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Showing the way, or getting in the way?

Discussing power, influence and intervention in contemporary musical-social practices.

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Abstract

This article presents a broad discussion of power and influence within contemporary participatory music practices in relation to practices of *intervention*. The discussion is presented through the respective experience and professional perspectives of music therapy, music education, and community music - each illustrated by current practice examples and their accompanying dilemmas; and covering both local and international projects. In a shared closing discussion, the four authors review the key question: whether professional influence and power in participatory music practices 'shows the way' or 'gets in the way'. They conclude that intervention takes place on a continuum, in different ways, and to different degrees and levels. What is vital is to retain practical and ethical reflexivity on the dimensions of intervention as a practice that can offer both creative opportunities, but which can also be part of subtly oppressive power relationships.

Keywords

Intervention, power, participatory music practices, music therapy, music education, community music

Introduction

This article began with our participation in the AHRC-funded Research Network Partnership *Excellence, Inclusion and Intervention in Music* (2017–18). The third public meeting of this group at York St. John University in October 2018 involved us (a music therapist and three community musicians/music pedagogues) in a ‘fishbowl discussion’ designed to produce a quick-fire and mobile discussion. The ‘fishbowl’ consisted of an arrangement of four chairs within a larger audience circle, the bowl having three of the four of us in discussion at the beginning, but with an empty chair that any audience member could ‘swim into’ to challenge the speaker(s) or to take the discussion into a new direction via their own ideas or practice experiences. This vibrant debate produced some fascinating material that usefully foregrounded many contemporary preoccupations of music practitioners and scholars.

Afterwards, we reflected on how, for us, the core of the many-sided fishbowl discussion was the topic of power and influence within contemporary participatory music practices. In particular, the range of current attitudes and reactions towards *intervention* – its appropriateness, styles and rationales. This topic had also been central to a previous Research Network meeting that had focused on different understandings of the politics and practicalities of intervention across the different socio-musical professions represented – community music, music education and music therapy. Intervention has been a loaded and controversial concept for some time now – signifying either necessary positive action into or within a musical situation, or alternatively, the less positive connotations of imposing top-down power, disruption and interference. Community musician and scholar Lee Higgins offered the research group meeting a ‘position paper/provocation’ (Higgins 2017), starting with his now infamous ‘definition’ in his book *Community Music: In Theory & Practice* (2012):

community music may be understood as an approach to active music making and music knowledge *outside* of formal teaching and learning situations. [...] *From this third perspective, community music is an intentional intervention,*

involving skilled music leaders, who facilitate group music-making experiences in environments that do not have set curricula.

(2012: 4, emphasis added)

Group discussions stemming from this position paper uncovered very different understandings of, and attitudes towards, the concept 'intervention' across the practices of music therapy, community music and music education – including whether the concept is used much anymore within these discourses. Several members of the research group were notably uncomfortable with the concept, raising the questions: Is musical intervention necessary? If so, when is it necessary, and how is it best done? Is 'intervention' really a good description of what practitioners across the socio-musical practices actually do or should do? Is it ethical? Lee Higgins also helpfully showed us how the Latin origins of the word 'intervention' – *Venire* = to come – usefully ties together a family of word-concepts: *intervention*; *invention*; *adventure*, *event*... It can be argued that musicians of all vocations are always interventionists in some ways related to this range of meanings. Why then are community musicians, music therapists and music educationalists seemingly so unsure about intervention today?

Partly, this questioning focusing on intervention stems from the broader sociopolitical world these professions work within today, and their increased sensitivity to issues of power and oppression which are (surprisingly to some) not only the concerns of the world 'out there' but also negatively structured into the professions themselves 'internally'. In the past five years, thinking within the arts therapies has turned with some anxiety towards these difficult questions. To cite just one example, a whole edition of the journal *The Arts in Psychotherapy* was dedicated to anti-oppressive practices and has an article by the music therapist Susan Hadley (2013) entitled 'Dominant narratives: Complicity and the need for vigilance in the creative arts therapies'. In this piece, Hadley writes that 'as therapists we are not above the fray of complex identity formation shaped by dominant/subjugating narratives' (2013: 373). That is, we are working every day, and within every minute of our practice, *within* the fray of the personal/political/social matrix – even if we think (or would like to think) that we are 'just making music' with people. This same situation of timely self-critique could equally apply to community music and music education in recent years.

We seem to be living through a cultural moment that is challenging many of the unquestioned professional assumptions of a previous era. *Are we really the (only) experts? Experts at what?* What are the implications of having expertise and authority as a music therapist/leader/teacher? What kind of power or influence do these roles involve, and what are the limits of our mandate within them to direct or control what happens to those people and situations we are professionally responsible for? When we are in music with other people, who is really in charge of what's happening, and when is intervention valid or invalid? Is 'being in charge' good or bad (or both)? (What is the relationship between participatory music practices and the classical legacy of the orchestral conductor style of direction?). Is directing what happens musically to do with the interests of 'the music', the people or the institutions we work for? Are there perhaps darker aspects of power politics lurking beneath the seemingly benign practices of music therapy, community music and music education?

We summed up these many questions with a single question that forms the title and starting point for this discussion article: When we (as therapists, educators, leaders) take a more directive or interventionist stance in socio-musical practices, are we *showing the way, or getting in the way?*

The article attempts to further the discussion on this timely subject that began in the Research Network meetings and was subsequently further developed in the fishbowl discussions at the public meeting in York. Whilst in an article like this we cannot reproduce exactly the style of discussion in each of these forums, we aim to convey some of the original content of the original discussions and their ethos of provocation, open dialogue, inclusion and informality. Our aim is to work each time from the everyday reality of our respective situated practices and their contemporary challenges, and to bring out the more theoretical aspects in relation to these.

