

Musical Vocabularies

Creating a framework for meaningful intercultural musical dialogue

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Abstract

In this arts-based research I draw on the approaches of autoethnography and artistic research to uncover findings emerging from my artistic and pedagogical navigation through traditional and contemporary folk and global musics. I explore the processes of my own interpretations and understandings of music-making in intercultural contexts through composing, co-creating, and interacting with musicians from different musical and cultural backgrounds.

The title of *musical vocabularies* refers to the process of gathering and understanding musical aesthetics from diverse and unfamiliar musics as a non-native, and how to integrate and transmit these elements artistically and ethically in my performing and teaching practices. Through exploring musical dialogues and collaborations in this research, I discover different ways of music-making and music-thinking, which involve a variety of pedagogical methods and perspectives.

In the first sections of this work, I discuss my positionality by briefly unfolding my artistic and educational background, as well as unpack the core methods applied in this arts-based research. On the basis of three selected artistic case studies, I explore new and unfamiliar musical cultures together with their related pedagogical approaches and thinking. I unfold the working methods used and discuss the compositional processes, which involve co-creating and interacting in an intercultural environment, resulting in three main artistic outcomes, including a duo with a musician from the Faroe Islands, collaborations with musicians in Hungary, and an intercultural trio formed for my master's concert.

Through these case studies, I explore the artistic possibilities of intercultural music-making and how hands-on experience can be translated to teaching practice, suggesting a framework for meaningful intercultural musical dialogue. Key findings include that intercultural musical dialogues require multiple ways of music-thinking and pedagogical approaches. Furthermore, immersion into different cultural contexts, including day to day experiences of the culture and hands on collaboration with musicians from inside each culture are essential elements. Finally, I reflect on possible future directions for intercultural musical dialogue and discuss its complexities and current issues.

Key words: Intercultural music-making, tacit knowledge, embodiment, translation and transmission, autoethnography, traditional music, musical cultures, contemporary folk music, reflexivity

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CHAPTER ONE: PROJECT OVERVIEW

1. Introduction

The endless possibilities of exchanging music between different cultures and backgrounds are one of my great interests in music making. Primarily working as a composer and performing artist since 2014, I have chosen to immerse myself in foreign or non-native traditional and contemporary folk music that left intense and strong impressions on me. With this artistic and pedagogical research paper, I will unfold reflections on working processes carrying different pedagogical methods derived from three different case studies, each of them with a different artistic outcome. All of these case studies consist of music collaborations carried out between 2017 and 2023.

By covering hands-on musical collaborations within my three selected case studies, my objective is to investigate and reflect on what it means to work as a performing artist and music teacher in the field of intercultural music making. Within this study, I am working in collaboration with musicians rooted in various music traditions and I acknowledge my position as an outsider within these traditions. I will unfold the artistic outcomes of each case study and touch on its findings, the complexities, artistic and ethical challenges I have come across. For each case study, I will elaborate and analyse thoughts and insights I have gathered during each working process.

Case study one portrays an artistic project in the shape of a musical duo collaboration with a guitarist and singer songwriter from the Faroe Islands between 2017 and 2022. This duo went by the name *Raske Dreng* and was established in Malmö, Sweden in 2017. I will analyse the co-creating process and methods we have developed together by highlighting how we attempt to find common ground, both in musical preferences and visions. Within this work, we search for ways to maintain the highest level of individual artistic input and collective potential.

To unfold this working method, I will lay out the working process of our first record, released in July 2020. This process illustrates the complexity of intercultural music making in a one-on-one musical dialogue.

The second case study is based on my artistic immersion trip to Hungary in April 2023. Together with local musicians from Hungary, I have had the opportunity of collaborating, exchanging musical ideas based on traditional music from Hungary, and finding textural similarities with my compositions. Additionally, based on interviews and private sessions with different violin teachers, both from Hungary and Slovenia, who are active in the field of folk music, I have collected insights on this topic including many suggestions regarding methodology, approaches, and goals.

With the third case study, I will talk about a musical trio consisting of two musicians from Finland, which formed the basis for my final master's concert. With this trio, I attempt to bring together musical impressions I have gathered as part of my artistic research through the Nordic countries since 2016. The complexity of verbalizing and exchanging your individual musical visions is what I will unfold by analysing the working process towards my final master's concert, held on May 10th 2023 in Kalliosali, Helsinki.

This project is framed by the core research question:

What kinds of pedagogical approaches enable a teacher and performing artist to translate and transmit musical ideas and intentions in an intercultural context with musicians from diverse backgrounds?

In order to frame the reason and what has led to this research topic, I will now provide a brief introduction of my educational and artistic background, and positionality towards my research. This is followed by an outline of my research methods, key concepts, case studies, and analysis. The final chapters look at my pedagogical thinking and visions, drawn final conclusions, and look to the future.

2. Educational background

As a former guitarist since the age of six, I developed an interest in modal music along my first exposures to folk music, including folk music from Ireland, Sweden, and Norway. With these interests, I decided to take folk violin classes at the local music school in my hometown Herentals, Belgium. This, alongside my formal high school studies at the jazz and pop department with guitar as my main instrument. Since I had started to play the violin at the age of fourteen, I was considered a late starter. This did not allow me to take frequent violin classes and switch my main instrument to violin at the music high school in Turnhout, Belgium. Therefore, I continued my folk violin classes at the local music school in Herentals. After three years of practicing the violin, I managed to switch my main instrument to violin at the music high school in Turnhout. Since there wasn't a department of folk music, I was officially studying jazz violin with my first violin teacher from Belgium.

Andries Baele introduced me to very useful improvisation methods and toolkits, in combination with relevant jazz standards, classical etudes, and Baroque repertoire. These wide varieties of styles and impressions gave me a sense of borderless music practice. However, my main interests in violin playing were folk music from Scandinavia. During my final year as a music high school student in the jazz and pop department in 2016, I decided to apply for a Bachelor in Folk and World music in the Malmö academy of Music. As a preparation, Baele strongly encouraged me to collect tunes and written music of Swedish and Norwegian folk music. Through this approach I got to work with Nordic folk music in a very intuitive manner within my jazz violin studies.

Together with my teacher we explored and worked on Scandinavian fiddle tunes by approaching and analysing them as jazz standards, focusing on the core melodies and how these delicate intervals form melodies with characteristic ornamentations and harmonies. This intuitive approach of music learning introduced me to a pathway of learning to understand music by analysing and recognising its characteristics even though they are unfamiliar. In addition, I learned how to implement these unfamiliar sounds, music structures and harmonies into my own playing style. This resulted in my first fascination towards tune-based composition.

Between 2016 and 2019 I took a Bachelor study in Folk and World music at the Malmö Academy of Music in Sweden. I took violin classes from my former teacher from Värmland, Mats Edén. Edén is considered one of the pioneers of the Swedish revivalists of folk music since the late eighties, expanding Swedish folk music through his own compositions and intercultural collaborations with his foremost ensemble, *Groupa*. With a general focus on Swedish and Norwegian fiddle music, I have gained a wide variety of tunes from different regions of these two countries and learned to familiarize with its musical structures and characteristics. These characteristics included a brief introduction to microtonality and asymmetrical rhythmic in Nordic folk music. Mats Edén taught mostly by ear and provided written notation as a secondary reference.

By collecting tunes, recordings, and transcriptions through Mats Edén's lessons in Malmö between 2016 and 2017, I had gathered a brief vocabulary consisting of Swedish and Norwegian folk music. In 2018 I took my Erasmus exchange at the University of Southeast Norway, Campus Rauland where I enjoyed a specialized program focused on Norwegian folk music. One of my main teachers Ånon Egeland, introduced me to the remarkable hardanger fiddle or *hardingfele*, Norway's national instrument. This violin-like string instrument is known for its unique sound, produced by the sympathetic strings that lay underneath the fingerboard, as well as the characteristic decorative ornamentations on the top and bottom plate. My study plan consisted of ethnomusicology, organology, Norwegian folk dancing, ensemble and the history and present status of the folk music scene in Norway.

3. Artistic background

Since the age of 15, I have immersed myself in different duo constellations. With musicians my age, yet carrying and developing different musical interest and preferences, I have learned from a young age how to position yourself towards musician B who carries a different or similar musical ideas and preferences. My first one on one collaboration might have been one of the most fundamental learning environments for me. Between 2015 and 2017 I started to be artistically active together with Robbe Broeckx, a drummer rooted in jazz, indie and pop music. Our concept of performing only with violin and drums has a strong impact on my approach to rhythm and groove.

In my current teaching practice as well as my artistic navigation in traditional music, this first musical duo collaboration has taught me to value the rhythmic aesthetics of music and understand melody through rhythm and phrasing.

While playing the violin I learned how to use my instrument so I could play with a similar intensity as a drummer, covering the rhythm section while playing the melody and harmony. This music making approach, still has a strong impact on my artistic and pedagogical music objectives. This duo was my kick start collaboration where I could express my musical interests in traditional music, accompanied only by drums and percussion. We played music from Sweden, Norway, Poland and started to write melodies together, strongly inspired by the music we both shared to one other.

During my studies at the Malmö academy of Music, I established another duo constellation with Ragnar Finsson. Finsson is a guitar player from Tórshavn, capital of the Faroe Islands. Our music could be described as Transatlantic folk music, where we combined our roots and musical backgrounds resulting into a mix of interpretations or expressions based on Nordic folk music. We performed actively between 2018 and 2022 in Scandinavia and Western Europe.

