Person Centred Composition: A Portfolio of Compositions

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ABSTRACT

This portfolio of compositions explores the role of the person-centred composer when creating collaborative music in a variety of community and educational settings. Through a folio of discrete works representing specific solutions to individual contexts, this portfolio presents different views of what is necessary to provide a relational and person-centred approach to breaking barriers of participation, the importance of a congruent relationship between composer and participant and constructing a framework of core conditions for safety and flourishing in creativity, particularly within vulnerable groups. This approach is at the heart of each project, and accommodates the social, economic, environmental, and neurological challenges sometimes experienced when working collaboratively in diverse settings. The works include a community opera with 134 children, an opera written in collaboration with an artist in residence and musical ensemble, a radio play co-created with two groups of under-18s, and a project exploring music and synaesthesia with three community groups, musicians and international synaesthetic artists. Incorporating ideas from existing therapeutic and counselling models, notably Carl Rogers' core condition of *unconditional positive regard* and drawing upon a field of practice within creative community arts, each work involved devising working methods which embrace heterogeneity as a central consideration.

This folio documents the transformative experience for participants engaging in professional productions for the first time or encountering a way of approaching music and interdisciplinary working new to them. The creation of these works explores and addresses the conundrum (and on a personal level the challenge) of process versus product, an issue that became especially salient in the post-Covid 19 landscape. In doing so, the folio provides potential models of practice to guide future endeavours in this field.

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Preface

At the start of my PhD project, while considering the development of what would become the first piece within this folio, I was facilitating an unrelated project at Greenacre special school in Barnsley, which serves students aged 3-19 with severe and complex needs. I was working with non-verbal students who showed a positive response to music, alongside verbal students who were preparing for their annual Christmas concert. Inspired by the initial workshop sessions I decided that I wanted to write an opera or music theatre piece which would offer some of the pupils a chance to break out of their normal school concert situation and present a large-scale work in a professional setting, alongside experienced performers.

During my first year of PhD studies, I recognised a strong inclination towards crafting and enhancing materials with the objective of promoting inclusivity and challenging barriers to participation. My dedication to promoting social inclusion and equitable access has long fuelled my freelance endeavours, drawing inspiration from the theories of Carl Rogers among others, to inform my Person-Centred approach to working. I had seen this approach in action in a particularly challenging EBD school in Barnsley, where headteacher Dave Whittaker described their ethos and approach to the children as 'battering them with kindness'.[1] The school's exceptional demonstration of Rogers' 'unconditional positive regard' (UPR) and solid belief in young people who face barriers to accessing mainstream education deeply resonated with me. I found this approach hugely inspiring, recognising its potential as a foundational model, one that could be built upon and extended to benefit both children and adults in the broader community. Motivated by this vision, I embarked on a journey of research and practical application, which culminates in the work presented in this portfolio, the first being a 'folk opera' written to include the pupils of Greenacre school.

In each workshop session held to develop the pieces in this folio, substantial energy has been dedicated to understanding the backgrounds and unique life experiences of each individual, as these often shape their involvement and impact on a project. This is the core philosophy of person-centeredness: meeting individuals where they are and respecting their needs, preferences, and worldview without bias or judgement (this is explored in greater detail in Chapter One). While my work intertwines therapeutic and educational theories, the core foundation remains a reactive and

[1] Josh Halliday, "We batter them with kindness", *Guardian,* Feb 27, 2018.

humanistic response, sometimes guided by instinct and prior experience, to facilitate the journey towards self-actualisation through creative expression. My role as a composer is centred on enabling, inspiring and unearthing creativity from individuals by being less actively involved as a workshop leader, but making observations from a distance, and noting the physical and emotional presentation of each participant, then finding a way to structure and guide workshops to facilitate the participants growth, self-agency and continued inclusion. In Chapter 1 I discuss the similarities but ultimate difference between music therapy and the experiences I have provided as a composer and workshop facilitator.

Dave Whittaker's 2021 book *The Kindness Principle*[2] examines the difficulties he faced as a head teacher in an Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) school, emphasising the application of Rogers' person-centred approach, notably the concept of unconditional positive regard. Whittaker's assertion about UPR, "If a therapist can do this, surely a teacher can too," struck a chord with me.[3] This powerful statement which refers to a humanistic approach to relationships, has motivated me to further explore therapeutic techniques, mostly rooted in a person-centred and relational framework and to echo and reword Whittaker's sentiment as "If a therapist can do this, *then so can I*." In *Method Meets Arts* Patricia Leavy explores the concept that listening to and making music may have unique capabilities to heal and empower, and states that 'there is ample research in the social sciences and creative art therapies showing music can aid the psychological or healing process.'[4] Leavy offers numerous examples of research to support her statement, yet notes that the healing process can take time, sometimes a lifetime. This commentary and portfolio of compositions does not aim to expand upon this research but instead aims to develop a framework for effective collaborative composition to be experienced *in the here and now,* demonstrating that improved wellbeing is possible and likely when suitable environments and relationships are cultivated.

During further education studies, I dedicated myself to studying performing arts, theatre set design, and classical piano. I later found my passion for the saxophone as my instrument of choice and ultimately graduated with a degree in Jazz, Popular and Contemporary Music. Coming from a classical music background, I appreciated the liberation and creative opportunities that improvisation

[2] Dave Whittaker, *The Kindness Principle,* (Carmarthen: Independent Thinking Press, 2021)

[3] Ibid.,6

[4] Patricia Leavy, *Method Meets Art* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2020), 128.

introduced to my musical output. Therefore, I strive to incorporate improvisation and freedom into group collaborations, and I explore the inclusion of text, narrative, and theatre whenever appropriate. While the first two pieces in my portfolio emphasise structured and notated scoring, in my third and fourth works I have integrated elements of script, improvisation and the incorporation of natural sound sources to create effects, exploring spontaneous and non-notated musical expression.