As a written text is necessarily slower and more linear than a fishbowl dialogue, the format of this article is more like a 'relay race', with each of us handing over some of the material and questions to the next writer, who then develops it or takes it into a different direction. We reflect on emerging shared themes and differences within a final section, not to synthesize the perspectives but rather to open the discussion out to further inquiry and

comment. Academic citation is used sparsely to provide references of material directly alluded to, not to comprehensively support statements.

1 "You turn me, I'll turn you" - a perspective from Gary Ansdell [music therapy]

To intervene, or not to intervene? This is a question and a dilemma that has haunted much of music therapy's history – in both practice and theory. It is interesting that music therapists are now sharing this dilemma with community musicians and music educationalists as their mutual dialogue has deepened recently (Higgins 2012; Wood and Ansdell 2018). A key theme of this inter-professional dialogue has been how the intimate and personal work of musicking with people in a variety of ways and settings is also necessarily micro-political in certain ways, leading to a re-examination of many taken-for-granted assumptions, values and practices.

Arguably, this newly upfront and public debate has followed decades of disregard or plain ignorance towards potentially oppressive narratives within the therapeutic professions (Smail 2005). Some branches of the arts therapies have traditionally taken moral cover within a neo-medical model, assimilating its consensus regarding the defining and legitimating of roles in terms of expertise and authority. This includes three key aspects: first, the clear-cut division between therapist and patient identities; second, the characterizing of the therapeutic process as a treatment process originating *from* the therapist to the client (justified by the logic of what the patient 'needs', even if they do not always want it); and third, an understanding of the therapy context as largely a-social, a-cultural and a-political.

The dilemma of intervention in music therapy has increasingly functioned as a rallying point for controversies about whether to characterize the overall rationale of music therapy in relation to a medical/neo-medical model. If they do, then they can also characterize therapy as a 'clinical intervention' into the pathology and psychosocial world of the patient/client. In *The Study of Music Therapy* (2014), a key text on the developing history of music therapy theory in relation to practice, Kenneth Aigen suggests two perspectives: of 'interventions *through* music' or 'music *as* intervention'. The key difference is whether there is a separation between 'musical

aims' and any other aims (behavioural, psychotherapeutic, educational, social etc.). Beyond this basic conceptual distinction, there are other nuances relating to which theoretical traditions music therapy practices align themselves with. For example, psychotherapeutic models of music therapy often argue for a 'non-directive' therapeutic process after the client-centred theories of Rogers (1951). A further tradition, sometimes referred to as 'music-centred approaches', argue that the aim of music therapy is to keep the process *musical* and to help music help people within the difficult situations they find themselves. Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy practitioners might argue from this basic rationale, however, that a specific kind of *musical intervention* is also sometimes needed to free people up in order that the musicking can function therapeutically for a client, or within a social situation. So even in music therapy, there is a full range of opinion and dispute as to what intervention is, and whether and how it should be central to practice.

In the international music therapy community, the years from the late 1990s have seen a large-scale challenge to the neo-medical meta-frame from several different 'dissenting' and disrupting theories of music therapy such as Community Music Therapy (Pavlicevic and Ansdell 2004), Resource-Oriented Music Therapy (Rolvsjord 2010), Music-Centred Music Therapy (Aigen 2014; Ansdell 2014) and Culture-Centred Music Therapy (Stige 2003). What all of these currents have emphasized is that music therapy work always happens *within a specific context* – where we are not doing things *to* people, but rather *with people*, and *within a particular socio-cultural-political situation*.

In relation to my own practice – which draws upon many of these 'disrupting' perspectives – my attitude towards intervention is certainly key, but also complex and multifaceted according to situation and need. Overall, my approach comes within Aigen's 'music *as* intervention', believing that skilfully introducing music into a situation is often what primarily makes the difference, what makes music therapy therapeutic. As Aigen (2014) writes, 'the musicality of the intervention matters because the purpose is to awaken and engage the client's musicality, using it to enhance the client's full capacity to be human' (56).

In the two examples from my practice that follows, I suggest how interventions within a 'music-centred' perspective can nevertheless be seen on a continuum of mild-to-stronger

interventionist intention from the therapist, according to the situation and the professional judgement of need and possibility.

My first example is of what I will call 'mild intervention' or *intervention as invitation*. I am working as a music therapist in a care home with elderly people. I do a session in their living room along with staff, visitors and family members. I bring along musical material – known songs, pieces of classical and popular music – but have no plan or agenda, except to offer music and follow where it leads in terms of the people there and the situation they are in alongside staff, friends and family. I play piano and guitar, sing songs, improvise out of songs. The residents, staff and family members also sing and play percussion instruments. It is by turns joyful, difficult and touching. Am I in charge here? Am I an expert? What kind of interventionist power is at play here? After the session, a new carer says to me 'You are *good* at this!' and then lost for words she does a motion with hands and arms; first forward and backwards, then a circular mixing together. I think this is true; what I am good at after 30 years of music therapy practice is offering something musically at the same time as listening very carefully to a person's musical response, then incorporating this improvisationally into the next musical moment, and facilitating an ongoing 'musical conversation'. The ultimate success of such sessions is certainly not dependent on only me and my 'intervention', but how a shared and mutual care for music can be cultivated amongst everyone there – residents, staff and family members. So the 'mild intervention' in this scenario is primarily of music itself; of me bringing music into play within this care home and then to help the musicking to find its way and its purpose that day – amongst all of us there.