The art of one-on-one music exchange is what has been thriving me endlessly. I found a certain comfort and grounding when enhancing the amount of space that is created when there is only two people in the room carrying a musical, ethical, and educational background. Through my current studies and academic research at the Global Music department at Sibelius academy, I hope to develop new ways of exchanging traditional and personal music in a formal music education as well as artistic working processes.

4. Positionality towards my artistic research

As I was not raised within a certain strong musical tradition, it enables me to digest all sorts of traditional music, loose from its cultural customs, possible religious conviction, or political statements.

My great interest within navigating and learning traditional music from different parts of the world draws upon reflecting, comparing, and analysing different ways of musicking¹, traditional aesthetics, instrumentation, and cultural context.

A musician who carries a strong tradition might draw more upon the idea of representing and passing on their music tradition, since their musical background is rooted in one particular music tradition. As I have not grown up with a musical tradition or folklore, this is a very interesting topic for me that I have been observing carefully during my music studies in the Nordic countries in the field of folk, world, and global music. As my music education is generally based on Western European ideas and methodologies, it can be hard to truly understand a different starting point of unfamiliar music-understanding and music exchange applied in non-Western regions or even non-institutionalized music. The way I like to position myself is by showing a great interest in the other person's background, instrument, and cultural context.

As a performing artist and music teacher, I hope my research can shape awareness of the underlying and obvious complexities and values of intercultural music making and how this requires a certain mindset and positionality. This is equally important both in the field of teaching as well as artistically.

CHAPTER TWO: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

1. Literature review

Within my research topic there is both an artistic and pedagogical perspective to be unfolded. Therefore, I chose my literary resources to have a focus on both varieties of pedagogical methodology and approaches within the field of intercultural music-making as well as artistic research through examples of how to position oneself towards non-native traditional music.

¹ Any activity involving the transmission of musical knowledge, such as performing, listening, rehearsing, or composing (Sirek, D. 2018).

Additionally, I collected audio interviews with experienced artists, teachers, and multi-instrumentalists who have immersed themselves in a wide pallet of traditional music. The most valuable core readings regarding these topics have emerged to be a broad range of literature that grasps multiple pedagogical perspectives from different parts of the world regarding the complexities and current issues of intercultural music making.

The complexities, issues, and values of the integration of formal education in folk and global music in higher music education is an important subject in my research. What questions does a teacher or facilitator need to ask? What are the general scaffoldings to be a competent teacher in this field? What are the general obstacles you might come across artistically in and outside the music institutions, and how do you deal with them?

World Music and Music Education 'Facing the Issues' by music pedagogue Bennet Reimer touches on the underlying and more common issues of the integration of intercultural music making in formal music education. He lays out the kind of qualifications a master or teacher should have in order to teach, translate, and transmit different music styles. Even though the book dates from 2002 and new ideas of intercultural music teaching have been formed, the core issues and questions unfolded in this book are relevant to my own artistic navigation in different styles of traditional music and teaching practice.

Ethnomusicologist, B. Reimer points to questions such as, what terminology to use, which musics to teach, how to train teachers for this, who are the experts in these styles, and how much of an expert do you need to be? (Reimer, 2002, p. 140). Reimer suggests that in the field in intercultural music teaching, there should be an ethnomusicological perspective when teaching global music. He states: 'As a teacher transmitting different styles, we have to acknowledge the obvious limitations of replacing the ideal situation of learning from a native resource by a music teacher within an institutional learning environment. Adopting an anthropological perspective, the ethnomusicologist 's ultimate object to study humanity itself, with music as the medium through which humanity emerges' (Reimer, 2002, p. 142).

With the variety of traditional music discussed in my research, the exposure of a variety of pedagogical approaches is unavoidable and are therefore needs to be considered.

The Music of the Other – New Challenges for Ethnomusicology in a Global Age by Swiss anthropologist and musician Laurent Aubert (1949), was one of the few resources touching both on the pedagogical and artistic challenges of intercultural music making. How to learn the music of the other? He would unfold to the question on how to represent traditional music on stage: 'It is a matter of tactfully treating the visual codes or reconstructions of the functionalities of the music in the same way as the aural conventions' (Aubert, L. 2007, p.38).

Additionally, the book provides philosophies that connect with my own diverse formal education in the field of folk and global music. In my research I immerse myself in particular traditional musics, each of them with a different objective and expertise. This book helped me considering the following quotation: 'It is correct that the training in a foreign music will remain necessarily limited if it is not matched with a good knowledge of context, and possibly its language or one of its operative languages' (Aubert, 2007, p. 70). There is such a diversity of music teaching methods in the world that no model is universally applicable. From the more precise and systematic ones to those based on no obvious formalization, each suits its musical sphere and the way of life that accompanies it (Aubert 2007, p. 70).

In the book, *(Re)organizing the music curriculum as multicultural music education* by professor of music education at the Nelson Mandela University, South Africa, Alethea De Villiers, questions the national curriculum and its cultural hegemony it applies in relation to the nowadays multicultural society. This includes both compulsory education and national assessments. De Villiers questions the general music narrative and points out that a counter-hegemony needs to be adopted in the current cultural hegemony in formal music education (De Villiers, 2021, p. 389). I resonate with this statement as a student in the department of Global Music at Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts, Helsinki in terms of the article reflecting on the integration of a certain counter hegemony, wherein not only Western Art music or Western popular music is integrated, but rather building curricular that reflects our nowadays society.

The hands-on experience of exploring unfamiliar music cultures cannot be separated from a certain oral context that provides a certain learning environment suited for the music tradition to manifest. This oral context connects with the external elements such as social and natural environment, which creates the certain learning environment. When immersing within an unfamiliar learning environment, there are layers of learning and multiple ways to assimilate information. Through my pedagogical and artistic research, I also reflect on the internal and tacit processes of development.

This connects with Michael Polanyi's (2009) discussion on *tacit knowledge*. *The Tacit Dimension* by scientist Michael Polanyi (2009), unfolds the philosophy and science of tacit knowledge or the knowledge gained in the internal process of a certain experience. This layer of learning entails the subconscious absorbing of knowledge. Strongly related to my research, implicit or tacit knowledge such as developing motoric skills through familiarizing with new violin techniques and instruments communication skills, gives a cultural insight and understanding (Polanyi, 2009, p. 15).

This research is based on different ways and layers of learning in music. In the search of understanding musical aesthetics from non-native traditional music, it involves learning within unfamiliar social environments. The key findings and knowledge gained throughout this research is strongly based on personal experience involving emotional interaction, imitation, oral, and non-verbal dialoguing. A further crucial aspect is that of *embodied learning*. Professor Eeva Antilla (2015), unfolds the notion of learning as a manifest of bodily sensation in their work *Embodied Learning in Arts, learning is a bodily manifestation*. Antilla states: 'Embodied knowledge is personal and experiential. It emerges based on and in the form of sensations, perceptions, feelings, experiences, and emotions. It is non-symbolic and organic by nature, and it emerges in contact with the physical and social reality. Knowledge that is constructed in interaction supports interpersonal understanding beyond linguistic meanings' (Antilla, E. 2015. p. 29).

2. My Core Working Methods

The main research methods utilised in this project are connected to the approaches of artistic research. Artistic research is an approach to research that weaves together artistic processes, text-based approaches, and artistic outcomes to uncover new knowledge and understanding. As scholar Juho Varto states: 'Can a work or act of art itself be artistic research? This question is a serious one that concerns our idea of research' (Varto, J. 2018). In line with the approaches of artistic research, my work is strongly based on gaining insight through interaction and non-verbal communication in the form of musical dialogues. Through the process of artistic action and analysis, my research aims to gain new understandings and knowledge of diverse musical aesthetics and musical vocabularies.

This artistic research has a 'problem centred approach, whereby through art-based practices I attempt to unfold the artistic processes and gather pedagogical tools' that could suggest directions for a teacher or performing artist in the field of folk and global music, in the search to create a frame for meaningful musical dialogue (Leavy, 2017, p. 9).

As part of the approaches of artistic research, I also draw on the core research method of autoethnography. This method includes seeking to analyse and describe personal experience in order to understand cultural experience (Ellis et al., 2011). Adams et al. (2014) state, 'Autoethnographic stories are artistic and analytic demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experience. With autoethnography, we use our experience to engage ourselves, others, culture(s), politics, and social research' (Adams et al. p. 1, as cited in Thomson, 2021, p. 70). I use the approaches of autoethnography to analyse my personal experiences as I engage in the case studies presented in this research and draw on my own personal descriptions of the experiences. 'For the autoethnographer, everyday experience can serve as relevant "data" and everyday life can become part of an ambiguous and ever-changing field' (Ellis, C., & Adams, T. E. 2014. p. 266). This approach of artistic research relates to the immersion in non-native musical traditions and social dynamics as well as collecting data based on the personal interactions I experienced.

Additionally, my objective to translate and transmit unfamiliar musical traditions through artistic projects and my own teaching practice, is drawn from my own artistic and pedagogical perspectives and experiences. 'Autoethnographers must not only use their methodological tools and research literature to analyze experience, but also must consider ways others may experience similar epiphanies; they must use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience, and, in so doing, make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders' (Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. 2011. p. 276).