In three out of the four projects submitted in this portfolio, I adopt an autoethnographic approach. These three projects were conducted in the geographic area where I was raised (the Dearne Valley in the metropolitan borough of Barnsley, South Yorkshire), allowing for an autoethnographic perspective to be incorporated, especially in my interactions with participants from the Dearne area. This particular area of South Yorkshire is recognised as a 'trauma hotspot' with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) indicated as 'severe' in a study carried out by Sheffield Hallam University.[5] The acknowledgment of significant levels of childhood trauma / ACE in the region, along with my own childhood experience of being raised in one of the Dearne Valley communities impacted by the 1984 miners' strike, combined with observing the lasting effects of third-generation unemployment in the area, has fostered a deep sense of dedication, inspiring me to persist in working within this community. I comprehend (and have personally experienced) the narratives, relationships, and obstacles to creative access prevalent in the area.

The music presented in this portfolio therefore emerged as a result of activity conducted in creative environments that emphasise safety and the development of relationships. These environments are cultivated through the application of theoretical and educational models, as well as past experiences of collaborative work. The completed folio demonstrates a meticulous attention to the physical and relational well-being of the participants, with comprehensive efforts made to acknowledge and fulfil their needs across many different situations

[5] Adam Ellis Leach, Sally Pease and Sue O'Brian, "Identifying trauma hotspots in Sheffield; An analysis of the relative potential exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and trauma-preparedness of schools in South Yorkshire", (conference paper, Sheffield Trauma Informed conference, Sheffield, 29th February 2023).

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I feel incredibly lucky to have had two amazing supervisors during my PhD journey. Professor Roger Marsh truly understood my ambitions and wholeheartedly supported me in achieving them. Dr. Daniel March played a crucial role in guiding my recent projects. His patience, care, and kindness provided me with immense strength during the toughest times. I am truly thankful for their mentorship and unwavering support.

Working with talented musicians and leaders such as Tracey Smurthwaite, Catherine Ranus, James Whittle, Peter Birkby, Petr Morton, Pavla Beier, Omar Shahryar, Al McNichol, Steve Jones, and Charlotte Bishop has brought vibrancy and joy to our projects and workshops. Chiomah Akanwa-Day has been a solid pillar of support from day one, and Morag Galloway has been a continual source of wisdom, inspiration, encouragement, and expertise. I am also grateful to my educator friends - Hywel Roberts, Dave Whittaker, Ian Shires, Beth Deakin, and Mat Wright for their insightful contributions to my research and their genuine care for the youth they engage with.

Special thanks to my friends and family for their unwavering belief and support, especially Maria Robert and Kim Rooke who have been my rocks. To my incredible family, Theo and Rosa, for their timely messages of encouragement and unwavering pride in my work. My husband, Chris, for his unwavering belief, support, and willingness to discuss my thoughts, read my musings and listen to my latest idea.

A heartfelt thank you to my friends Charlotte Proctor and Hilary Osborn. This PhD is dedicated to the memory of Steven Osborn, a true champion of music accessibility for all.

Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references

Chapter one.

1.1 How the thesis is intended to be read.

The upcoming sections of this chapter provide an overview of the strategies employed to assist participants in the production of the works featured in the portfolio. These sections will discuss the theoretical frameworks which were applied to effectively address the participants' needs. Here, I provide definitions and explanations of the approaches and therapeutic / educational models that have served as sources of inspiration and that are applied, in varying degrees and with different emphases, in the four projects. Subsequently, these models and their practical applications are embedded and discussed in Chapters Two to Five, where each project and the process within it are elaborated upon in detail, with examples of how the models have been adapted for working in collaboration with the community and education groups. The showcased projects reflect the unique personal interactions that so often guided participants towards accessing new levels of self-actualisation and creative growth, while being acknowledged and valued as unique individuals. The project outcomes are representative of the participants' efforts at various stages of life and creativity, highlighting the transformative power of the creative process over the end product.

Due to the extensive and intricate nature of the theories and frameworks I have explored and applied in my research, only the essential key concepts that have aided in establishing a secure environment to encourage participant engagement have been extracted and emphasised here. These summaries offer a condensed overview of expansive theories, focusing on the key aspects relevant to the development of my own practice.

1.2 Working as a composer in the community..

I view myself primarily as a composer. but the role I embrace is collaborative rather than distant. Rather than being a remote figure with little interaction with performers, I prioritise working directly alongside community members, integrating their creativity and input into the compositional process whenever possible. My goal is to create opportunities for participation for those who might not otherwise have the chance to engage in music-making. In doing so, I gather material and inspiration

from these collaborations, which in turn informs and enriches my composition process, allowing me to create new works that are shaped by the contributions of the community.

Before presenting the methods employed in the creation of the outputs within this folio, it is important to clarify what it is *not* the focus of and to acknowledge the distinction between my role as a composer offering potential beneficial outcomes affecting well-being, to that of a therapy practitioner (specifically in the capacity as a music therapist) who is explicitly engaging therapeutic interventions for the sole purpose of a therapeutic outcome.

