak og notater fra intervjuer og notater fra eventuell observasjon vil lagres på passordbeskyttede filer på Høgskolen i Bergens sikre forskningsserver. Det vil bli brukt pseudonym i transkriberingsarbeidet.

Det som gjengis av intervjumaterialet og observasjon vil være anonymisert i masteroppgaven. I og med at musikkmiljøet i Norge er såpass lite, kan det allikevel tenkes at du vil kunne bli gjenkjent ut fra utsagn eller beskrivelsen av virksomheten i masteroppgaven.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 31.12.2015. Når prosjektet er ferdig, skal datamaterialet anonymiseres og alle opptak slettes.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert og alle opptak slettes.

Dersom du har spørsmål til deltagelse i studien, ta kontakt med masterstudent Felicity Burbridge Rinde (tlf. 986 40 155) eller veileder Catharina Christophersen (tlf. 55 58 59 81). Er du villig til å være med, er det fint om du skriver under på den vedlagte samtykkeerklæringen og sender den til meg eller sender meg en epost der du ir din samtykkeerklæring.

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.

Mvh Felicity Burbridge Rinde
Olsvikmarken 142
5183 Olsvik

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien til masterstudent Felicity Burbridge Rinde, og er villig til å delta i studien.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

□ Jeg samtykker til å delta i intervju
□ Jeg samtykker til å bli observert

Samtykkeerklæring kan også sendes per epost til felicityandtonny@hotmail.com.

Appendix A-2: Information letter and consent form sent to informants (English translation)

Invitation to take part in a research project into music education outside formal educational institutions

Background and aim

I am a master's student on the music education programme at Bergen University College (HiB) and am writing my master's thesis on music education activities in Norway outside formal education institutions ('community music'). The aim of the project is to chart part of the field of community music in Norway and look at music teachers who lead and facilitate a variety of inclusive music activities for various groups in the population. My research question will be formulated in lines with this focus.

I am hoping to interview music teachers who have chosen to work with group music making outside educational establishments. My informants should be experienced leaders of these kinds of activity, preferably people who have carried out pioneering work in the field in Norway.

What would participation in this research project involve?

Participation in this project would involve one or two semi-structured interviews of roughly one hour's duration. I would also be interested in observing you at work, if you are willing to be observed. The interview questions will include questions about the music activity you lead, your thoughts on your role as facilitator for other people's music making, and your motivation for doing this kind of work. It is important for me to let my informants' thoughts, priorities and reflections lead the way in the interview(s). All interviews will be recorded, and I will make notes during the interview, but in the case of observation I will only take handwritten notes.

What would happen to information about you as informant?

All information will be dealt with in confidence, and shared only with my two supervisors, Tiri Bergesen Schei and Catharina Christophersen. Sound recordings and notes from the interviews and from observation, if any, will be saved on password-protected files on the university college's secure research server.

All material from the interviews and observation will be anonymised in the master's thesis. Nevertheless, since the music world in Norway is relatively small, there is a fair chance that you may be recognised from the excerpts or descriptions included in the thesis.

The planned completion date for the project is 31.12.2015. Once the project is finished, all data material will be anonymised and deleted.

Voluntary participation

Participation in the research project is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw your consent at any time, without saying why. Should you withdraw your consent, all information about you will be anonymised and all recordings deleted.

If you have any queries about participation in the research project, please contact med master's student Felicity Burbridge Rinde (tel. 986 40 155) or supervisor Catharina Christophersen (tel. 55 58 59 81). If you are willing to take part in the project, please sign the enclosed consent form and send it to me, or email your declaration of consent to me.

Notification of this research project has been submitted to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

Best wishes, Felicity Burbridge Rinde
Olsvikmarken 142
5183 Olsvik

Consent form

I have received information about Felicity Burbridge Rinde's master's project and am willing to participate in the research project.

(Participant's signature, date)

□ I consent to being interviewed
□ I consent to being observed

The signed consent form may also be emailed to felicityandtonny@hotmail.com.

Appendix B-1: E-mail to informants concerning anonymity and translation (Norwegian original)

Sendt 6. januar 2015

Kjære informanter!

Godt nytt år! Jeg vil takke så mye for det dere har delt med meg i høst, gjennom både formelle intervjuer, uformelle samtaler og observasjon.

Da masterprosjektet ble meldt inn for NSD ved studieoppstart i august, tok jeg utgangspunkt i at datainnsamlingen ville være basert på intervjuer med anonyme informanter. Jeg har imidlertid oppfattet det slik under intervjurunden i høst at alle fire informanter er villige til å bli omskrevet/sitert med fullt navn.

Dersom dette er tilfelle for deg, setter jeg pris på om du kan svare denne mailen med en bekreftelse. Bare en kjapp setning, noe slik som:

Jeg samtykker til å bli omtalt og sitert med fullt navn i masteroppgaven til Felicity B Rinde.
Navn, dato

Jeg vil da sende inne denne tilleggsinformasjonen til NSD, for å ha alt på det rene i forhold til de formelle kravene rundt personvern i forskning.