My core working methods include:

- Expanding musicianship through exposure to diverse musical traditions
- Focusing in on particular musical elements from different traditions, such as quarter tones, repeating rhythmic patterns, ornamentation, different vocabularies, etc.
- Collaborating with musicians from diverse backgrounds
- Discussing with musicians from diverse backgrounds
- Immersing myself in new musical and cultural environments, including a field trip in Hungary and Slovenia
- Testing different pedagogical approaches to translating and transmitting musical ideas
- Experimenting, improvising, and composing
- Jamming and performing
- Having conversations with performing artists and teachers who have immersed themselves in a wide variety of traditional music

3. Key concepts

The key concepts used in my research include, *tacit knowledge*, *embodied music making*, *translation and transmission*, *intercultural music making* and *ethical consideration*. I will give a brief overview of each concept here, and later explain how they connect to my work in various ways.

- **Tacit knowledge**, as mentioned above, refers to the internal learning and absorbing of knowledge which isn't written down nor verbalized. Through my research I gathered insight of what exactly is 'it' we learn or take in when being exposed in an unfamiliar learning environment and in which ways do we absorb knowledge? When considering my positionality and understanding of traditional music relevant to my academic research, there is a primary learning objective which in my case could be gathering an understanding of musical aesthetics and repertoire. However, when navigating and interacting with a local community native to that music, you can be immersed in local traditional customs as well as being exposed to an unfamiliar social environment or natural environment or climate. These non-verbal elements are in fact part of a learning environment and cause a certain state of mind wherein you absorb this knowledge.
- **Embodied music making** refers to the involvement of the whole body while learning and teaching. Through the observation and analysing of teaching methodology applied in traditional music performed both by qualified teachers in a formal higher music education as well as non-formally educated musicians, there are valuable insights and directions in teaching practice I have collected that embraces violin learning as a full body learning. As Antilla E. describes in 'Embodiment Learning in Arts', learning is a bodily manifestation. 'I use the term embodiment to refer to human existence as it becomes manifest through and in our bodies, as bodily sensations, lived experiences and physical actions' (Antilla, E. 2015. p.2).
- **Translation and Transmission** refers to ability of understanding and recognizing the general aesthetics or main characteristics of music and being able to connect and integrate these in your musical vocabulary. Additionally, from a pedagogical perspective, gaining competence to transmit and represent traditional music or aesthetics from traditional music in teaching environment while also being able to elaborate the cultural context, positionality and functionality of the music in question.

- **Intercultural music making** can be described as the interaction of two or more musical elements, traditions, or aesthetics. The term 'intercultural' goes beyond traditional aims of respecting and valuing diversity – while upholding them as a necessary baseline – as it needs to concern itself with “the learning environment as a whole. The term is frequently used in both the literature resources as well as in formal music education in folk- and global music. Discovering the possible connections of musical elements when two or more different music styles or traditions are colliding with one other is the main objective of my research and case studies I will later unfold. The transmission and exchange of musical ideas and knowledge can be described as musicking (Sirek, D. 2018, p. 48).

Ethical consideration refers to raise awareness towards the artistic and pedagogical actions in the field of intercultural music making. This artistic research project is drawn upon the interaction with non-native traditional music as well as their social and cultural environments. The notion of Ethical responsibility is of great importance when transmitting and translating unfamiliar musical aesthetics in artistic projects and teaching practice. Through the lens of teaching practice, this means that when presenting or transmitting non-native musical traditions, a teacher should be aware of their position as a non-native source towards these styles or traditions and acknowledge its original contexts. 'What are the questions and considerations a teacher or artist should be aware of' when collaborating and interacting with a non-native traditional music (Reimer, B. 2002. p. 142)?

CHAPTER THREE: ARTISTIC AND PEDAGOGICAL CASE STUDIES

In this chapter I will unfold and analyse three case studies, which involve immersing myself in intercultural musicking as a performing artist. In each case study I have come across various pedagogical, ethical, and cultural challenges and gathered a lot of insight into my positionality towards foreign or unfamiliar music traditions.

1. Case Study One: Raske Dreng

Raske Dreng is a music collaboration founded in Malmö, Sweden during my artistic Bachelor studies at the folk and world music department of Malmö Academy of Music (MHM) in 2017.

Together with Faroese singer songwriter and guitarist, Ragnar Finsson, *Raske Dreng* embraced an artistic objective of making contemporary folk music sound and feel natural for modern society with an instrumentation consisting of guitar, vocals and violins. This six-year long collaboration has resulted in various artistic outcomes. Within the working process of co-composing, co-creating, and co-arranging a debut album, I have come across valuable artistic, pedagogical, and ethical insights considering the approaches of traditional music and collaborating through musical exchange. This process has been a great hands-on experience where we attempt to find resonance and common musical preferences while our musical, cultural, and educational backgrounds strongly differ. The music could be defined as contemporary Transatlantic folk music with self-composed works, which carry traces of traditional musics from Norway, Sweden, Faroe Islands, UK, and USA.

1.1 Implementing aesthetics from traditional music

In the search to find a particular style for the music, we realized there are common musical interests and preferences that were worth investigating despite our different musical and ethnic backgrounds. Ragnar Finsson had been musically active as a guitar player and singer songwriter in various popular styles such as country, americana and indie folk, while my own musical background strongly draws upon traditional and contemporary folk music.

Both traditional music from the Nordic countries as well as certain sub genres from acoustic indie folk became two main sources of inspiration that would later define our music. Within the process of composing our first works, we started exploring and analysing musical textures and characteristics of traditional music which are non-native to both of us. The question of how to borrow these musical textures can come in different forms. This also raises ethical considerations when borrowing and building on musical textures from traditional music.

How can a performing artist with no native relation to a certain traditional music represent a borrowed texture, what are the rules here, and who is qualified to do so? As Reimer states, 'one of the most salient methods used to achieve this immersion is field experience. In this way, knowledge about culture is acquired by direct interaction with people, by participating in their costumes and traditions, by experiencing how they feel and think' (Reimer, B. 2002 p. 140). The traditional musical elements we have implemented in our own music are all carefully selected, based on our own immersion and interaction with these cultures.

This raises further questions related to issues of cultural appropriation. Although the scope of this project does not allow for an in-depth discussion on this issue, I acknowledge that this is a very relevant discussion that needs further attention, and could be a topic to dig into in my future research. By borrowing musical textures from traditional music both from the Nordic countries as well as certain regions in USA and UK, we recognized various musical connections that we tried to integrate in our music. These connections could vary from:

- Similarities in harmonic progressions
- Bowing techniques and strumming: subdivision
- Ornamentation
- Instrumentation
- Oral- and musical context

The most important consideration we discussed during this process of exploring traditional music and freely working with it, was our own positionality. On one hand, we saw much value in being interested in a various amount of traditional music and attempting to combine and implement musical aesthetics in our own music. However, our objective was not to claim or to represent traditional music. Our intention was only to draw inspiration from musical elements by respecting and considering their traditional forms or even rules. It is challenging to borrow certain traditional music aesthetics for your own artistic purpose when they are taken out of its original context. Therefore, we aimed to understand and analyse how the implemented traditional musical elements are manifested and practiced within their aural conventions and aim to treat these tactfully according to their functionalities (Aubert, L. 2007, p. 38).

Some of our works portray a Faroese Ballads or *Kvæði*² from the Faroe Islands. These ballads are sung and don't contain any instrumental accompaniment. Additionally, people perform a stepdance while singing a *Kvæði*. The form contains a call and response structure. This structure can be recognized in many music traditions world-wide. Within our repertoire, we arranged one of the most famous Faroese ballads called *Sigmundskvæði yngra* by adding a musical accompaniment to the normally a cappella sung ballad.

However, we maintained the call and response form, original lyrics and story while also maintaining the stepdance rhythm, which has a steady pulse so you would still recognize the ballad with its most traditional characteristics. Usually, we would only add to what already exists and works in its traditional form. In the case of our compositions, we would experiment with textural elements such as particular musical structures or forms that are applied in traditional music, as well as instrumentation, the use of ornaments on different instruments, rhythmic and melodic characteristics, and scales. In the following example I will briefly unfold one composition of this case study where the consideration of traditional elements can be analysed.

1.2 Unpacking one composition: Jordad Halling

Norwegian *bygdedans*³ or village dances carries a sequence of melodic excerpts or motives which can amount to more than seven different melodies in one dance tune (Kvifte, T. 2008, p. 37). This music is traditionally performed by a soloist playing the Norwegian hardanger fiddle. As earlier mentioned, this violin-like string instrument differs with the classical violin. The fiddle is known for its number of strings that are attached underneath the finger board and serve as sympathetic strings, which will start resonating when the instrument is played. This, in combination with the slightly bigger sound holes, produces a particular sound timbre. The bridge of the instrument is almost flat which causes the player to play two strings at the same time. Therefore, the hardanger fiddle requires a certain and delicate playing technique.

² **Faroese ballads** or *Kvæði* are verses portraying heroic tales. These ballads are accompanied by the Faroese chain dance while singing in a call- and response structure.' (Blach, K. 2017. Conversation in the Faroe Islands)

³ **Norwegian village dances** including the gangar and springar or walking/running dance (Nyfold, F. Norwegian folk music course. 2018).

After my Erasmus exchange at the University of Southeast Norway, Campus Rauland, where I was introduced to and studied this instrument, I began to integrate the hardanger fiddle in my own compositions intended for Raske Dreng.

In the following composition Jordad Halling, composed by myself, I was strongly inspired by a Norwegian male dance called *Halling*⁴. The fiddle playing of this dance involves a variety of stirring bowing techniques where often the back beat in a 2/4 or 4/4 time signature is emphasized, while also emphasizing a steady pulse by foot tapping on each beat.