In contrast, I find myself on another day improvising with a patient in a hospital setting who after a brain injury gets trapped into musical 'perserveration' when we play together – that is, once he is started a pattern he cannot stop it. After a while, I musically intervene, cutting in and across the client's stuck playing, offering – as musically as I can – another melodic/rhythmic pattern, which eventually he picks up, then looks up to me, recognizing this welcome change. At this point, our musical relationship also changes – something new has become possible *between* us. This is a stronger intervention – what I had call *intervention as challenge* – disturbing/disrupting a situation that I have judged professionally to be not in the

best interest of our ongoing musicking. The ethical mandate for the exercise of this intervention as a valid therapeutic action is to help free up the client's music so that our musical dialogue can also be more free.

The 'ethics of intervention' on the therapist's side are articulated and discussed through the reflexive practices that are part of being a professional music therapist – in the service to the basic duty of a therapist to cause no harm and to use aspects of power responsibly. But there is also a complexity in both these situations that may not always be obvious from their surface – which is the nuanced reality of the *shared* power and mutuality that almost always underlies the musicking situation, even when it may appear that there is an expert and a non-expert, or a leader and follower(s) (a situation carefully analysed and theorized by Rolvsjord's (2010 model of 'Resource-Oriented Music Therapy'). The reality is that almost any musicking process is also a creative collaboration, a subtle sharing of influence. In a public dialogue in the 1960s, the philosopher Martin Buber and psychotherapist Carl Rogers came to the formulation that therapeutic relationships are (like educational relationships) 'mutual but non-symmetrical' (see Cissna and Anderson 1994). In music therapy, the client has also to *want* things to be different and has to take their part and give their permission within a musical intervention – either in responding to a musical invitation, or in taking part in the challenge to aspects of themselves within the musical intervention. In the milder version of intervention in the care home, the situation can also be seen as mutual and reciprocal; once we are collectively 'in the music' in this way, then everyone invites each other into the arrival of what can happen.

This suggests that a music therapist's (and perhaps also a community musician's, or a music educator's?) primary task might be how to best care for the next musical moment together, without either abnegating our professional influence to suggest, direct or shape the musical future, nor abuse this – rather, to attempt to distribute the music's own power.

There is a nice story the Zen teacher Shinryu Suzuki used to tell when he felt that his audience needed to think a bit more about the issues of power, influence and intervention in spiritual practice:

Once, during a ceremony, a Zen teacher was asked "What power will you use to direct others?"

“Don’t use it” he replied.

The questioner pressed on: “Then how will you direct people?”

“You turn me; I’ll turn you” the teacher replied.

(quoted in Burkett [2018: 162])

In this way, can we perhaps think of the various ways that we have in and through music of turning to each other, and turning each other, in and through musicking? Sometimes, this is through gentle musical invitation, sometimes through a more challenging musical or non-musical intervention, which serves to direct or re-direct a mutual musical trajectory. We can perhaps certainly think of our influence as musicians as a form of ‘soft musical power’ that is sometimes a necessary component to creating helpful musical relationship and community.

2. ‘How much is too much?’ - a perspective from Sara Lee, [the Irene Taylor Trust]

Creative projects delivered by the Irene Taylor Trust’s musicians involve inviting groups of prisoners, former prisoners or young people in contact with the criminal justice system to write, record and perform their own music. We arrive at the prison or community setting, set up the instruments and invite a group to join us, and, after finding out what people are interested in and the instruments they might like to try, we offer them the chance to play, to ‘feel’ those instruments and to begin to get to know them. Together, we then write original songs. Simple in essence but way more complicated to achieve whilst considering factors such as how much we (the facilitating musicians) should/need/are required to input into the process. During projects, we need to consider questions like:

- Our role is to offer the best possible experience to our participants, so what form should that take?
- What levels of guidance/support are acceptable?
- What might happen if we gave no guidance at all?
- At what point do/should we ‘intervene’ as things are progressing?

What we are sure of is that the creative process needs to flow, and we are there to gently support this as and when we need to. In no way should it be oppressive or overly guided,

however, surely there are points where we *should* offer something, which might move a process on musically for the group or for an individual? In our process, the music itself often informs you how to proceed. Sometimes, however, the guidance required is a practical thing for an individual – how to play chords on a keyboard or hold a guitar, for example – to help make the experience fulfilling and the planned outcomes/outputs possible to achieve. It is extremely unlikely that we would leave an individual to work difficulties out for themselves as we are balancing a number of things here, including whether they are able to and how long it may take, plus the fact the rest of the group may be patiently looking on, waiting for the solution to arrive. Support given at this time would always be subtle and quiet and possibly not even noticed by the other group members.

Basically, our projects are a constant back and forth of support, guidance, interaction and instruction whilst allowing people to explore and develop. Groups can be low energy, high energy or somewhere in between. Individuals may have advanced musical skills or limited skills, personalities might be extrovert or introvert. Each individual is different just as each group is different, meaning that ultimate flexibility and responsiveness to what is developing in the room is required at all times. As we are working, we ask questions of ourselves and the group: Where do you think the music needs to go now? More of the same? Something different? If you have half the group saying one thing and half the other, how might you deal with that? Not by telling them what they are going to do, but by explaining the options and offering examples up for choice. That I believe is part of our role, to share the knowledge we have in an inclusive way for the advancement of the group and the people who are part of it.