Music therapy is a formal, clinical, and evidence-based practice utilising music interventions to address the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals.[6] 'Music Therapist' is a protected title, with the process described as a 'clinical, psychological intervention'.[7] I hold the field of Music Therapy in high regard and have gained significant insights from researching, reflecting and considering aspects of this discipline. There are, perhaps inevitably, crossovers in the approaches I have adopted and of music therapy frameworks, but I have approached creating these projects from the aspect of a *composer* engaging with a new group, focusing on effective relational approaches to foster and enable creativity within the group. My goal has been to create a safe and supportive environment, where individuals can thrive through the music I compose with them or the workshops I provide and facilitate. I have not entered any group or session with a clinical plan, nor with the intention of conducting therapy during the session. It became evident, however, that certain participants experienced significant positive emotional benefits throughout their journey. Nonetheless, challenges to sustained participation often arose, prompting me to explore theoretical frameworks, particularly drawing from humanistic psychotherapy concepts. While the occurrence of a therapeutic experience is highly valuable, my foremost aim remains breaking down barriers to participation. In project four, *Seeing Music, Hearing Colour*, which involved vulnerable adults navigating the complexities of recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, I made the decision to include a music therapist and an art therapist as workshop leaders. This proactive choice was made to ensure that specialised therapeutic support could be provided if required and acknowledging that I am not formally trained to provide therapeutic intervention of this nature.

[6] British Association for Music Therapy, "Introduction to Music Therapy in the UK," YouTube video, 0:30, posted by "BAMT", Jan 28, 2021, accessed May 7, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQ73B8ZvZgk

[7] Ibid., 50

In a similar vein, there is a significant overlap between my role as a composer and the role of a community musician. This overlap becomes especially apparent when Higgins expounds on the multifaceted nature of community music and offers three broad perspectives of what community music is : '1) music within a community, 2) collective music creation, and 3) an engaged interaction involving the music leader, facilitator, and participants.'[8] Clearly, the types of projects represented within this portfolio fall under all Higgins' categories but specifically point two,, and so might be regarded as a type of community music. However, although I recognise these intersections, the initial focus of this portfolio was not on 'community music', as broadly understood, although collaboration within the community has been integral throughout. My primary focus was on the creation of a large musical work or series of works, where I acted as the composer. I aimed to involve as many community members as possible, encouraging idea generation and collaboration from diverse perspectives. This approach provided creative opportunities for a wide range of participants, including those who may not have previously engaged with this art form, while also allowing experienced individuals to expand their skills. In other words, I am not a therapist, nor do I see myself fundamentally as a community musician, I view myself to be first and foremost a *composer* with a very clear sense of social engagement, who will include community and education groups in the process where at all possible. As a composer, I write music with a substantial contribution from the participants, and actively engage with them, incorporating their feedback and ideas to create compositions that provide a sense of ownership, achievement and connection as they recognise their essential role in the collaborative journey.I strive to develop works that integrate personal contributions from participants, sympathetic to and guided by their specific needs, life experiences, and external constraints to provide a rewarding and empowering experience. The forthcoming sections outline the critical issue of establishing a secure and supportive environment that enables participants to explore their creative potential. This process is designed to facilitate their ability to create, even when the experience may be intimidating or unfamiliar to them. By prioritising safety and trust, the aim is to encourage participants to engage with their creativity in a space where they feel empowered to take risks and expand their artistic boundaries.

1.3 Theoretical frameworks.

Throughout this and subsequent chapters, there are frequent quotations using the terms 'therapist' and 'client.' In my context, 'therapist' is interpreted as 'workshop leader/composer' and 'client' as

[8] Lee Higgins, *Community Music in Theory and in Practice* (New York: OUP, 2012), 3.

'participant.' Thus, these terms are interchanged in this text, from 'therapist/client' to 'leader/participant.'

The key theoretical frameworks outlined below have been important in establishing nurturing environments in order for me to facilitate participants' creative contribution, development and well-being. Organising these chapters has presented a challenge due to the interconnected nature of the frameworks and theories; and, despite dealing with each individually, this interrelation should be kept in mind while reading through the material. I start by introducing Person-Centeredness as it serves as the fundamental principle guiding my working processes. Following this, I explore the provision of safe conditions for creation, incorporating autoethnographic information, including trauma hotspots in the geographic areas where I have worked on three of the four projects. I emphasise the importance of the congruent relationship between leader and practitioners, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, and the unique challenges of working with neurodiversity. I conclude by presenting Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, adapting it to incorporate the theories explored throughout this chapter. This synthesis has led to the evolution of a framework that has proven beneficial for both myself and practitioners in the community and educational settings encountered during my projects.

1.4. Person-Centredness

To give a clear representation of the essence of what I consider to be a person-centred approach, it is important to outline the foundational principles of the model. In what follows I provide a concise summary of the origins and development of this theory, including Rogers' six conditions, congruence, unconditional positive regard, condition of worth, expertise and the fully functioning person.