My objective while composing a halling myself as a non-Norwegian, was to be creatively inspired by the relation of the dance and the music and attempt to compose a tune which could maintain the same danceability and therefore aim to maintain its functionality (Aubert, L. 2007, p. 37).

The melodies I composed were inspired by the scales Lydian and Lydian dominant. which are traditionally applied in this repertoire. Additionally, I added a part in a Dorian scale, which added to my own interpretation of the music. Throughout this composing process I aimed to respect the musical structure taken from Norwegian hardanger fiddle music and apply its traditional ornaments and bowing techniques. I chose to apply a three-part form of which some parts include sub variations of melodic excerpts. Another texture borrowed from Norwegian hardanger fiddle music is the use of intervals and scales where the fourth, third and seventh interval may vary between low and high.

- Lydian scale:
- Lydian Dominant scale:
- Non-tempered or Pure-tuned Lydian Dominant scale:



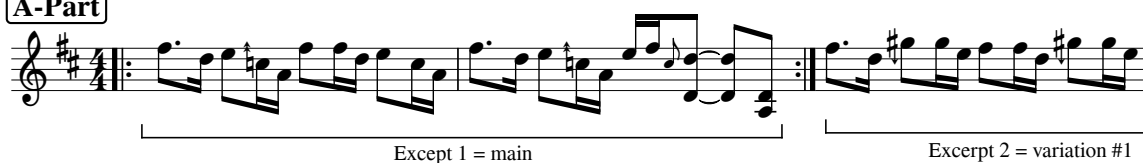
⁴ **Halling**: Norwegian male dance whereby the dancer shows his strength through acrobatics (Nyfold, F. 2018)

Jordad Halling

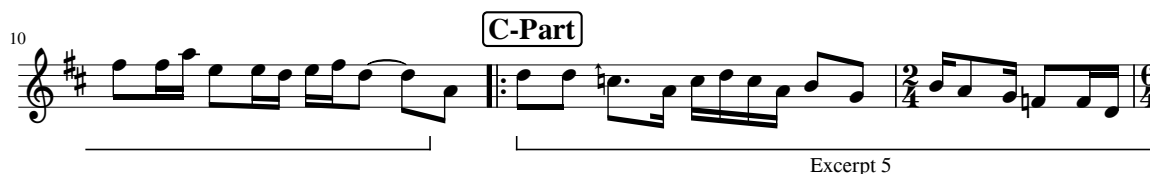
Halling

Oscar Beerten

A-Part



B-Part



In this last scale, the third and fourth interval are intonated slightly lower. In Norwegian traditional music, this intonation is based on the intervals of traditional instruments such as the overtone flute ⁵or *seljefloyte*. However, I was suggested by my teacher Ånon Egeland that this music is supposed to be played with a pure-tuned or non-tempered intonation. I also included this suggestion in this following artistic outcome ⁶ in a form of a composition.

⁵ **Overtone flutes:** An overtone flute is a type of a flute that is designed to play in the upper harmonics, typically well above the two or three harmonics that are the practical limit for most woodwind instruments (Egeland, Å. 2018. Ethnomusicology course).

⁶ **Artistic outcome CASE STUDY ONE:** can be found in the reference list at the end of this research paper including a YouTube-link.

1.3 A pedagogical reflection

The pathway of how to find common ground is what I find valuable in every form of music making. By analysing this working process, which occurred outside a music institution, I intend to apply some core ideas in my own teaching practice. As part of this process, I reflect on how to exchange and verbalize your musical ideas, preferences, and background in a one-to-one setting where participants might not be familiar with your musical background and vice versa. Additionally, I learned that it is reasonable to expect that both me and an artistic collaborator with a diverse background may struggle to play music from outside their home culture (Halick, E. 2017, p. 13). In this project I found valuable insights and philosophies on the question of how to create direction within an intercultural music dialogue. As a future teacher in this field, I deeply consider the value of hands-on experience. The following summary consists of my personal key findings, which provided direction during this working process.

- Introducing and discovering **tuning systems**

Traditional music around the world, along with its traditional instruments, involves a wide variety of tuning systems. In this case study we often increased the possible occurrence for resonance by exploring tuning systems which are traditionally applied within the common selected styles we were drawing upon. How would a standard Hardanger fiddle tuning system respond to an open or modal tuning for guitar, taken from Celtic music? A Standard or frequently used Hardanger fiddle tuning has an ADAE tuning. As opposed to the standard EADG tuning, the G-string is tuned up one interval. This causes the tuning system to become a modal tuning, allowing open strings to resonate while playing in certain modalities suited for the tuning system. One of the modal tunings we applied on the guitar is the DGDGAD tuning, which is strongly inspired by the cittern ⁷ tuning that has a GDADA tuning. The combination of these two tuning systems is likely to resonate if the tonality, key, or root-note ⁸ is the same. This works well, since both tuning systems are ideal for music with a certain modality.

⁷ **Cittern:** The cittern is one of the few metal-strung instruments known from the Renaissance period and has gained a high status in the contemporary Nordic and Celtic folk music scene.

⁸ The **root-note** refers to the first interval of a scale or tonality.

- Approaching **unfamiliar traditional music**

How can we recognize the most characterizing musical aesthetics of traditional music?

Each music style has a range of characteristics and textures. These are the core elements of what makes the music special. Through analysing different styles of traditional music, by stripping down the music, these characteristics can be recognized in different forms and might connect with familiar music styles (Campbell, P. 1996, p.41).

Core elements can include:

- A rhythmic pattern with a certain subdivision or time signature
 - A familiar or unfamiliar scale or modality
 - An ornament or melodic motive that characterizes the music
 - Intonation and phrasing: Is there a certain use of microtonality or phrasing texture that relates to any familiar music?
- **Composing** with the musical elements

Through composition, we were able to familiarise ourselves with unfamiliar musical elements. By choosing one or several musical elements, which could be a rhythmic pattern or a scale, for example, we started composing simple melodies or phrases with them. The value of this improvisatory or creative approach is to be able to integrate new elements of unfamiliar music into your musical vocabulary (Halick, E. 2017, p.14).

2. Case Study Two: Field Trip to Hungary

In this case study, there are multiple layers of music exchange I will unfold including my navigation through Hungarian traditional music. During April 2023 I undertook my artistic immersion trip to Hungary as part of my master's project. The main objective of my field trip was to get introduced to Hungarian folklore and traditional music while gaining hands-on practice through an intercultural music collaboration with local musicians.

2.1 Oral context

My artistic immersion trip was co-organized by Mátyás Egervári a Hungarian multi-instrumentalist, folk music researcher and founder of *PásztorHóra* and *Góbé Zenekar*. These two mentioned folk music groups are well-known in the Hungarian folk music scene as well as the world music scene in Europe. These folk music groups are one of the few active internationally touring bands from Hungary performing both contemporary and traditional folk music, and are well accepted in both the traditional music scene and the contemporary folk music scene in Hungary. I met Egervári in March 2022 at the first Ethno Hungary camp, which took place in Balatonboglár, Hungary. At this international music camp for young musicians, we spent a week-long music exchange with participants from four different continents. Meeting the Hungarian delegation there was a first real-life exposure to Hungarian folk music. Both Egervári and other Hungarian participants were generously introducing their musical background in traditional music from Hungary by introducing me to a variety of Hungarian traditional instruments such as the three-stringed viola or *Brácsa*, the *cimbalom* or hammered dulcimer and the *magyar duda* or Hungarian bagpipe.

I have known and recognized these instruments by attending concerts of ensembles from Transylvania and listening to records of *Muzsikás*, *Palatkai Banda* and *Kalász Banda*. Yet, it is only when you are exposed to these instruments in a real-life situation played by local musicians whose musical identity and background are rooted within these instruments, you gain a certain understanding of the timbers and aesthetics of the music. These sort of impressions provide aesthetic context and expand the knowledge of unfamiliar textures of music (Bartleet, B. L., Grant, C., Mani, C., & Tomlinson, V., 2020, p. 169). Later, when I attempted to learn certain complex asymmetric rhythmic bowing patterns on the three-stringed viola with a local player, I noticed that his approach to these rhythms was based on practical knowledge more than theoretical knowledge. This connects to the concept of tacit knowledge as outlined earlier (Polanyi, M. 2009, p. 7). Through this first real exposure to traditional instruments from Hungary during Ethno Hungary 2022, I developed a major interest in the traditional accompaniment section consisting of string instruments such as the *Brácsa*.

During April 2023, Egervári invited me to Hungary to undertake my artistic immersion trip. With his unwavering enthusiasm and generosity, he helped me prepare a detailed plan within a time frame of three weeks, which consisted of traditional music events and other activities concerning Hungarian folklore. Due to the Eastern celebrations, there were several occasions of attending festivals such as the annual National Dance house festival and visiting the traditional Eastern celebration in Hollókő. Hollókő and its surroundings are on the UNESCO World Heritage List and host the annual Eastern celebration involving traditional customs, music and dance. As a conclusion of artistic outcome, we intended to collaborate with his band, Góbé Zenekar and aimed to write at least two arrangements together, which would resemble a combination of one of my compositions and a Hungarian traditional melody or song.