I have witnessed a number of ways practitioners/facilitators achieve their goals and these fall under three headings:

- *Non directed* – this method can sound wayward but you would absolutely know that it had been achieved by the individuals with virtually no ‘influence’ from the facilitator/musician.
- *Semi directed* – this potentially has a more polished outcome, but you can still hear where the music has been derived from.

- *Over directed* – this sounds the most removed (and the least authentic) as it exhibits the undeniable hallmarks of the facilitator/musician rather than the musical personality of the group, suggesting an unequal working relationship and an imbalance of ‘power’.

Ideally at the end of a process, you want a gig that remains true to its creative roots but also exhibits a professionalism that will confirm to the performers that they have been part of something special. This requires a delicate balance of support and guidance throughout the process. We want the songs to sound the best they possibly can to ensure the whole experience is good for both the performers and the audience. Individual parts have to be written in a way that is understanding and respectful of where a person is in their musical development, they have to be attainable and satisfying, whether you have been playing your instrument for 3 years or 3 days. If as a facilitator/musician you can hear how a particular aspect could sound more structurally solid or musically more authentic, do you stand back and say, ‘no, I am not going to offer anything, I am going to let it take its course’, risking the audience of (in our case) prisoners picking it out as a potential weakness in someone? No, at all times you are going to be weighing up a whole host of puzzles and ‘do I, don't I’s’, to ensure that each person sounds and feels the best they possibly can. Is this too much guidance from the facilitating musicians?

For example, if at the start of a project, somebody was trying to play the guitar ‘upside down’ we would definitely intervene (if they were a new player), as much for the experience of the individual and the stability of the current group as for any later point. If the same person tried to do something similar at a future time but was not as sensitively supported, the result could potentially be they lose confidence and give up, possibly thinking, ‘well that’s how they told me to do it on that music project...’. Instantly, this is obviously us saying, ‘we know the most effective way to do this.’ But is it right or wrong for us to do so?

During the time where people are experimenting, we listen intently for those first few notes someone comes up with on the bass, which can be added to a couple of the chords the keyboard player has found and a simple beat the drummer is investigating. We show how by putting these together you get the beginning of a song. Once again, this is us clearly taking a

lead to accomplish this first stage, in order for the project to progress. But is it right or wrong for us to do this?

As people start to feel physically more comfortable with their instruments, they ask for pointers and we may ask a question back but we will always help them learn. 'Which notes can I play with this?' 'Try any of them. Are there any which you think sound better?' This is guidance but still leaves the individual space to experiment and make a decision. However, there may be a case where the individual thinks something sounds great yet others in the group do not and neither do we. In this context, for the music and the others in the band, we might suggest changing something in order it sounds more in tune with what everyone else is feeling. But is it right or wrong for us to do so?

When refining final song structures and, for example, someone absolutely loves the sound of the chorus they have written and wants to hear it again and again and again, yet it really upsets the balance of the music. At this stage, we might suggest that hearing it just twice could sound more effective, and see what they think when they have heard it. Are we right or wrong to impose what we think on this process?

Writing music with people who are new to the idea or even combining those who can with those who have not as yet, takes a certain amount of management and guidance in order to make the process effective and nourishing for everyone. Say for example, we have agreed as a group to present a gig of three or four songs to an audience at the end of the week. Maybe, early in the week, we get stuck on one particular song. Should we let it work itself out but run the risk that it does not? What if we get to the end of the week and the sticking point is still there? We'd probably have lost most of the group by that point, saying to us as they left, 'you're the professionals, you shouldn't have let this happen, you should have sorted it out' But should we? Of course we should, if we want to ensure the process and the product make the group feel they have achieved something extraordinary as individuals and as a team. Letting something go without challenge which leads to people getting frustrated, or knowing that by leaving it, it was not going to be as satisfying as it could be (which they would also know), could have a demoralising effect on individuals, affecting them, the group *and* the music. We can help ensure that does not happen and we *should* do this. How much we offer to the process always

changes, as it is dependent on the individuals and the group they make. Finding a balance is the key as the group as a whole is likely to need different things at different times during the process, just as each individual will need different things. You have to be sensitive to all this at all times.

With experience, you learn how you need to be and what you need to do to help each person achieve the best they can. Some people are pretty self-sufficient, others need more support. The decision about whether and how to support or not support is taken on a case-by-case basis, and in response to what is happening at the time. There are already plenty of challenges in creating music in the way we do (i.e., group work, unfamiliar instruments, singing, performing in front of people etc.), that at certain points you may want to alleviate this by offering a quick solution to balance out all the plate spinning someone is already being asked to do; one less thing for an already overloaded brain to think about. Decisions are made when they need to be and with the permission of the facilitating musicians and the participants. Ultimately, the whole process is a delicately balanced 'see-saw' and, if effective, will be personally fulfilling for everyone involved.