1.4.1 The birth of the person- centred approach and enduring relevance.

To provide context for a theory that is now 70 years old, it is important to outline its origins, development and continuing relevance up to the present day. Carl Rogers (1902-1987), a prominent American psychologist and founder of the person-centred approach to therapy, developed his influential model in the mid-20th century emphasising the importance of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness in facilitating individual growth and self-actualization (described below). Rogers' significant contribution to the field of what became known as humanistic psychology was the book *Client-Centred Therapy*, published in 1951.[9] Client-centred therapy played a significant

[9] Carl R Rogers, *Client Centred therapy* (London: Constable, 1951).

role in shaping the field of psychotherapy and influencing the development of modern counselling practices. During his time as researcher at the University of Chicago Counselling Centre (1945-1957) Rogers and his team trialled and tested this new humanistic approach[10] to talking therapy, developing six core conditions (listed in 1.4.4). Catherine Jackson offers an insight into the development of client-centred Therapy by explaining '…. put hugely simplistically - Rogers distinguished between *client centred counselling*, the one-to-one practice, and the *person-centred approach,* a much wider philosophical approach that could apply across the helping professions'.[11] From his initial exploration of client-centred therapy a person-centred approach was born, where, as Rogers states 'I am no longer talking about psychotherapy but about a point of view, a philosophy, an approach to life, a way of being which fits any situation where growth – of a person, a group or community – is part of the goal.'[12] Since it became established as a leading therapeutic approach (and major theoretical model) in the mid/late-20th Century, the person-centred approach has subsequently become widely recognised, influential and adapted in other fields including education, human resources and organisational development. Put simply, the person-centred approach is a method that prioritises the individual's unique needs, preferences, and experiences in any intervention or interaction. It emphasises empathy, respect, presence and non-judgmental active listening as key skills employed to empower individuals, by considering and valuing an individual's reality and fostering an environment where they feel understood and supported, demonstrating unconditional positive regard, promoting personal growth and self-actualisation. This approach has been paramount during the planning, observations and provision of the delivery of the four projects in this portfolio. I have questioned whether a theory which was formed over 70 years ago can still be relevant today. The British Association for Counselling Psychotherapy (BACP) states that along with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), person-centred counselling is still the most favoured model offered by its 70,000 plus members.[13] The theory developed by Rogers has undergone expansion and refinement over time, yet his approach, along with his six essential conditions, continues to be widely esteemed and implemented in contemporary therapeutic practice.

[10]A humanistic approach is a psychological perspective that focuses on an individual's inherent drive towards self-actualisation, emphasising personal growth, self-awareness, creativity, and the importance of understanding and fulfilling one's unique potential.

[11] Catherine Jackson, "Why Rogers is still relevant," *Therapy Today,* Vol.35, No.5, (2024): 19

[12] Carl R Rogers, *A Way of Being* (Boston: Mifflin Harcourt, 1990), 72

[13] Catherine Jackson, "Why Rogers is still relevant". 19

1.4.2 Rogers' six conditions

Rogers identified six core conditions that are essential for a therapeutic relationship to be effective.[14] These are:

1. **Empathy:** The therapist should strive to comprehend the client's experiences and emotions from the client's point of view.

2. **Unconditional Positive Regard**: The therapist embraces and respects the client unconditionally, without passing judgement on the client's thoughts, feelings, or actions.

3. **Congruence (or Genuineness):** The therapist maintains authenticity and transparency in the therapeutic relationship, openly and honestly expressing their own feelings and reactions.

4**. Respect:** The therapist demonstrates heartfelt regard for the client as a distinct individual with intrinsic value and dignity.

5. **Warmth:** The therapist expresses kindness, compassion, and interest in the client's welfare.

6. **Non-possessive warmth and listening:** The therapist demonstrates warmth and compassion towards the client, maintaining appropriate boundaries and not seeking anything in return or becoming excessively attached.

These six conditions are essential for establishing a safe and supportive environment where clients can freely explore their thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

1.4.3 Congruence

While all of Rogers' six conditions hold importance, congruence and unconditional positive regard (1.4.4) have been identified as particularly significant and are commonly highlighted in research literature. Congruence, also known as genuineness, is the ability to be authentic, open, and honest in interactions. It involves being transparent (wherever possible) about our own feelings, thoughts, and reactions while staying true to ourselves. By being congruent, practitioners can establish a trusting and supportive relationship with participants, which can facilitate personal growth and positive

[14] Carl R Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change," *Journal of Consulting Psychology* Vol. 21, No. 2, (1957), 96.

outcomes in creativity. Congruence has been incredibly important in interactions with participants in the four portfolio projects. This is further elaborated upon in section 1.5.2, which highlights the significance of pairing suitable practitioners with groups and outlines key considerations to address prior to initiating workshops.

1.4.4 Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR)

This is undoubtedly one of the most important conditions when working with vulnerable or reluctant participants. Rogers introduced the concept of unconditional positive regard as a crucial component of person-centred therapy and described it as 'an attitude of complete acceptance and love, which means offering complete support and acceptance of a person no matter what that person says or does'.[15] He deemed this concept essential in creating a safe and nurturing environment where the individual feels valued and accepted for who they are, facilitating their growth and self-actualisation. Rogers emphasised the importance of caring for the client as a separate person, allowing them to have their own feelings and experiences without fear of judgement or rejection.[16]

An underlying principle of UPR is relational outreach and kindness. In *The Kindness Principle* Whitaker states; 'Kindness can mean being tough and fair - exposing frailties and weaknesses but doing it with warmth and compassion. To remain kind in difficult and challenging environments takes courage and strength'.[17] This was a core element of emotional transaction between staff and children at his school, where pupils would be held to account for their behaviours but with unconditional warmth and kindness. They were never shouted at or made to feel shameful. I learnt a great deal from my time providing workshops in that particular school, and value UPR as one of my biggest strengths as an inclusive practitioner. It has served as a recurring transactional and relational tool, woven throughout the development of all my PhD portfolio projects. My approach to implementing UPR into working with participants can be summed up by one of Steven Pauls' summary points for developing the therapeutic relationship 'The very nature of my presence is demonstrated through my attempt to

[15] Carl R Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change," *Journal of Consulting Psychology* Vol. 21, No. 2, (1957), 98.

[16] Carl R Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change," 98.