In order to understand the wide variety regional styles of Hungarian traditional music, a brief introduction is necessary to be able to grasp the main findings of my research. Through online interviews taken with Egervári, I was briefly informed about the community dynamics within the Hungarian folklore community as well as introduced to regional styles and layers of music. According to Egervári, Hungarian folk music can be approached in at least three layers of gypsy music:

- **Authentic Gypsy Music**
- **Village Gypsy Music**
- **Urban Gypsy Music**

First of all, there is the **authentic gypsy music** rooted from the Romani people⁹. This particular and mainly vocally performed music consists of slow plaintive songs and fast melodies which may be accompanied by dancing. The fast melodies are accompanied with tongue-clacking, handclapping, mouth-basses, clicking of wooden spoons, and other techniques (Egervári, M. 2023. Interview).

⁹ **Romani people:** an Indo-Aryan ethnic group which primarily lives in Europe (Egervári, M. 2023. Online interview)

A second layer is **village gypsy music**, which could be subdivided in several types.

With a string-oriented instrumentation consisting of a first and second violinist, one or two viola players or *brácsa*, and a three stringed upright bass. This village music was played by gypsies, who were mostly self-educated. This notion of being self-educated, often in communal or familial dynamics is a common frame for learning traditional music. This can be approached as the original aural convention of the style of music (Aubert, L. 2007, p. 96).

They were taught music from other good players nearby, not in music schools or aristocrat households. They were taught by ear. This specific layer of gypsy music has become my personal main interest within Hungarian traditional music. The following video example is a *lassú cigánytánc* or slow gypsy dance from the Transylvanian village of Pălatca, now situated in Romania. Once predominant, this Hungarian speaking community is still present, as well as a large Gypsy minority, once trilingual, Romani, Hungarian, and Romanian, nowadays speaking predominantly Romanian. 'The village gypsy music from Palatka (in Hungarian) is considered one of the most popular village gypsy music played in a *Táncház*¹⁰ or Hungarian dance house event' (Egervári, M. 2023. Interview).

Within this layer of village gypsy music there are village gypsy bands, which however do have a music education background. These trained musicians are familiar with scores and were taught in a local music school and are therefore also exposed Western classical-oriented music. (Egervári, M. 2023. Interview).

A third layer of gypsy music is known as **Urban Gypsy music or "Restaurant Gypsy music"**. This nowadays rare and almost extinct layer of gypsy music is still to be found in Budapest. This music was rooted in the city of Budapest where gypsy bands performed at certain restaurants. These restaurants were seen as "domains" so one would know which band belongs to which restaurant and on which days. The most important element is the violinist of the band, after which the band was often named. 'These bands are dynasties. This means that the music was passed on by grandfather to father and to son. The music is complex and played by classically educated musicians, not "peasants"' (Egervári, M. 2023. Interview).

¹⁰ **Táncház:** Hungarian folk dance event (as opposed to stage performances). It is an aspect of the Hungarian roots revival of traditional culture which began in the early 1970s, and remains an active part of the national culture across the country, especially in cities like Budapest (Egervári, M. 2023. Online interview).

The Urban Gypsy music is an entertainment source for wedding feasts, christening celebrations, childbirths, and to entertain people dining at the restaurants. Within this entertaining function, they play with much virtuosity. Besides arrangements of traditional folksongs, they play a genre called *operett*, which means "little opera".

These pieces were written for a symphonic orchestra and opera singers. This genre bloomed only in Hungary in the 1800s, but it was lighter, with very simple naive love stories, and written tunes that sounded like folk melodies. The aristocracy had a heavy dose of orientalism and a "back to the roots" movement at that time. These gypsy bands played operett excerpts of folk tunes, "sounds-as-a-folk-tune" with additional classical excerpts, Romanian hora music, Monti Csardas, Brahms, etc. (Egervári, M. 2023. Interview).

During my fieldtrip I attended over ten different *Táncház* or dance house events.

These Hungarian folk dance and music events are the lion's den of traditional folklore, music and dance from Hungary and Transylvania. During these events, I had the chance to closely observe and record both dances and music performed by legendary musicians from the most profound regional music traditions. This, with the help and guidance of Mátyás Egervári and Márton Rigó (Góbé Zenekar), who made it possible to meet and communicate with the most iconic violinists in the Hungarian folk music scene, such as Florin Coboda from the original *Palatkai Banda*, the dance house band from Palatka village.

Additionally, I attended the annual National Dance House festival, *Táncháztalálkozó* which took place at the Papp László SportAréna in Budapest, hosting dance house groups from all over the country, including Transylvania and Slovakia. This big dance house event provided a general understanding and impression of the wide variety of regional music from Hungary. To me, Hungarian folk music has always been a maze of music which is a hidden secret within its own borders and practiced and developed internally. There definitely is truth to this since without the help and guidance of my Hungarian hosts, I would not have been able to navigate my way within this traditional music, including finding my way to dance house events, participating in dances, and occasionally even playing with local musicians. It was of therefore vital importance to have a local guidance.

My days in Hungary were structured in two different yet corresponding subdivisions. From morning to evening, me, and the musicians from the band Góbé Zenekar, worked towards a musical collaboration whereby we attempted to find musical connections with my self-composed music and Hungarian folk music aesthetics. During the months of preparation between January and April 2023, I composed four tunes which I intended to introduce to Góbé Zenekar. These tunes and drafts were initially sent to them in the form of recordings through a shared drive folder, where we exchanged ideas and references. This working method of forwarding musical references of which both parties felt comfortable exchanging has contributed to the efficient and fruitful process of music exchange and co-creating (Sirek, D. 2018, p. 48). Upon my arrival on April 5th, we immediately started our first rehearsals in Kolozsvár utca in a communal suburb in Budapest. Since we already had shared references and drafts in advance, there was more than enough working material, which provided a starting point and direction.

Góbé uses authentic folk music in a daring and experimental way. The members completed their studies at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. Their range of musical tools and backgrounds includes classical, folk and popular music alike. Their aim is to bring folk music closer to people and make them familiar with the music culture that lies behind their songs. It is therefore an important aspect to have a shared mindset of willingness and openness to be 'socially embedded in dialogue, education, transmission, and exchange' in order to achieve meaningful intercultural musical dialogue (Bartleet, B. L., Grant, C., Mani, C., & Tomlinson, V., 2020, p. 166).

This collaboration has resulted in a single release consisting one of my compositions combined with a famous Hungarian folk song. Additionally, this artistic project has given me the opportunity to be a sustainable international guest musician in the band for occasional tours in Northern and Western Europe in the near future. The combination of co-creating music with local musicians while being exposed daily to their traditional folklore, dance, music, and social dynamics, resulted in a general understanding of Hungarian traditional music. Additionally, this all came together in an artistic outcome whereby the music carries these snapshots of musical impressions gathered during my field trip and the oral context it represents.

2.2 Unpacking one composition: REBEKA

Prior to my artistic immersion trip to Hungary, I requested musical sources of Transylvanian village gypsy music from Palatka. During my first exposure of the three stringed viola or *Brácsa* at Ethno Hungary in March 2022, I was briefly introduced to certain bowing techniques applied on this traditional instrument. These bowing techniques resemble a groove-based rhythmic pattern which portrays the subdivisions of a dance. The tune I composed for the music collaboration with Góbé, is inspired by both the bowing patterns of the three stringed viola, and a harmonic progression only consisting of major triads while the melody varies with certain intervals.

During the co-arranging process, me and the viola player of Góbé explored the possible ways of both phrasing my melody as well as attempting to find ways of how to accompany my tune with a traditional bowing technique and rhythm on the three-stringed viola. The challenge here was to find a way to combine our approaches, primarily working with rhythm. This meant that I had to understand the variety of subdivisions each traditional bowing rhythm carries and attempt to find rhythmical connections and interpretations to the subdivisions of my self-composed melody. By doing this and trying the different possibilities of adding traditional bowing accompaniment rhythms on my melody, we did not find a hundred percent-accurate traditional bowing rhythm that fitted my tune with my intended subdivisions.

However, we collectively took this as a possibility to create a bowing accompaniment whereby we would slightly adjust some micro timings and phrasings of my melody while the viola player also adjusted micro timings from a traditional accompaniment rhythm taken from a Transylvanian village dance viola accompaniment. This working process in finding a common sense of understanding complex and detailed musical elements resulted in one of the most eye-opening and meaningful musical dialogues I have encountered during my field trip.

For this artistic outcome ¹¹, Góbé suggested a popular Hungarian folk song, *Borsót vittem a malomba* “I bring peas into the mill” from *Somogy* to combine with my tune. This song carries a *ugrós* or jumping dance rhythm which intuitively felt very close to the sense of rhythm and subdivision of my melody. Additionally, we also considered that the harmony I suggested for my melody felt somehow related to the harmony and melody of *Borsót vittem a malomba*.

3. Case Study Three: Master’s concert: Channelled Through Ecstatic States

Throughout my exploration through traditional music from different parts of the world, I have been trying to define or investigate what exactly attracts me so intensely to this field of music. After my studies at the University in Southeast Norway in Campus Rauland, Norway in 2018, I came to an interesting realisation. During the ethnomusicology course given by Ånon Egeland, who is one of the most profound and respected folk violin players in Norway, I learned about a term used in Norwegian folklore called *Rammeslått*¹², the ecstatic state of trance one can be in when dancing on certain traditional fiddle repertoire or while playing for dancing. This phenomenon has been a major interest of mine since my very first exposure to traditional or contemporary folk music and later research in Norwegian fiddle music. The term also conveys a sensation of hypnosis through music and dance. This common, and yet perhaps poorly described sensation of eternal ecstasy can also be experienced in relation to other musical traditions worldwide, I believe.