3. Taking a Creative Risk - a perspective from Pauline Black [Education and Community Music]

Participatory and creative musical practice and trying to promote shared social interaction is fundamental to my practice, which spans across a range of contexts, as I work with education and community music students in a University setting, as well as continuing part time with a range of freelance music education projects. I might describe myself as a practitioner chameleon – shifting contexts, wearing many hats, absorbing the environment and having to remain acutely aware of the different power relations that manifest themselves depending on the educational practice that I might find myself in. One thing remains constant in my own goal, however, and that is to try to create a 'safe space' for music-making, creating and sharing and to encourage people to perhaps step out of their comfort zone at times, taking what could be termed a creative risk in that 'safe space'. I am using the term 'safe space' with reference to the

creation of an environment where participants will feel comfortable being able to try things out and to experiment.

I do not explicitly use the word 'intervention', and as I have reflected more and more is all music education practice not indeed interventionist? It could be suggested that depending on the amount and type of 'intervention', a music teacher/practitioner could be viewed as an agent of social change or an agent of social control. Can we ensure that we value diversity? Can we remain aware of the power relations that condition social relations within our environments? These are some of the questions I suggest that, as music educators, we need to keep foregrounded.

One example I will share of 'intervention' from my practice is in working with a group of undergraduate education and community music students, when exploring Green's (2002) informal learning pedagogy. I might begin by asking students to create their own 'cover version' of 'Happy Birthday' working out melody, chords and playing this in any style, with three verses, in a short space of time. They are not allowed to use their main instrument, and they must work in groups with students that they may not know very well. I follow this up by asking students to listen to a recording of a popular song and then in groups to work out how to play the song. My role is to step in, or intervene, when the situation demands, a gentle musical power perhaps, to move things in another suggested direction when asked for help. Not too dissimilar from the process described above by Sara, this might be to demonstrate something on an instrument or to discuss note choices to help participants to move on. When I ask these music students to play by ear, improvise, collaborate or to play on instruments that are not classed as their main study, this can be an uncomfortable experience to begin with. Many of these music students are not used to this environment of creative experimentation, where it is ok to try things out and actually get things wrong, then use this as a learning experience. Creating a suitable environment or 'safe space' to allow this experimentation is paramount. These experiences are subsequently explored with me in class in a way that Finney and Philpott (2010) define as 'meta-pedagogy' or the study of pedagogy in order to learn pedagogy.

Our education and community music students come mostly from a western art music background and are largely used to the conventions of notation and the hierarchical position of

the score; therefore, the playing by ear and improvisation tasks are challenging. This raises the question: How much power does the score hold over a musician? Further issues of power are discussed as follows:

...teachers are interpreters of these most tangible artefacts of the canon, gatekeepers of power and knowledge, and without them, the authority of both individual teachers and the institution as a whole is thrown into question.

(Prouty 2008: 3)

The majority of music degrees and programmes that are in place to educate music teachers privilege western classical music skills (Abramo and Austin 2014; Finney and Philpott 2010); therefore, this privileging of art music may become the default for many, with an associated 'master-disciple' or 'apprenticeship' model of teaching commonly found in music education. Students fall back on what they know best, drawing on learning experiences from their own backgrounds. Does the dominant Classical canon remain as this gatekeeper of power? Wright and Froehlich (2012) draw on Basil Bernstein's theory illustrating how music education might function as an agent for social reproduction, as the teacher may draw on their own ideologies, habitual preferences and patterns of behaviour (*habitus*). Bernstein refers to this as 'recontextualisation of knowledge' (212), and this raises key questions regarding who selects the type of curricular music studied in school and Universities and what social and cultural values are embedded within.

Although I introduce students to the formal – informal – non-formal continuum with activities such as the ones described earlier, students are sometimes faced with further challenges when trying to implement informal learning strategies whilst on school experience placements. Students may go on placements and not feel able to implement these informal learning strategies within a curriculum seemingly overloaded with assessments. In some circumstances, there are more parameters to work within, for example, navigating the creativity/performativity agendas within the secondary school system, or battling hidden (and not so hidden) hegemonic pressures of working in a higher education institution. Are some musics more valued than others? Who and what are these gatekeepers of power? Which pedagogies and musics are included or excluded, which are marginalized and who decides? Can

we disrupt hierarchies? I believe there is a need for an in-depth course on the study of the formal – non-formal – informal continuum in music, but this falls outwith the dominant canon of musical study on a music degree.

Another example I will share of ‘intervention’ from my practice is in working with people learning jazz and improvisation. This may be primary or secondary school pupils, music and non-music students at university or adults playing in a community band or in a one-off workshop. With a wide ranging ‘audience’, this calls for sessions with a general plan and music material in mind, but the emphasis has to be on developing the session to suit the needs/abilities/confidence levels of the participants. Creating the environment to allow participants to feel comfortable to take a risk in a ‘safe space’ is fundamental. Flexibility and adaptability on my part is key, along with intuition (Claxton and Atkinson 2000). It could be said that teaching improvisation requires a great deal of improvisation.

Picking up on Gary’s themes above, I would also use *intervention as invitation* by offering patterns for participants to respond to, on my trumpet, using call and response patterns and gradually aiming to build confidence so that participants can offer a solo improvised response along with a rhythm section playing. Participants experiment together as a large group so they do not feel exposed, then gradually they play in smaller groups, then individually if they feel comfortable to do so. I believe this develops musical agency. I also mentor education and community music students in this workshop setting so that they can also learn to facilitate improvisation workshops.

In a longer term jazz project, choice of repertoire and style, as well as musical decisions such as tempo, introduction and instrumentation would all gradually be transferred from me to the participants, in a shifting of ‘power’ to represent a more authentic jazz experience. A move to self-/peer-directed learning, with an emphasis on collaborative working and distributed leadership would be established. This is an example of learning in a socio-cultural space, according to what Rogoff (1991) describes as participatory appropriation: ‘individuals change so that they handle other situations in accord with developments in previous situations’ (132).

