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Developing Creative Ecologies in Music Education: Intercultural Explorations and Encounters in a Creative Music Intensive.

Music education throughout the world is adopting a ‘creative turn’ in both the ways information and skill is transferred, as well as the underlying social and organisational ethos that complements educational development and growth through music education. In some platforms Music education is arguably resisting universal and homogenous approaches, embracing increasingly differentiated perspectives, practices and local beliefs that assert against globalising trends.

The creative experience of music making remains a dominant driver in social transformation and change, where and practice of improvisation is seen as a significant element of cultural production, collectivisation and sociality. The practice of improvisation provides environments that acknowledge and promote difference, that foster intercultural and transnational music making, and discourses that challenge the totalizing assumptions of creative expression. New understandings of improvisation fracture reifying narratives by considering experiences and interactions spanning physical, interpersonal, and socio-cultural interactions. Improvisational activity in the 21st century is identified as enhancing our relational senses of empathy, curiosity and fosters inter-subjective spaces through which we perceive, feel, sense, and communicate. These deeper understandings of improvisational music making are powerful signifiers of the way we collectivise, organise and make musical and collaborative sense of musical experiences.

So, amidst a globalized, connected world of hegemonic influence and power, music making and music learning is also shaped by localised perspectives, beliefs, interpretations and adaptations of tradition that reflect improvisers’ creative experiences as authentic and in-the-world in which they live.

These creative experiences can be understood “by an analysis of its specific historical and local, national, international and relational contexts” (Burnard) where creative outputs are dependent and open to participatory and discursive meaning-making processes and procedures, as they interact and negotiate convention, tradition, communities and creativity. A proper understanding of these processes requires interrogation of the ways communities’ acknowledgement of improvisational creativity is generated, fostered and shared, and how they collectively comply, manipulate or even subvert codified practices. The production of improvised music is evolved through practices differentiated by distinctive creativities that are temporally mediated and constructed through exploration and self-technology (de Bruin, 2016b; Foucault, 1977; Monson, 1994).

This investigation of localised music education practices explores the unique relationship existing between the arts and interculturality, where collective music making can transcend distances between groups of people by creating interconnections between seemingly disparate cultures, and how they merge, learn and create from each other.

3 *Contextualizing the study*

This study reports on the 2016 CMI event, a ten-day practice-based residency of 20 young, emerging student improvisers from throughout Australia and the Asia-Pacific Region, and several culturally diverse internationally regarded master improviser/ educators. The cultural focus of the 2016 CMI was vitalised by the integration of two cultural streams: Korean and Indigenous Australian culture featuring p'ansori singer Bae Il Dong, American based Korean improviser Sunny Kim, and the Young Wagilak traditional songmen- Daniel and David Wilfred from Arnhem Land, in northern Australia.

The CMI is an education outreach program from the AAO, now in its 5th year, bringing together young and developing improvisation students from around the world, with the aim of facilitating new ways of creating improvised music, and explore the meeting points between disciplines, cultures and local perspectives of improvised music making. This ethos evident in the AAO and CMI is a commitment to creating musical and cultural futures that integrates Asian and Western influences as an essential cultural fabric of the region.

Facilitators

Wagilak people: Daniel and David Wilfred

The Wagilak speaking songmen of South East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, are custodians of one of the oldest continuously practiced cultures on Earth. The Wagilak people's song- or manikay- brings to life the cultural expression and celebration of tribal ancestors, country, law and congress. Through performance and iteration, and interaction, manikay continually evolves and progresses, replenishes. The Yolgnu seek difference as a way of perpetually revitalizing their culture, where difference is seen as complementary. (Yunupingu, 1993).

Bae Il Dong is highly regarded as one of Korea's finest p'ansori singers, a style of epic story singing emerging during the mid Chosŏn era (1392-1910). Bae Il Dong, a performer steeped in the eastern school (*tongp'yŏnje*) of p'ansori street opera, is one of the few contemporary singers to follow the traditional method of learning through isolation.

The 20 students were selected via a written response to the perceived benefits they felt their music could gain from such a collaboration, what they could take back to their musical communities, and what they could offer the CMI as an improvising musician. The participating cohort of students invited to the 2016 CMI included cellists, keyboardists, saxophonists, trumpeters, percussionists and vocalists.

4 Methodology

Qualitative case studies as a methodology afford researchers opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon in context, and in this case it allowed me to explore individuals, the organization, simple and complex interventions, and the relationships and community building.