In this project, I draw deeply on Nordic folk music and personal interpretations of yet unexplored aesthetic connections of traditional musics, channelling impressions of music rooted in continuousness and trance. With traditional bowed instruments from the Nordic countries such as the hardanger fiddle, the *Rammeslått* repertoire can be performed.

¹¹ **Artistic outcome CASE STUDY TWO:** can be found in the reference list at the end of this research paper including a YouTube-link.

¹²**Rammeslått.** Musical term taken from Norwegian folklore. The term refers to a state of trance while playing in hardanger fiddle for dancing. It is believed that this repertoire can invite bad spirits on the dancefloor (Documentary NRK. 2005. *Magiske understrenger - Historien om hardingfele*).

Legends go that when one performs a Rammeslått, you might invite bad spirits or demons that might attempt cursing the dancefloor, causing it to be possessed, and therefore the dancers will never be able to stop dancing and the fiddle player might never be able to stop playing. In the artistic outcome in the shape of my master's concert, I aimed to transmit this sensation of trance and continuousness towards the audience. This, through my own compositions portraying my interpretations of the Rammeslått sensation performed on the Norwegian hardanger fiddle, Western ordinary violin, three-stringed viola or *brácsa*, bowed lyre or Finnish *juohikko*, and guitar. In this project I was accompanied by Jussi Pelkonen on guigtars and Ossi Raippainna on percussion.

3.1 Unpacking one composition: Paide Retreat

For this performance outcome, I realized one and a half academic years up front that the complexity of verbalizing and transmitting my objectives for the music I wish to make would need enough timeframe to explore and enhance the complexity of intercultural music making. I would prefer to enhance the co-creation process where my chosen musicians, Jussi Pelkonen and Ossi Raippalinna from Finland, would be able to be part of constructing and arranging the pieces with me. This is not simply because of maintaining a democracy but to enable my musicians to play in their highest potential and skill. I believe that when you as a facilitator, teacher or composer, set the framework and can provide the needed core ideas such as melodies, arrangements, and direction, it can encourage the artistic collaborators and result in the working process being more fruitful when you choose to leave enough space for artistic input from your musicians (Halick, E. 2017, p. 14). This including skill, objectives, ideas, and comfort zone. To achieve this, we started our first meetings in May 2022.

The music I wished to perform created a lot of space with a flexible musical structure which could be approached as a 'playground' for variations, improvisation, and interaction. For the first one-on-one sessions with Jussi and later with Ossi, I prepared skeleton ideas in the shape of melody and rhythmic motives. All the composed pieces for this project were recognizable either through a certain rhythmic pattern, a scale, or motive. These skeleton ideas or core elements were the starting point, and the motives were intended to be easy to repeat for a long time.

Step one was to explore the intensity and fundamental characteristic of the musical motive, while step two was to present a theme or arrangement resulting out of the skeleton idea. We took that last step when we found a common ground or understanding of the core element or skeleton idea.

The piece, 'Paide Retreat' is a self-composed melody I wrote during an artistic retreat in Paide, a small town in central Estonia. Both the melody and the harmonic progression carry a certain continuity. The main element of this piece is a single harmonic progression that allows multiple scales that vary and collide within one another. This occurs through varying with a single melodic theme that returns after each story is told through improvisation. The scale applied in Paide Retreat flirts with varying and applying different scales whereby the melody can vary between the major and minor pentatonic scales, with the fourth, second and sixth intervals being considered the most primarily used intervals. The improvised melodies are generally based on these variations with intervals while the harmonic progression accompanying the tune stays the same, without using thirds. However, this use of melody can be found in many traditional musics. In Paide Retreat I attempt to find a balance between Sahel music textures of harmony and continuity and Polish *Mazurek*¹³, a couple dance primarily danced in Polish folk music. Polish mazurek is known for its flexible meter and asymmetric rhythm¹⁴.

In Paide Retreat¹⁵ I attempt to borrow this sense of flexible meter as well as applying traditional ornaments and scales from Polish and Nordic fiddle music. The idea behind flexible meter can be best described according to Tellev Kvifte's analyses on the shortcomings of traditional music theories of rhythm and meter in folk music. Kvifte states that the sense of rhythm and meter in folk music is 'to keep the organisation of the meter naturally going in our heads and bodies. The meter should rather be understood as a framework we use (as performers, dancers and listeners) to understand the music we hear' (Kvifte T. 2008, pp. 32-34).

¹³ **Mazurek:** Traditional pare dance from Poland

¹⁴ **Asymmetric rhythm:** nonidentical or irregular durational groups following one another at two levels, within the bar and between bars or groups of bars (Kvifte, T. 2008.)

¹⁵ **Artistic outcome CASE STUDY THREE:** can be found in the reference list at the end of this research paper including a YouTube-link.

- Ongoing melody pattern and original skeleton idea 'Paide Retreat':



- Harmonic progression and suggested phrasing 'Paide Retreat':



3.2 Pedagogical Leadership

This master project has been a meaningful new experiment and learning opportunity for me on a pedagogical level. I had to lead two performing artists with diverse backgrounds into my world of music making that portrays elements such as pentatonic scales, microtonality, asymmetric rhythm, traditional music from different regions of the world, and unfamiliar traditional instruments from different parts of the globe. In this process, I attempted to provide my collaborators, Jussi and Ossi, with a brief context and introduction to each unfamiliar musical aesthetic.

When we tried out our first piece together, consisting of the Norwegian hardanger fiddle and all its characteristic ornamentation, scales, rhythm, and open tuning systems and limitations, I felt that it was important to mention the instrument's background and functionality (Aubert, L. 2007, p. 70). This, with to aim of provide an understanding of the instrument's abilities and aesthetics, which might initially be quite unfamiliar. Too often I reckon this step is not carefully considered in an intercultural learning environment when collaborating with musicians with a different ethnical and musical background.

Understanding a glimpse of the abilities of the musicians and their instruments provides more possibilities to interact with one other (Reimer, B. 2002, p. 146).

Throughout this working process of co-composing and co-arranging music in a one-on-one setting, music exchange and transmitting your musical and pedagogical starting points were aligned with the use of references. The usage and presenting of references can help the student or participant understand vital musical and contextual elements through sensibility (Bartleet, B. L., Grant, C., Mani, C., & Tomlinson, V. 2020, p.173). I tried to structure my rehearsals so that there would always be enough time to elaborate on the context of each piece, including which musical aesthetics from traditional music are borrowed from which regions and why. Therefore, I presented a new arrangement by performing it solo along with excerpts of music and video sources. Especially when considering borrowing elements of foreign music traditions in my own arrangements. This enabled me to learn how to verbalize my ideas, and especially my intentions with music that features musical elements and textures from different music traditions.

For each session I made sure there would be the needed demos and arrangement sheets. Prior to the rehearsal, I would record a brief demo consisting of a guitar harmony or pattern and rhythmic pattern played by myself, which I stored in a shared folder prior to our rehearsals. Alongside this, I prepared an arrangement sheet which was nothing more than an A4 comprising of a starting point or structure, primarily with no music notation included. This served as one way of direction, and I tried to find a balance between applying western notation with learning by ear. For this, I felt that I needed to be able to read my band mates when I presented new materials. Sometimes the melodies consisted of many different variations and a wide variety of harmony. It is good to consider the option of providing a lead sheet with written notation in some cases, while for another piece consisting repetitive melody segments, harmony and rhythm, it might be more fruitful to teach by ear. In the case of most of the compositions for my master's concert, I attempted to preserve all the flavour and fluidity of aesthetics so intimately connected with principles of an oral tradition involving learning by ear and imitation (Aubert, L. 2007, p.73).

This project, along with my studies in the global music department has made me reconsider the ways of immediate use of musical aesthetics of non-native traditional music as well as how to create new frames for intercultural music dialogue. The culmination of my master's concert, *Channelled through Ecstatic States* brings together these musical experiences and influences.

CHAPTER FOUR: PEDAGOGICAL THINKING AND VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

1. My objectives as a music teacher

During the past seven years, I have been instructing, teaching, and learning within a variety of intercultural environments. As mentioned before, formal music education in folk, world and global music has a constant evolving education system suggesting different teaching methodologies. My main objectives as an upcoming teacher in this field are rooted in gathered key findings, which I found most valuable when aiming to understand, perform and teach folk music of different regions and styles.

- **Presenting a range of styles of folk music traditions in Europe**

When teaching a scale of styles from different countries and regions, it is a matter of tactfully treating the visual codes or reconstructions of the functionalities of the music in the same way as the aural conventions (Aubert, L. 2007, p. 38). The repertoire is carefully suggested according to the styles of traditional music, including an adequate amount of knowledge of cultural context, repertoire, and providing reliable recourses and references. The aim is to be introduced to musical aesthetics involved in the tradition that would be beneficial to train the recognition of different regional styles of folk music. Exploring one style or an aesthetic of a style can be beneficial for learning another style (Egeland, Å. 2018, Ethnomusicology course).

- **Applying an interactive pedagogical approach**

This refers to the notion and dynamic of learning and discovering with the student or group. A teacher provides direction, feedback, and assessment. Traditional songs and instruments could be taught through imitation and call and response. Imitation happens naturally, which is a very logical and clear phenomena, just like language, behaviour, and attitude is taught through imitation (E. Antilla, 2015, p. 8). The same thing can be observed with music teaching through imitation and interactive teaching and learning. In traditional music, an instrument, songs and playing techniques are taught through imitation where the teacher or representative of that tradition exposes the learner to that tradition.