Another example from a project where I had a short composition residency in a primary school makes me think of a different type of intervention. In conversation at the end of the

project, the teacher that I worked with reflected, 'I thought I was going to have to intervene' (*intervene as in 'correct'*), as my practice was so different from regular classroom activity. This teacher was not used to the level of child-centred activity (and sound) in the room. The 'power' dynamic in her classroom was very different to normal, but what started as potentially challenging became a wonderful and very successful collaborative opportunity. There were obviously conflicting initial viewpoints concerning appropriate pedagogy and classroom dynamic – is discipline viewed as a type of power?

In another project, I have been in the role of lead practitioner facilitating collaborative practice between primary teachers and visiting artists (music and other arts), so my 'intervention' has been to help facilitate further 'interventions' as well as exploring the creativity agenda and what that means for each in their respective environments. The theme of taking a risk within a 'safe space' again is key; my intervention could be viewed as helping to prepare/establish this environment, acknowledging that there is a fine balance required between structure and freedom. Yet again, there is still an element of control and power in play here with setting up this 'safe space'.

The rules of play in one context (e.g., in higher education) or working as a freelance practitioner are not the same, and at times there can be assumptions made about what the educational process is and how one might impact on the other. These multiple identities in music can sometimes appear conflicting. Formal institutional structures can have hidden informal hegemonic pressures. In some of my freelance work, some power structures are in the background (e.g., funding applications) and in my work as a practitioner for the Youth Music Initiative, the teacher in the class is responsible for 'managing' the class, I am left to simply 'be the musician'. I have tried to share some different scenarios for thinking about power and intervention in my musical-social practices.

I was lucky enough to be in a discussion group with some secondary school pupils recently, where they had made up the question, 'Imagine if there was no fear of failure?' and we unpicked this, as we thought about ways to approach the school curriculum creatively. They viewed school as being very driven by assessments and were using words such as pressure and

stress, however wanted to have more independent choice with regard to their learning pathways and be made to feel ok if they did not always get things right.

Music education is constantly adapting to change and the how, why and what that is learned may be up for constant negotiation. Learning spaces/environment and technology are all evolving and can all impact on the musical experience. The curricular model and school frameworks undoubtedly have a major influence on pedagogy. In recent years, there has been an upsurge of the teaching of popular music and music technology in schools and as a result there has been a move to adopt more informal learning strategies. This learning in a socio-cultural environment has an emphasis on exploration, experimentation, learning aurally, group interaction and collaboration.

Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in schools has in its framework for teaching and learning the 'learner at the centre' (Scottish Government 2008) and there is encouragement to move away from teacher-directed pedagogy. Freire (2005) proposed his critical pedagogy in a reaction to the 'banking of knowledge concept':

Critical pedagogy for music education acknowledges that teaching and learning music is socially and politically constructed. It advocates a shift in the power relationships within the music classroom by suggesting that teachers and students teach each other. This pedagogy not only engages children in critical thinking through problem posing, problem solving, and dialoguing, but it also engages children and their teachers in critical action by a mindful production of culture.

(Abrahams 2005: 14)

Camlin (2015) also proposes a move away from the teacher as the authoritative figure of power, to a more socially engaged dialogic pedagogy within participatory music, citing Christopher Small:

We learn, from the sounds and from one another, the nature of the relationships; in affirming we teach one another about the relationships; and in celebrating we bring together the teaching and the learning in an act of social solidarity.

(Small 1998: 218)

The learning environment needs consideration, as there are different power agendas at play and many creative tensions. To ensure innovative practice, sometimes we need to go out of our comfort zones. Providing a safe space for participants to take a creative risk can perhaps be a way to frame our interventions. Mursell (1956) uses the term 'participatory democracy' to frame the type of qualities to aim for in a democratically minded music educator:

... music was a social art that lent itself well to participatory democracy...we must try to exercise the kind of leadership that evokes the thinking, the planning, the choosing, the deciding, the cooperating of others – the sort of leadership that does not treat others as passive followers, but that builds up in them a sense of active, responsible cooperation in a common enterprise.

Perhaps considering collaborative practical experiences and shared social interaction with improvisational models of pedagogy will help find a way for participatory music practices in education and community music. Thinking about whose norms might be privileged, whilst being mindful of the power relations that condition social relations within our environments, can help in becoming a culturally responsive music educator.

4. The mysterious ways of power in a collaborative project between India and Norway – a perspective from Brit Ågot Brøske [Education and Community Music]

As a music teacher educator, I have a strong motivation in contributing to general music education for all, and a strong interest in contributing to educating future music teachers who are able to welcome people in different age groups, with varied skills and abilities, in all kind of situations, from different cultures around the world, in active music-making. This is also my motivation for being involved in several international projects – in South Lebanon, Georgia and India. A common characteristic for all the three international projects is aiming for inclusion of all and cultural democracy (everyone's right to express herself through culture and art, regardless of gender, skills or social status), and they are all focusing on active music-making.

The Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) is a collaborative partner in all projects. In my part of this text, I focus on one of these projects, located in India, continuing the ongoing discussion of intervention and power. A main point is to exemplify that power relations are complex and function in different directions and that there are different ways of understanding what actually counts as interventions in these projects.