[17] Whitaker, *The Kindness Principle,* 1.

understand you (empathy), my wholehearted acceptance of you (UPR) and my natural movement to engage with you fully (Congruence, Authenticity).'[18]

1.4.5 Conditions of worth

Though not one of the six core conditions, conditions of worth is worthy of consideration as it refers to the conditions by which individuals believe they are valued and accepted by others. These conditions are often imposed by family, friends, teachers and society in general and often leading to individuals enacting behaviours or ways of being which align with these expectations in order to gain approval and validation. An individual can believe they are only 'worthy' if they meet certain expectations; if they are unable to meet perceived expectations then issues of self-esteem can manifest as a poor sense of self-worth. In practical terms, when striving for creative excellence or attempting to meet expectations, failing to meet a goal or comparing creative output to that of others can have the effect of impacting self-esteem in this way. According to Jennifer Crocker et al. 'One of the central problems with self-esteem or self-validation as a source of motivation is how easy it is to abandon our goals in the face of difficulty.'[19] Therefore, throughout my portfolio projects it has always been crucial to emphasise the process over the outcome, avoiding a negative experience or feeling of something not meeting expectations or being 'good enough', which could disrupt the flow and hinder the commitment or ability to persist. This does not imply that low-quality outcomes were anticipated or encouraged, but rather that realistic expectations were important, and bridged the divide between attainable objectives, and the maintenance of positively reinforced self-esteem, resulting in the development of a finished product that instilled a sense of pride.

1.4.5. 'I am not an expert.'

Expanding on the concept of conditions of worth, it is crucial to investigate how participants perceive the role of the practitioner in their personal development journey. While we may be experts in our particular field, we are not experts on the individuals we work with. Quoting Rogers, 'it is the client

[18] Stephen Paul and Divine Charura, *An introduction to the therapeutic relationship in counselling and psychotherapy* (London: Sage, 2015), 139.

[19] Jennifer Crocker et al, "The Pursuit of Self-Esteem: Contingencies of Self-Worth and Self-Regulation." *Journal of Personality* 74, 6 (2006): 1749-1772, accessed March 17, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00427.x

who knows what hurts, what directions to go, what problems are crucial, what experiences have been deeply buried'[20] This statement underscores the idea that participants understand themselves and their environments best, especially in navigating challenges and traumas, and as collaborators, we can support them in acknowledging and addressing their current life situation without judgement whilst acknowledging that this may not be the primary focus as we collaborate on creating music. Participants often simply seek to be present in the moment and escape from any challenging circumstances they may currently be facing. It was crucial for participants in the workshops of this project not to believe that our role was to "fix" them, "solve their problems" or that the project was anything other than an opportunity to be creative. Throughout, it was made clear that the collaborative process was centred on creativity rather than a therapeutic intervention.

In his book *On Becoming a Person*, Rogers introduces the concept that identifying as experts, particularly in creative domains, can create constraints that hinder innovation and self-expression. He emphasises that genuine creativity thrives in an atmosphere devoid of criticism and rich in acceptance and comprehension. Forming judgments can restrict the growth of the individuals we seek to aid. Central to his philosophy is the belief that the helper "is not the expert on the client's life; the client is the expert on their own experience.''[21]

1.4.7 The fully functioning person.

In Rogers' theories, the concept of the *fully functioning person* plays a central role.[22] This idea pertains to an individual who is in a state of personal growth, self-awareness, and self-acceptance. The fully functioning person, according to Rogers, is characterised by congruence between their ideal self (the person they aspire to be) and their actual self (who they truly are). This congruence leads to a greater sense of authenticity, fulfilment, and psychological well-being. The fully functioning person is open to new experiences, self-reflective, and able to navigate life's challenges with a sense of inner peace and

[20] Carl R Rogers, *On Becoming a Person: A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy* (Boston: Houghton Miffin, 1961), 11.

[21] Ibid., 350.

[22] Ibid., 195.

resilience. They also live in the present moment, appreciating the current experiences rather than dwelling on the past or future. This is placed into clearer context in 1.7.2

1.5 Safety to create.

In *The Body Keeps the Score* Bessel Van der Kolk emphasises that feeling safe is not simply the absence of danger, but equally the presence of positive factors that promote well-being and trust. He lists secure attachments, predictability, physical safety, self-regulation and community and social support as key elements which contribute towards this sense.[23] In *Client-Centred Therapy* Rogers similarly presented his idea of core conditions of safety, which are empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence. This next section underscores the crucial need to prioritise both physical and emotional safety in creative workshops. and stresses the importance of selecting suitable participant-facing practitioners to lead these sessions. It also explores the trauma hotspots in the prominent geographic area I have been involved in and examines the interconnection between trauma, safety, and the fight-or-flight response.

1.5.1 Safe environments

When we feel unsafe, our body is likely to enter a fight, flight, or freeze response, which can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and a focus on survival rather than creative expression. This physiological response can impair our ability to think creatively, problem-solve, and innovate.

Catherine Pestano says that 'creative work needs an atmosphere conducive to participants lowering their customary defences and relaxing enough to take up their own autonomy and agency in the activity.'[24] In Deb Dana's explanation of Polyvagal Informed Therapeutic Approach,[25] she states that sound and temperature have an impact on relational connection.[26] In delivering projects, it is essential

[23] Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (USA, Viking Penguin books, 2014), 79-81.

[24] Catherine Pestano, Music group work with LBGT youth, in *Reaching out: Music Education with 'hard to reach' Children and Young People,* (London: Music Mark, 2013), 121.