- **Being familiar with different musical structures**

Traditional music all over the world involves a wide variety of musical structures. Although there are countless similarities of musical structures that can be considered main structures of traditional music such as dance sequences, sets of tunes played in certain regions and flexible or free meter-oriented music like laments, ballads, airs, etc. It's important to have a general understanding that musical structures in traditional music forms vary according to their functionality. Considering these perspectives on music enables a student to familiarize themselves with the different conventions of non-familiar traditional music.

- **Familiarize with rhythmic patterns, harmony and scales through improvisation and composition.**

This refers to the ability of unfolding or stripping down music and familiarize oneself with its main aesthetics. Within the traditional music I feel eligible teaching, such as Scandinavian and Nordic music, I would suggest approaching the main characteristics of the music prior to teaching melodies or arrangement. The main objective here is to aim for a wider understanding of the music and to enhance the ability to recognize more than just the melody. By familiarizing oneself with the main musical elements that characterize the music such as scales, harmonic progressions, and ornamentations prior to learning a melody, the student gets a broader overview of exactly what aesthetics are involved in the music. In order to explore and become familiar with these musical elements, a range of toolkits can be provided.

This could include elements such as rhythm exercises and harmonic progressions on backing tracks, where a student can explore certain rhythmic patterns, scales and harmony, through an improvisatory approach and possibly compose melodies based on unfamiliar music aesthetics. This approach enables a student to connect and find possible similarities with familiar music (Cvetreznik, B. 2023. Interview).

- **Being familiar with various teaching approaches applied in traditional music in different parts of the globe**

This includes being able to sustain and enhance flexibility as a musician by being familiar with the different main learning and teaching methods applied both in traditional music from different parts of the world, as well as working methods in the field of intercultural music making. This is important, since the working field can vary strongly and constantly involves different working, learning and teaching methods (Cvetreznik, B. 2023. Interview).

As mentioned before, learning and teaching by ear can be considered a general teaching method applied in both formal music education and informal music education. Therefore, it is important to have the ability to be familiar with this approach. Additionally, the ability to read notated music and transcribe music can only increase the student's ability to work and learn music within a wide range of learning and working environments. The combination of all these elements enables a student to be able to work in a range of different fields, wherein the student knows how to navigate when co-working with musicians from diverse backgrounds.

- **Ethical considerations and positionality**

How do you position yourself pedagogically and artistically when you work, contribute, and co-create in an intercultural environment? Through experiences as a teacher and participant in various intercultural collaborations based on intercultural traditional music making, I believe that there are different ways one could profile or position themselves towards new or unfamiliar musics. Within these working and teaching experiences, I feel it is important to position myself with the needed enthusiasm and interest towards unfamiliar traditional music. What comes rather naturally is to apply a certain humble approach while embracing new ideas and impressions. A vital aspect here is to act through sincerity.

The ideal frame for meaningful intercultural dialogue draws upon openness and ethical responsibilities (Noddings, 1998). One could be positioned openly for dissonance and resonance while exchanging musical and cultural differences.

- **Wellbeing and Alexander technique**

As a music student I understand how easy it is to imitate both good and bad bodily habits from a teacher. In 2018 I was introduced to Alexander technique, which is an effective form of neuromuscular (mind-body training) movement re-education that goes directly to the root cause of most chronic muscular pain: the brain and the way in which it senses and organizes the muscles and movement. It works by becoming aware of our thinking and movement patterns that cause muscular tensions and postural problems, stress and anxiety.

Alexander technique (AT) principles create the right conditions where an organism's self-healing mechanism can take over its healing and changing process. The outcome is a better human functioning on every level (C. Sommer, 2021. Interview). Traditional music in Europe only, involves a wide range of postures applied on certain traditional string instruments such as playing without a shoulder rest, placing the violin vertically, and placing the violin around the chest bone instead of underneath the chinrest. These postures of playing violin are used for both sound production reasons and phrasing of the music (Egeland Å., 2018.

Ethnomusicology course).

However, as a student I have never been guided holistically when attempting to apply and understand the use of odd violin postures. I understood that it is a matter of simply copying and imitating a teacher. However, I believe in the advantages of applying an odd or traditional posture, which can include enhancing phrasing, sound production and groove. As a teacher, I wish to apply a neuromuscular approach in general where a student can get familiar with the general principles taken from the Alexander Technique. This refers to the ability to be fully supported and connected by the whole body when playing, performing and being. Being grounded when playing is of great importance when finding a supportive and balanced posture. Being grounded also means being balanced through having both your feet steady on the ground while being seated using the sitting bones and lengthening the spine and neck.

In addition to playing with full body support, I was introduced to another principle, which is the awareness of arm lines. There is a line that connects your right-hand pinkie continuing to your shoulders, which connects with your left arm and left-hand pinkie.

This imaginary arm line creates awareness of the fact that both arms, fingers and finger joints are in fact connected. This has helped me a lot to relax my bow hand and left hand. When tension occurs in the bow hand, it is likely that there will be tension in the left hand as well. When focusing on relaxing the bow hand, the left hand might notice tension release as well (Vahervuo, M. 2021. Individual AT session). This enabled me to build on embodied learning, developing supportive body-mind principles and standards in order to reach my fuller potential in being, playing and performing (Antilla, E. 2015 p.30). Therefore, I value these aspects greatly as a way to enhance my competence when teaching violin to students and to be a good representative with my own posture and habits. As earlier mentioned, learning happens through imitation and it is likely that a student imitates a teacher's postural habits and standards.

As for my own teaching practice, while approaching different traditional violin postures, I would invest care and time in individual tuition to guide a student to find a non harmful posture with the needed resting points in order to play without any unnecessary pains. The key insight here is that students could be more critical when learning and embracing new methods and suggestions regarding posture. Approaching this aspect with more criticality and awareness would stimulate critical learning and the sense of knowing what you are doing (Fenwick, T. 2010 7).

2. researching and collecting pedagogical approaches applied in different learning and teaching environments

I have mentioned the notion of borrowing and implementing musical aesthetics from traditional music from different parts of the world. The process of understanding these aesthetics involves certain pedagogical methods as different music traditions involve different ways of understanding music. It is important to consider the different ways of thinking about music and what sort of pedagogical approach this requires.

As a teacher in this field, it is therefore right 'to replicate as far as possible the pre-existing conditions of their methods with discernment' (Aubert, L., p.70 2007). As a teacher transmitting different styles of traditional music, 'we have to acknowledge the obvious limitations of replacing the ideal situation of learning from a native resource' by a music teacher within an institutional learning environment (Reimer, B. 2002, p. 142). As Reimer states, 'the logistic, practical and philosophical difficulties involved experiences with these musics which are created in a variety of contexts to the public-school classroom, are themselves a major issue' (Reimer, B. 2007. p.140).

For this research within the context of my case studies, I gathered two perspectives of pedagogical insights. The first perspective considers pedagogical methods involved with traditional music. These methods are developed and have been applied over a long period of time through history. The second perspective involves the pedagogical methods applied in higher music education in the field of folk, world and global music in the Nordic countries. As a music student in three different music institutions in three different Nordic countries hosting folk, world, and global music, I recognize the variety of pedagogical methods applied and how new approaches are constantly taken into account. These methods are not fully developed nor fully defined per se. Therefore, different philosophies and methods of learning and teaching folk, world and global music in higher music education can be considered and are constantly evolving. However, according to each music institution it is a matter of considering the direction and objectives of each education.

Within teaching and learning folk music, a trained or educated teacher and a non-schooled or trained teacher such as a family member or local fiddler are both valid recourses. I believe that the combination of these two worlds provides a broad pedagogical perspective of folk/traditional music. First of all, a pedagogical perspective that involves methodology whereby the music is taught through notated sheet music and technical exercises involving the training of ornaments, bowing techniques and phrasing. Nowadays, within departments of folk music in higher music education in the Nordic countries, folk music is being taught by analysing and unfolding the musical aesthetics whereby technical exercises are constantly invented and a theoretical approach is applied (Interview. Haigh, C. & Judelman, C. 2023. Fiddle Gateway).

Opposite to that, there is the learning through imitation without the use of Western music theory terminology nor notated music, which involves a different way of music thinking, as earlier mentioned. As part of this research, I have gathered the following pedagogical methods and perspectives taken from traditional music:

- **Hungarian Folk music:**

Within the earlier mentioned layer of Village Gypsy Music there is the notion of learning melodies for violin through imitating the voice and motion of the right hand and whole body. Besides playing the melody, a teacher would also sing the melody and encourage the student to sing and copy or imitate the exact phrasing on the violin. There is often no music theory terminology involved in this teaching practice (Életek Éneke VI. rész - a Magyarpalatkai Banda. 2007. Documentary).

- **Norwegian Folk music:**

In Norway I was taught hardanger fiddle by Ånon Egeland. Egeland would strongly stimulate the singing and playing of different instruments such as overtone flutes or *seljefloyte* and mouth harp or *munharpe*. This, in order to have a broad understanding of the musical aesthetics and familiarize oneself with the melodic limitations and yet richness of these mentioned instruments. Additionally, this approach enhances the accuracy of intonation in Norwegian fiddle music involving microtonality.¹⁶(Egeland, Å. 2018. Individual tuition). This tendency of teaching multiple instruments and the usage of voice might be a teaching perspective applied in traditional music from different areas in Europe and perhaps beyond? This aspect, however, might be a future research topic.

3. Pedagogical visions for the future

What are the main qualifications to be a teacher in this field in higher music education?
Is it fair to say that most traditional music is passed on rather orally and through imitation? If so, how do you carry this quality of organic learning into a modern music institution?