The project in Bengaluru, India, is a collaboration between Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts (called SaPa), the Jain University and NMH. SaPa started as a music school and has instrumental tuition for children as their primary task. In 2014, SaPa started the SaPa-in-Schools Programme, aiming for establishing music as a subject in several primary and lower secondary schools and providing music education as a part of the school curriculum. This entails among other things to develop a syllabus and train music teachers, where NMH and SaPa have been the important partners. Together with Jain University, all the three partners are now involved in establishing a bachelor programme in music education at Jain University. SaPa is the major driving force in all the work and plays a crucial role for the project to exist.

First of all, what kind of interventions do we find in the project? During our two to three visits to India per year, I (and my Norwegian colleagues) intervene through participating in discussions about the direction in the project, give ideas and contribute in decision-making. We also intervene through giving workshops for SaPa-in-school teachers. In a workshop, there will normally be about 30 SaPa-in-school teachers gathered, who are all employed as music teachers in different schools in the SaPa-in-school programme. They teach children from 3 to 15 years old, and they participate regularly in workshops led by SaPa. Finding musical material and activities that can be relevant for everybody in this group is quite a challenge for my Norwegian colleagues and me. In all the workshops, we bring in different kind of musical material: playful activities, songs with basic harmonic layers, canon songs, and songs with movements and dance activities. We try to bring in material that is already familiar to the participants, and some new material. We do a variety of music-making activities, improvising and composing, and always include reflecting on and discussing challenging issues related to learning and teaching music in schools. The teachers attending workshops have different wishes and needs, and our challenge is to be open for this and create new ideas throughout the workshops.

Although these are examples of how we, coming from Norway, clearly intervene in the project, it is important to recognize that SaPa is in several ways the strongest part and driving force in the interventions, and the partner that really wants to advocate changes in music education in India. This relates most of all to interventions in schools through the SaPa-in-school programme, including syllabus, teachers trained by SaPa and supervision of the teachers. It seems like SaPa has had ideas and motivation for creating change (for reaching the goal of providing general music education to all children), and in collaboration with NMH, finds the strength to intervene and push these changes. SaPa's intervention can be considered massive – they have reached 25 000 children in total in all the schools, and trained around 50 music teachers.

Furthermore, it occurs to me, that I am not only making interventions, but that I can be looked upon as an intervention myself. This renders interventions as double-sided and like a two-way process and has consequences for the understanding of power in collaborative projects. For me, discussions of intervention and power is then not a question of who advocates the 'right' way, but rather a question about making choices and actions that are in line with our own values and convictions, and this goes for both us Norwegians as well as for the Indian partners. This can be seen as valuable for creating strong collaborations, as different viewpoints and traditions creates a context of multi-voicedness and contradictions, which can be drivers for learning and development (Engeström 2001). If we understand collaborative projects as two-way interventions filled with complex power relations, a variety of perspectives can be seen as a strength and constitute rich possibilities for development.

Seeing interventions as a double-sided, two-way process has consequences for the issue of power, and I will pose the question – *who* has power in this project and *how* does power work and play out? The Norwegian partners have certainly power in the project – particularly through the power of knowledge and experience. Nevertheless, the project is filled with examples of power placed among other partners and persons involved, and in several ways one important aspect for making the project work is for us to build on a hybrid understanding of power relations. This is a collaborative project, and everyone involved: NMH, SaPa, SaPa teachers and Jain University, have power in different issues and topics – the power works *in*

between the project, in the spaces between the partners, and we all have to relate to decisions made in one part of the project as it is complex and multifaceted. For me, this means that there are many ways of power in the project.

The role of the local music teachers is one aspect and example that feeds into the questions of power. When collaborating with other cultures and educational structures, there seems to be a possibility for me, coming from Norway, to present and advocate the best practice from Norway, including not only specific material and strategies, but not the least an attitude to teaching in the direction of wanting to advocate students' self-reflection and critical thinking. A goal for me is to educate music teachers that are able to adjust to different settings, that are able to create their own material when needed, who can change and re-organize the musical material to different pupils (age, skills, abilities). How can such concerns and goals be reached in cultures that advocate other kind of values, or see differently on the role of the music teacher – a teacher that has to be loyal to detailed curriculum plans and stronger control through exams and tests that pupils have to attend? What happens locally in India when western ideas of cultural democracy, the teacher as facilitator, collaborative learning, a socio-cultural view on learning, and the idea of the reflective and critical thinking student in all levels meet the local culture with its own structure, traditions and hierarchies? The context is complex, hybrid and multifaceted and entails dilemmas of conflicting values and traditions, which both Norwegian and Indian partners have to handle and which are drivers for change and development.

In India, there is a strong tradition in learning music mainly outside schools, and music education not being available for all; music is traditionally learned by sitting with a guru within the *guru-shishya system*. The teachers should be highly respected and not contradicted, and this tradition affects how our focus on developing a critical thinking pupil can be at all understood or valued as important. According to our collaborative partners, learning traditional music is normally not considered *fun*, but is rather related to a linear understanding, meaning a strong focus on finishing and completing musical works. This often collides with my view on the role of the music teacher, but my possibilities for influencing this idea and situation is very limited. This gives me the need for raising questions: How can inclusion of all in active music-

making be realized in a music culture and tradition where learning music follows a specific pathway, with specific musical material and ways of learning and teaching? How does working with active music-making challenge a cultural understanding of learning?