Jeg ønsker samtidig å informere om at jeg etter mye refleksjon og samtaler med veilederen min og andre i fagmiljøet, har bestemt meg for å skrive masteroppgaven på engelsk. Engelsk er morsmålet mitt, og jeg er i tillegg statsautorisert translatør i norsk/engelsk, så selve oversettelsesbiten er jeg temmelig trygg på. Jeg ønsker allikevel å kvalitetssikre eventuelle sitater fra intervjuene ved a) å få dem korrekturlest av en oversetterkollega med musikkfaglig bakgrunn, og b) å tilby at dere får lest gjennom de oversatte sitatene før publisering.

Mange takk for hjelpen!

Mvh Felicity

Appendix B-2: E-mail to informants concerning anonymity and translation (English translation)

Sent 6 January 2015

Dear informants,

Happy new year! I would like to thank you for your help throughout the autumn, in the form of formal interviews, informal conversations and the chance to observe you at work.

When I registered my master's project with the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) at the start of term last August, I assumed that my data collection would be based on anonymous interviews. However, in the interviews with each of you during the autumn I understood that all four of you are willing to be written about/quoted by name.

If this is so, I would greatly appreciate it if you could confirm this by mail. A brief sentence will suffice, along the lines of:

I consent to being written about and quoted by name in Felicity B Rinde's master's thesis. Name, date

I will then submit this information to NSD in order to comply with the data protection requirements regarding the use of personal data in research.

I would also like to inform you that on reflection and following discussion with my supervisor and others in the field, I have decided to write up my thesis in English. English is my native language and I am a government authorised translator in Norwegian/English, so the matter of translation should not be a problem. Nevertheless, for the purpose of quality assurance I intend a) to have all translated excerpts from the research interviews proofread by a fellow translator with a background in music education, and b) send you the translated excerpts for your review before the thesis is published.

Thanks for your help!

Best wishes, Felicity

Appendix C-1: Interview guide (Norwegian original)

A: Fortell om deg selv og musikkaktiviteten (åpen)

Motivasjon, målsetting. For eksempel:

- A1 Hvorfor velger du å jobbe med slike grupper?
- A2 Hva er det viktigste med dette arbeidet?
- A3 Er målsettingen først og fremst musikkopplæring? Er denne aktiviteten innenfor det du anser som musikkpedagogikk?
- A4 Hva var det som fikk deg til å begynne med det? (En hendelse? En holdning? En erfaring? Studiene? Teori? En person som inspirerte deg?)
- A5 Hva bringer du av deg selv til arbeidet? Hva får du igjen?

B: Temaer for videre diskusjon

B1 Læringssyn og kvalitetsspørsmålet. For eksempel:

- Anser du tilbudet først og fremst som musikkopplæring?
- Hvilke lærings- og undervisningsstrategier/metoder bruker du?
- Er kvaliteten på det musikalske produktet viktig? Noe annet som er like viktig/enda viktigere?
- Har du tanker om musikkopplæring gjennom hele livsløpet?

B2 Lederens rolle. For eksempel:

- Er din rolle (utelukkende) en lærerrolle? Eventuelt hvilke andre ord vil du bruke for å beskrive rollen din?

B3 Kulturell diversitet, tilgang til musiseringsarenaer, musikksyn. For eksempel:

- Hvem ønsker du skal delta i dette tilbudet? Er det åpent for alle? Musikkfaglige krav til deltagerne?

B4 Fellesskap/empowerment. For eksempel:

- Er det et mål for la deltagernes stemme bli hørt også i overført betydning?
- Er det viktig å tilby deltagerne muligheten til å tilhøre et fellesskap og fungere i en gruppe?

Appendix C-2: Interview guide (English translation)

A: Tell me about the activities you lead (open)

Motivation, objectives. For instance:

- A1 Why have you chosen to work with these kind of groups?
- A2 What is the most important aspect of this work?
- A3 Is your (primary) aim music teaching? Would you describe this activity as part of the field of music education?
- A4 What prompted you to start working with these groups? (An event, an attitude, a personal experience, your music teacher training, something you read, a person that inspired you?)
- A5 What do you bring to this work? And what do you get out of it?

B: Topics for discussion

B1 Personal philosophy of music education and the question of quality. For instance:

- Do you regard this activity (primarily) as music instruction?
- What learning/teaching strategies do you use in these groups?
- Is the quality of the musical end product important? Is anything else equally/more important?
- Do you have views on a lifelong perspective in music teaching and learning?

B2 Your role as leader of the group. For instance:

- Is your role (exclusively) that of teacher? How else would you describe your role?

B3 Cultural diversity, open access to music-making, views on music. For instance:

- Who do hope to attract as participants? Are your group activities open to anyone who would like to take part? Are they required to have pre-existing musical skills? Equality of opportunity/cultural diversity?

B4 Community/connectivity/empowerment. For instance:

- Is it important for the participants' voices to be heard?
- Is it important that the participants are offered the opportunity to belong to a community and feel that they belong to the group?