[25] Polyvagal theory, developed by Dr. Stephen Porges, explains how the autonomic nervous system regulates emotional and social behaviour through the interaction of the vagus nerve with two different branches that promote either a state of safety and social engagement or a state of defence (fight-or-flight and freeze responses).

[26] Deb Dana, *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy - engaging the rhythm of regulation,* New York: Norton, 2018, 78

to consider both environmental and physical factors, including the selection of appropriate practitioners for delivering sessions, as explored below.

1.5.2 Practitioners and cues of safety.

The success of the workshops and unlocking each participant's full potential relied heavily on selecting the right practitioners. The way we present ourselves can have a huge impact on the people we are attempting to relate with. Van der Kolk states 'When the message we receive from the other person is "you're safe with me", we relax'.[27] Dana asserts that "Cues of safety come from the eyes and smiles. Prosody is powerful. Gestures offer an invitation to connection."[28] Clearly demeanour and physical presentation can make a great difference to the way a participant may relate to a facilitator or situation. As Whitaker claims when talking about children who have experienced emotional difficulties 'If you are bright and cheery then it is likely that the children will be too. If you are dark and gloomy then you will see how the children respond with their mood'.[29] He also states that 'if a pupil is emotionally invested in you, then the best reward they can get is your personal and genuine recognition'.[30] Van der Kolk emphasises the significant role of facial expression, highlighting that even 'slight changes of tension of the brow, wrinkles around the eyes, curvature of the lips and angle of the neck quickly signal to us how comfortable, suspicious, relaxed or frightened someone is.'[31] Linda Pound declares that 'Children do not simply react to words that are used but interpret the context, facial expression and body language to understand meaning.'[32] I believe the same can be said for adults too.

In choosing practitioners for the projects, I considered the importance of their professional expertise, as well as their interpersonal skills. As composer and leader for each project, I considered it my responsibility to connect with practitioners, even for just for 15 minutes prior to the start of each workshop, to check in and address any potential barriers that could affect positive interactions on that day. In the presence of life challenges or illness, we would focus on grounding ourselves and preparing physically and mentally for the workshop ahead, and if that meant I had to take the lead until they felt

[27] Ibid., 78

[28] Deb Dana, *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy - engaging the rhythm of regulation.* New York: Norton, 2018, 80

[29] Whitaker, *The Kindness Principle,* 17

[30] Ibid.,17

[31] Van Der Kolk, *The body keeps the score,* 78.

[32] Linda Pound, *How children learn* (London: Step Forward Publishing, 2005), 40.

ready to confidently assume their positive role, that was perfectly acceptable. I was fortunate to have received the same support when needed.

In conclusion, participants' responses could be significantly influenced by the visual and physical presentation of the practitioners. Therefore, selecting the appropriate practitioner was crucial. It was a privilege to work with inspirational leaders and musicians, and I feel fortunate to have had access to a wealth of practitioners to collaborate with for each project. I am grateful for the permission to name and acknowledge these individuals in chapters 2-5,

1.5.3 Trauma and the ACE hotspots in Barnsley.

In the context of safety, acknowledging the impact of trauma is crucial, as past traumatic experiences can affect a participant's capacity to build relationships, establish a sense of safety, and consequently feel unsettled in new or unfamiliar surroundings. As Judith Herman states 'Trauma can create significant barriers to forming new relationships and feeling secure in unfamiliar environments, impacting one's ability to adapt and thrive'.[33]

Trauma comes in many forms; what Gabor Maté defines as "Capital-T trauma" and "Small-t trauma."[34] In Maté's words "Capital T trauma occurs when things happen to vulnerable people that should *not* have happened."[35] These include experiences such as the death of a parent during childhood, sexual, physical and psychological abuse, and domestic violence. Small-t trauma can be caused by a variety of events, including lack of connection with significant adults, unpredictable emotion in the home environment, bullying, constant criticism, and the experience of 'not being seen or accepted, even by loving parents.'[36] Maté also states the often overlooked occurrences and effects of small-t trauma that can be massively impactful to children, such that they can be carried into adulthood.

[33] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 56.

[34] Gabor Maté, *The Myth of Normal* (New York: Penguin, 2022), 22

[35] Ibid., 22

[36] Ibid., 23

In three of the four projects highlighted in this portfolio, workshops were held in the Dearne Valley, situated 8 miles from Barnsley town centre. This area mainly comprises small former mining communities that are often referred to as 'isolated' because of their remoteness from the town centre and other urban areas. Accessing activities for young people who lack transportation, like a car or a parent who can drive, can be challenging in this region. Similarly, adults who do not drive must depend on public transportation, which is not consistently reliable and may have limited operating hours, especially in the evening.

In a 2003 study which identified trauma hotpots in and around Sheffield (including Barnsley and the Dearne Valley) the opening statement reads 'Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are more likely to occur in poorer communities' and that having 4+ ACEs is strongly associated with higher deprivation.[37] A score of 4 or higher is indicative of prolonged unemployment, illness, and limited educational qualifications. This implies that residents may be caught in a cycle of poverty that spans across multiple generations within their families. The traumas identified on the trauma hotspot map can be identified as a combination of both capital-T and small-t trauma events. These encompass a range of categories such as: Violence and sexual offending, other crime (including burglary to vehicle crime, public order to drug offences), persistent school absence and low parental aspiration. Based on the report's Indices of Deprivation and Trauma-Related Impact, the calculated scores within the final basket of indicators (BOI) were utilised to create a predictive model and trajectory map of trauma exposure. The data highlighted the Dearne as an area of significant concern, classified within the most severe category. Furthermore, the absence of training for educators in trauma-informed practices was noted. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) persist beyond schooling and usually have lasting effects as individuals transition into adulthood. In three out of the four projects within this portfolio, I have engaged with participants in the Dearne area and observed the traumas they have faced. These insights were gathered from direct conversation, personal situations revealed in workshops, and information shared by teachers and community leaders. I have strived to establish safe environments for these participants with the goal of fostering the sentiments expressed by Madelyn Miller, who emphasises that 'learning in the context of trauma is deepened when a climate of safety is provided.'[38]