A few final examples. With the SaPa-in-school programme, SaPa has managed to create and develop general music as a subject in schools, and at the same time train music teachers, and develop the syllabus for the teaching in line with the different regulations in the schools. Being able to reach this achievement makes it clear that SaPa has influence, resources and power and is highly respected and function as door-openers. How this influence and power works and functions, how it operates between and among the involved partners is not easy to understand for us being 'the others' in the project. One example here is related to the collaboration with Jain University where it often is impossible for me as a foreigner to understand the mysterious ways of influence, decisions and changes that go on. There are regulations of exams that we do not fully understand, we have to deal with the board of the University making decision about the structure of the course without discussing with us, and also it has even been difficult to get to meet the right persons at the University – the persons with the real power. Another example is when I am asked of SaPa to sit in for a meeting with someone, where I find myself not fully understanding what is going on and suddenly being asked to elaborate on the value of music for all within the meeting. And later being explained why – because it was for trying to reach some agreements, or to reach a goal or to win someone over somehow, and that I was brought into it to reinforce the arguments through being an international partner. These examples show that I sometimes am left with the feeling of being in-between power, that power works on its own, in a complex game of power and interventions.

The mysterious ways of power in this project challenge me in several ways, and very often it feels like there are many dilemmas to tackle, as the examples above show. It seems, however, that the overarching goal is simply too important, the goal of including all in music-making and being a part of a cultural democracy. This goal is in this project a shared goal between the leaders of SaPa and myself, which is a condition for making development in the project happen. For reaching our overarching goals, or what possibly can be called a universal

value, both SaPa and I are more than willing to navigate in this rather complicated field of interventions, power and contradictions.

Intervention as a practice [closing thoughts by the four authors]

In this text, we have presented a variety of perspectives and views on intervention and power related to different contexts and cases. Several questions and dilemmas are raised: seeing intervention as something on a continuum or of different degrees, from mild intervention to intervention as challenge, discussing which level of instruction could be suitable within an intervention, the issue of creating safe space within interventions, seeing interventions as invitations, the case of intervention through dialogue, and intervention as double-sided or two-way processes. What is common in several of these experiences and ideas is acknowledging that intervention happens in different ways and to different degrees and levels. Words like complexity, various ways, finding the balance, being sensitive, diversity, improvisation, flexibility, compromises and inclusion of all are found in each of the perspectives presented in the text. It seems as the term intervention goes for both the issue that some musical work at all are happening with or together with other people – in prisons, in care home with elderly people, in schools, in international teacher training. This means seeing intervention as a *practice* where musical activities are taking place. The situation of us, as music therapists, community musicians and music educators, using music in these places at all is then seen as intervention and nurtures reflection of power, although we are often invited in with clear purposes and goals to be attained. At the same time, the different contributions in this text show that intervention can be understood on a different level – centred around the *person* who intervenes, and how this person (music therapist, community musician, music educator) acts as an intervention and during the intervention. This goes on, clearly, in a span between challenging or directing actions in the setting (instructing), to being very modest and mild and just letting things unfold in the setting (facilitating), or even almost being ‘used’ in an intervention where we are one piece in a puzzle where someone else holds the whole picture.

All these different viewpoints and perspectives together show somehow that it is challenging to deal with what Donald Schön calls the ‘swampy zones of practice’ (Schön 1987:

3) and being able to handle such swampy zones demands or advocates reflection in action as well as reflection on the actions. Doing or being a part of musical interventions could mean encounters between people, between cultures, between traditions and history, all with music at the centre. Such encounters will in many ways be filled with contradictions and multiple voices (Engeström 2001) and hence challenge both the professional music workers' and the participants' identity, both professionally and personally. Here lays perhaps the most valuable asset in interventions or in encounters – the possibility to be changed, to become someone else, to be touched and moved, and be open for learning something that is 'not yet there' (Engeström 2001) and focusing on what we can become rather than what we are (Hall 1989).

All the different aspects of intervention that are found in this text lead to several dilemmas and issues on power and power relations. The issue of power can, based on the contributions in this text, also fit into a continuum from soft power to a stronger power, and to different aspects of power – from power within people, power in institutions, power in rules, power in music, and power in tradition, history and culture. Based on this, it might be a good idea to move away from seeing power as something that is good or bad, and right or wrong (because it is never that simple!). Throughout the different cases and contexts presented in this text, power is not a straightforward issue. In some cases, having power is crucial for making things happen, for opening doors, and can be seen as supporting the participants. In other cases, it seems as though it is more fruitful to not act through power or not to reinforce unequal power relations. There are clearly many ways of power carrying different levels of value or importance. It might be fruitful to move away from seeing power as something that someone possesses, to something that operates within interventions, in relations, in organizations, and throughout traditions and history. Maybe it is reason to turn to Foucault on this matter, who sees power as not a form, but a relation between forces (Deleuze 2006: 59). In Foucault's understanding, power is not essentially repressive, it is practiced before it is possessed, and it passes through the hands of the mastered no less than through the hands of the masters (Deleuze 2006: 60).

Considering interventions on different levels and in a variety of ways, and understanding power as something that operates in mysterious ways in all the different relations, calls

furthermore for reflection, skills in adapting, being sensitive and open-minded. The professional – whether a music therapist, community musician or music educator – needs continuing reflection, sensitivity and openness on this contentious area. This is in order not only both to meet the participants' needs and wishes but also to understand how power operates in the relationship, and being able to see interventions and power relations as potential assets for learning and development, both for the professionals and for the participants.

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