¹⁶ **Microtonality:** is the use in music of microtones—intervals smaller than a semitone, also called "microintervals". It may also be extended to include any music using intervals not found in the customary Western tuning of twelve equal intervals per octave.

And is it possible to do so? (Aubert, L 2007, p. 69). As a music pedagogue in the field of intercultural music making, the teacher's job is to stand by and help the participants to verbalize and translate musical and arrangement ideas to the group of learners, who may be unfamiliar to the music tradition taught. Most of the participants are not familiar with teaching music to a big group of diverse musicians. Since everyone carries a different cultural background, it is vitally important that you create a frame where different approaches of teaching and learning are validated and considered equally. As a teacher, there are two elements that I find important to implement in my own teaching practice, which are reflexivity and interactivity. During my master's degree at the Global Music department, I have gained a lot of insight into teaching methods where a teacher would position him / her / themselves as a learner. I believe that by implementing a more participatory and interactive teaching method, a teacher can gain more expertise and give a broader vision and more insights in terms of where and how more professionalism is needed (T. Laes, H. Westerlund, 2017, p. 36).

Another skill that I would highlight as a music teacher is to apply an interactive way of learning, which is encouraging and opens up a safe frame where a student can make mistakes and learn. As a student you can feel a sense of receiving competence and good mentorship. I feel that I am heard and that my musical ideas and intentions are valuable. I highly value the development of artistic identity and the development of sound production.¹⁷ As a teacher I wish to build and perfect the ideas and musical intentions of a student to develop their artistic potential. Each individual musician has a background to drawn upon, with musical preferences and valuable impressions. I wish to create a starting point within my teaching practice where a student can reveal and learn how to verbalize musical ideas, create and think of new musical ideas through hands-on musicking. For me, the aspect of co-creating within individual tuition forms the scaffolding of my approach to music teaching and learning. I hope I can continue to gain new impressions of relevant teaching methodologies and teaching approaches focused on how to stimulate a student's musical ideas.

¹⁷ **Sound production:** This term is often used in violin teaching. It refers to action of making sound as well as the quality of the sound produced on the violin. (Cvetreznik, B. 2023. Individual violin sessions and interviews in Ljubljana.)

The most important insight for me here is that I will keep reflecting on my ideas and input as a student and as a teacher, to help construct new pathways for intercultural music teaching.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

1. Main findings and limitations

This research has given me insights into both pedagogical thinking in the field of intercultural music making, as well as my own personal artistic development. By reflecting on the artistic and pedagogical processes of my case studies, I value the hands-on experience and exploring undefined learning and teaching environments.

A main finding that reoccurs in all the previous discussed case studies, is that the intercultural learning environment creates the possibility to gain an understanding of musical aesthetics from unfamiliar traditional musics, and gather these elements in your own musical vocabulary. Gaining more understanding of the approaches required to be fully exposed and introduced to unfamiliar traditional music, along with the particular pedagogical approaches of the cultural context was a further main finding. Moreover, through the practical case study experiences, each of them producing a different artistic outcome, I have been able to expand my musical and pedagogical vocabulary.

Additionally, through the combination of both researching traditional music as well as global or contemporary folk music, the richness of aesthetics gained through traditional music has given me more grounding and competence when borrowing musical aesthetics from traditional music in my own compositions. The more impressions I gained by diving into the core of traditional music, the more meaningful my own musical interpretation has become. Another key finding refers to the attempt to conceptualize and define each step taken in the different working processes of my case studies. Although this process gave me new insights and understandings, I found it was important to not over analyse the processes. The moment I started to overthink them, the results were least efficient and fruitful.

I discovered that, when I immersed and navigated myself in new and unfamiliar musical traditions and environments, I could often rely on intuitive impulses. During my field trip in Hungary, I learned to enhance a respectful approach based on patience and showing willingness to learn about their traditional music, customs, and musical thinking. This approach towards unfamiliar traditional music and culture has resulted to unwavering generosity from my local guidance and artistic collaborators. I felt included and encouraged to participate within their cultural context of musicking. It is likely that interaction through musical dialogue occurs in the right place at right time and above all, with the right mindset. This however, requires patience and could never been foreseen or planned in this case study. I experienced that this happens naturally through human interaction drawn within a frame of trust, respect, and sincerity.

Within the field of intercultural music making in higher music education, transmitting your interpretations of traditional music to musicians not familiar with the music nor aesthetics is a major issue or complexity. The ability to exchange and verbalize your musical and artistic preferences is a vital part of meaningful music dialogue. By this I do not mean only verbally, but the ways you are able to communicate through musical interaction and dialogue. This requires both certain pedagogical and artistic thinking, whereby a musician is able to expand on their own familiar musical thinking and learns to recognize musical elements in any unfamiliar style of music and interacts with it musically.

Within the scene of Global music and contemporary folk music, the notion of interpreting or reforming traditional music has many complexities. In my third case study, 'Master's concert: Channelled Through Ecstatic States', the complexity of finding a common musical understanding was a main challenge. The main findings in this regard included the need for particular pedagogical approaches to introducing the musicians to unfamiliar musical traditions, including long periods of embodied musical experiences. By finding a balance between non-verbal musical dialogue and contextualizing our musical preferences with the use of references, we were likely to find a common musical understanding.

The question of *why do we need to add on to what already serves the music's traditional functionality*, was a question I began to ask myself throughout my artistic research.

This complex issue raises questions about how many new elements can be added to the music from your own musical preferences and ideas, including structure and harmony, for example. The music I wish to make is primarily based on modal music focused on bowed instruments, mostly with a dance purpose. Like the Norwegian hardanger fiddle repertoire, the soloistic music tradition should be already “complete” according to the required functionality which in this case is dance. With this as my starting point, my core idea is to gently add a rhythm section underneath the already established fiddle playing. This has been complex to verbalize to musicians not familiar to this functionality and traditional approach.

As earlier mentioned, I do not carry a strong music tradition, while I do strongly draw upon my interpretations of Nordic and Transylvanian traditional music. However, I have been working with musicians who represent strong music traditions, that carry certain approaches to music making and musical intention. This creates both challenges and opportunities for myself and my collaborators, and often works best when we are both exploring new musical territories through co-creating new musical material inspired by the music we represent. In these discussed case studies, the performance outcomes are based on the balance between exploring, translating and combining vocabularies of music. This, within the lens of contemporary folk music where traditional musical values such as aesthetics, functionality and cultural context are considered and respected. By collaborating with musicians who are rooted in a musical tradition, it enables me to understand the musical core elements taken from traditional music better in order to seek interaction.

Furthermore, it can be challenging in many ways to create a frame for a meaningful traditional music exchange and dialogue. The idea of intercultural music exchange as a general way of musicking cannot be generalized as one practice and approach. As for myself, I see music exchange as a call and answer like dialogue where musical ideas, characteristics and identities are put forward and engage in dialogue. The aim here would be to verbalize your musical ideas and backgrounds and to search for possible common characteristics, intentions and/or dissonance. I am constantly fascinated by how often resonance occurs while having these intercultural music-making practices. However, the actual approach of music exchange does differ a lot.

2. Future Research

This research project has been a first academic reflection on my artistic outcomes and pedagogical findings. By undertaking similar future projects, I will continue finding directions of different international perspectives of how to teach and learn traditional music and how to transmit musical aesthetics within an intercultural music environment. For future research projects I aim to take bigger geographical and cultural steps through intercultural music collaborations with music I feel a connected to.

As a music teacher in this field, I wish to discover more suggestions and philosophies on how to build and reform a curriculum for departments of folk and global music. Additionally, I wish to find more research on the vital qualifications and positionality a teacher or master should have in order to teach different styles of music. Continually questioning what terminology to use, which musics to teach, how to train teachers for this, who and how are the experts in these styles, and how much of an expert do you need to be (Reimer, 2002, p. 140).

It is such a great opportunity to be a student at the Global Music department since this young and unique music department is constantly evolving its content depending on its students musical and cultural backgrounds and preferences. Being able to develop the department is a great and encouraging position to be in as a music student and future teacher. It stimulates the sense of responsibility and opens up a space for personal input and ideas. I am glad I can think and develop my future pathway as a music teacher while having great mentors with whom I can ask pedagogical advice and reflect on pedagogical, ethical, and cultural concerns or issues.

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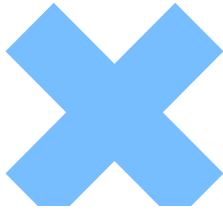
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APENDIX

CONSENT FORM

I hereby state that I have archived the attached consent form, signed by all artistic collaborators involved in this research paper.



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Consent for use of personal data

Consent to participate in the research: Musical Vocabularies,
Creating a framework for meaningful intercultural musical dialogue

I have understood that participation is voluntary, and at any point in the research I am at liberty to notify the researcher that I no longer wish to participate in the study.

- ☐ I want to participate in the artistic research as an expert/artist/composer, and I want the information to be published including my name.
- ☐ I want to participate in the artistic research project anonymously.
- ☐ I give permission related to the law of copyright to use my piece of art/performance as a part of the research.
- ☐ I give permission related to the law of copyright to show my piece of art/performance publicly.
- ☐ I want to be identified as the author of my piece of art/performance
- ☐ I want my piece of art/performance to be published unnamed.

I have received sufficient information about the research project. I have understood the information and I wish to participate in the research study.

Signature of research participant

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Email address

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