[37] Adam Ellis Leach, Sally Pease and Sue O'Brian. "Identifying trauma hotspots in Sheffield; An analysis of the relative potential exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES's) and trauma-preparedness of schools in South Yorkshire. (conference paper, Sheffield Trauma Informed conference, Sheffield, 29th February 2023).

[38]Madelyn Miller. "Creating a Safe Frame for Learning: Teaching About Trauma and Trauma Treatment." *Journal of Teaching in Social Work* 21, 3-4 (2008) 159–76. Accessed May 10, 2024, doi:10.1300/J067v21n03_12.

These statistics reveal the stark realities often faced by participants from this geographic area, yet it is equally crucial to acknowledge and highlight the strong sense of community and musical heritage prevalent in this region. Kathleen Turner's chapter 'Words of Choice' in *Community Music at the Boundaries* has been influential in shaping my language and outlook when engaging with Barnsley communities. Turner emphasises the significance of the language used in communication with participants, pointing out that the way we use language to describe the community has 'the potential to create unseen boundaries between facilitators and community members'.[39] She advocates for fostering inclusive environments by choosing empowering language over expressions that may perpetuate limited views of disadvantage, that we should ensure that 'communities are characterised by words of choice rather than by limited and limiting disclosure of disadvantage'. Turner's chapter has prompted me to always consider my terminology, particularly when working in communities facing socio-economic challenges. I have come to re-evaluate the importance of discussing the richness and positive heritage of the community during workshops, when I previously may not have thought of doing this. Ian Shires, who was co-principal cornet in Grimethorpe Colliery Band[40] from 1998-2014, concurs with these assertions. He states that 'the band has given the residents enormous pride in what 'their' band has done, and still do, for its local community.' In recent email correspondence discussing this subject Shires writes 'The label of 'deprived' can have a negative impact on residents of a community. If someone is constantly labelled in a negative way and often 'written off' then what is there to aspire to? Choosing how to label someone and their community can have a profound effect on how they see themselves and their future.'' Shires helped to reform the Grimethorpe Besson Youth Band which he also led and directed. He states that 'Young people need to be afforded creative opportunities, where they can express themselves, receive praise and develop as citizens.' According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, Barnsley ranks among the top 10% most deprived areas in the country. Statistics reveal that 23.5% of Barnsley's population lives in income-deprived households, and 30% of children are affected by income deprivation. The Dearne valley is among the most income-deprived areas in the country, with Goldthorpe being one of the top

[39] Kathleen Turner, "Words of Choice," in *Community Music at the Boundaries,* ed. Lee Willingham (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2021), 26.

[40] The Grimethorpe Colliery Band is a British brass band with a long and prestigious history. Originally formed in 1917, the band hails from the village of Grimethorpe in South Yorkshire, England. The band gained international fame following the 1995 release of the film "Brassed Off," which featured the Grimethorpe Colliery Band and highlighted the struggles of mining communities in the UK. Their diverse convert performances include the FUFA world cup, BAFTA awards, BBC proms, Eurovision and London 2012 Olympic Games opening ceremony.

2% most income-deprived towns nationwide.[41] There are numerous examples of strong music communities in the Barnsley Borough, with organisations such as Barnsley Youth and Community Choirs boasting over 700 plus members and building. Their senior choir is ranked 5th in the world in pop and gospel categories and is currently in the process of building a new home, the Northern Centre of Vocal Excellence (The NAVE), which will attract the top choral leaders in the world. In the words of founder and artistic director Mat Wright CBE 'Children will only ever achieve what you expect them to achieve, so expect greatness. By providing the best possible environment in the new NAVE building, expectations will be raised, and the young people will feel the value we place upon them'. Wright further states, "While many young people in the borough face challenging life circumstances, within our organisation, this is neither highlighted nor made a focal point. Everyone is treated equally, and the same level of behaviour and commitment is expected from all members, regardless of their personal circumstances". The empowering language highlighted by Turner, along with commitment to excellence, is deeply embedded within the organisation. All leaders and volunteers (of which there are currently around 100) are trained in Mental Health First Aid and uphold the same principles of equality and high expectations. In the safe space of the choir, individuals are encouraged to fully engage with the music, striving to be their best and take pride in belonging to a world-class organisation recognised for excellence globally. Here, you are encouraged to set high standards for yourself, regardless of your geographic location or life experiences, which are set aside in pursuit of personal and collective growth. This is far removed from the type of societal labelling and limited expectation discussed above.

1.6 Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development.

Lev Vygotsky was a prominent Russian psychologist known for his theories on social development and the importance of social interaction in cognitive growth. Vygotsky was invited to become a fellow at Moscow Psychology Institute in 1924 and began a short but prolific writing and research career until his death in 1934. His concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) has been highly influential in educational psychology and although this is another model which dates back to the 1930s,[42]

[41] Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, *The English Indices of Deprivation 2019*, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019.