Data were collected using multiple sources, including online information, documents and interviews with participants that was used to construct a diverse narrative enquiry approach. The focus of the interviews was the exploration of perceptions and scope of engagement in learning. Questions were open-ended and interviews semi-structured to allow participants the opportunity for deep reflection. The data generated from the interviews were analysed utilizing a cross-case, inductive analysis approach (Patton, 1990)., and this analysis of

learning and teaching processes can as Stake suggests, highlight “the idiosyncratic more than the pervasive”

The event consisted of daily lectures, small ensemble workshops and open group practical sessions that explored cultural traditions of Arnhem Land manikay (song) and Korean traditional p’ansori. The CMI consisted of a daily program divided into the transmission of specific information and skills development during morning workshops presented by the leaders, and practical application of these skills in the context of music practice in the afternoons/evenings. The sessions explored meeting points of these two ancient musical traditions, and encompassed a diverse range of influences including Arnhem Land manikay, or song story, Korean p’ansori singing, live electronic processing of instruments, jazz instrumental and vocal improvisation, Pan-Korean rhythmic concepts and extended instrumental techniques

FINDINGS Will start with the overarching thoughts of facilitator Sunny Kim

5 VID

6

One of two major themes emergent in the data was :

Finding my own voice through personal discovery

-These intense and immersive musical experiences fostered collaboration and development of new music using tools and ideas discussed and taught during the residency.

-As a module of learning, the participants immersed in the varied modalities, the entanglement of cultures, voices, experiences and conceptions of aesthetic. In this sense, artefacts and histories transcended temporal boundaries of each participant, producing a vital and rich assemblage of stimuli and ideas through which they created, circulated and affected new concepts and an evolving socio-musical knowledge.

-Participants shared their thoughts and reflections on how the project promoted engagement in creative musicking and further meanings evolving from their music-making:

Reflections of one participant said:

This intercultural exploration allows me to explore the music and myself, and ask ‘What is it in Korean music that i can take that can nourish my own conceptions in music?’

Artistic director and facilitator Peter Knight shares his views of how the different cultures synthesised through collaborative music making, and how individuals developed their own processes

7

-performative and reflexive activities were a means by which the performers ‘self’ uncovered connections to previous understandings of their world of traditions, their rootedness to it, and its exchange within a hyper- reflexive environment.

8 vid Daniel Wilfred reflects on his own personal learning over the 2 weeks

9 A second major theme was interpersonal and collaborative discovery

-This was described as leaving behind safe-zones and exposing themselves to the internalised structures the community has created, resisting against ‘mannerism’ and breaking away from previously ‘learned’ constraints and restrictions of thought.

-The participants discussed situations of action and interplay where musicians respectfully challenged each other into bringing different perspectives into a sonic discourse.

-Collectively the performers disrupted and dismantled their previous modes of musical production,

- An Intercultural synthesis and exploration resounded with an in-practice design thinking approach of ideating, prototyping and refining, affecting their own rhizomal construction of concepts from intersecting, overlapping and interconnecting plateaus of information

- sharing of spaces, perspectives, knowledge and risk-taking in the classroom that allows “our collective listening to one another to affirm the value and uniqueness of each voice”

10 VID.....Bae Ill Dong discusses his feelings to how shared cultures blended

11 VID..... Again he explains how it seemed to come together

12 Implications

Intercultural improvisational practices challenges orthodoxies of knowledge, artistic production, critical social engagement, and how education may harness these attributes for the greater good. The study, using the CMI as an exemplar, places creativity, dialogue and intercultural understanding at the centre of activity. When we engage in the intercultural and interdisciplinary we already challenge what is taken for granted, the status quo, the ‘centre’ of dominance. We attribute importance to complex, hybrid and diverse cultures and ethnic groups and how they live respectfully side-by-side, and teaches students that music is to be experienced, played and lived through pluralist perspectives that can resound in our own music-making, artistry, and practice.

Intercultural and interdisciplinary musical experiences allows education to support the emergence of identities that can reconstruct society and break the ethnocentric approach that still dominates the social sciences (Castells 2010). Teacher education that reaches beyond “a basic anthropological framework” (Jenkins 2008, p.116) allows teacher practice to impact more deeply in social inclusion, integration and equity by creating unity, solidarity and the “need to learn the art of living with difference” (Bauman 2010, p.151) and navigate in a world in which cultural diversity exists within the closest neighbourhood.

The role of the music educator becomes a significant factor in increasing social inclusion, integration and equity, optimising the cultivation of collective understandings in which teachers identify and operate as societal change agents. By acknowledging and valuing local difference, knowledge assimilation and wider learning amongst communities, the fixed practices, canonized repertoires and expectations that dominate music and arts learning can be dismantled.

Lastly, empowering local practices and regional specific differences can increase the self-reflexivity of regional and national blind-spots and enhance more intensively a sociocultural imagination into holistic educational structures.

School music departments can be places where student experiences socially and culturally integrate, unify local sharing of visions, aims and collaborate through a ‘fusion of horizons’ in music education (Gadamer, 2006). At a salient time in many nations grappling with interculturality and realigning past histories, where understanding, respecting and celebrating difference requires sustained vigour and revitalisation, musical initiatives and movements that bring people together and actualise local intercultural activity are a powerful leap forward.

12 Thank you

13 THE BOOK