[42] Vygotsky first described the concept of ZPD in his book "mind in society: The development of Higher Psychological processes. The book was published posthumously in 1978. The concept is introduced in his earlier writings from the 1930's, particularly in "Thinking and Speech" published in 1934. This was not available in English until the 1970's

numerous modern-day models and theories have expanded upon Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD, including my own framework, which includes some of his ideas.

Vygotsky described the ZPD as 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.'[43] Simply stated, the ZPD is the range of tasks that a learner can perform with the help and guidance of a more knowledgeable other but cannot yet perform independently. This model has been used widely in education with notable adaptations and extensions, with the process of 'scaffolding' directly derived from the ZPD.[44] The Comfort, Stretch, Panic Model (CSP) has become widely utilised for personal and organisational transformation. e Whilst there is uncertainty regarding the model's origins, it is rooted in the exploration of barriers to change, inspired by the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and aimed at supporting individuals and organisations to overcome obstacles and realise their full potential. Like Vygotsky's model, this three-level framework positions the optimal learning zone between comfort and discomfort.

Figure 1.1 illustrates Vygotsky's ZPD alongside Figure 1.2, which represents the CSP model commonly now applied in numerous organisational and educational contexts.

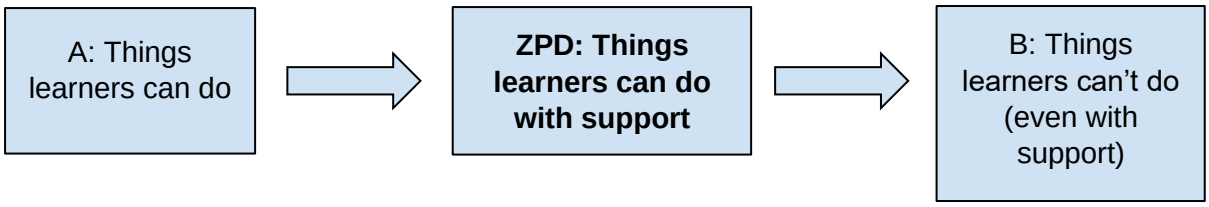

Figure 1.1 Vygotsky's model of ZPD

[43] Lev Semenovich Vygotsky and Michael Cole. *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press, 1978.

[44] Scaffolding Theory was developed by Jerome Bruner in the 1970s - building on the concept of ZPD, first introduced in this paper: David Wood, Jerome S. Bruner, and Gail Ross. "The Role of Tutoring in Problem Solving." *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 17, no. 2 (1976): 89-100.

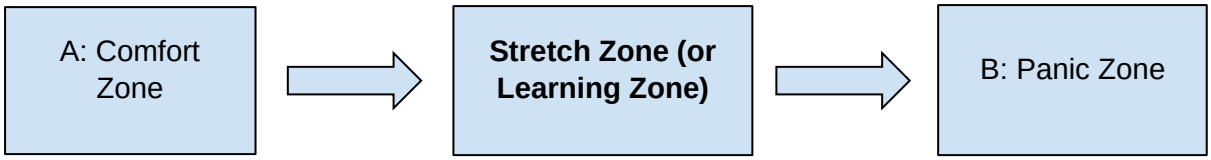

Figure 1.2 The CSP model.

In conclusion to this section, Vygotsky stated that "learners can typically complete more difficult tasks in collaboration with competent adults."[46] The important term here is "collaboration," which I believe is particularly significant to my way of working.

The concept of ZPD has been embedded within my own framework, highlighting the significance of relationships and the ability to recognise when individuals need gentle encouragement to remain within their developmental zone. Similarly, it is crucial to observe when a participant is moving from the stretch zone towards the panic zone. The CSP model illustrates that once individuals exit the central zone of 'attainability,' conditions of panic and a frozen state may arise.

1.7 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

In 1943, Abraham Maslow presented his Hierarchy of Needs theory in a paper titled *A Theory of Human Motivation.*[47] Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a theory that arranges human needs into five levels. The levels, from the bottom to the top, are:

1. Physiological Needs
2. Safety Needs
3. Love and Belongingness Needs
4. Esteem Needs
5. Self-Actualization Needs

[46] Donna L. Miller, "Cultivating creativity," *The English Journal* 104, No. 6 (2015), 25-30, accessed Feb 5, 2020, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24484423

[47] Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50 (1943): 370-396.

According to some interpretations of Maslow's theory, these needs must be fulfilled in this specific order, with the lower-level needs satisfied before an individual can progress to higher levels of fulfilment. Maslow later stated that he may have given 'the false impression that a need must be satisfied 100 percent before the next need emerges.'[48] Joshua Cutts concurs, stating that 'Human flourishing seems to require more than simple need satisfaction: it demands that needs be satisfied in particular ways, in ways that meet the subjective demands of individuals.[49] The framework I have developed, as detailed in section 1.9.2, considers that the levels of Maslow's hierarchy intersect, recognising that different needs within the hierarchy may need to be addressed simultaneously. Prior to introducing the adjusted framework, it is beneficial to explore Maslow's ultimate goal, which is the final need of *self-actualisation*.

1.7.1 Aiming for Self-Actualisation

Maslow proposed that self-actualisation is the highest level of psychological development where individuals strive to fulfil their potential and achieve personal growth. He states, 'A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man *can* be, he *must* be. This need we may call self-actualisation.'[50] He also felt that only a small number of people reached this level. He also stated that self-actualising people have frequent 'peak experiences', these experiences are characterised by feelings of clarity, connection, and purpose, often leading to a heightened sense of self-awareness and personal growth. Peak experiences can occur spontaneously and are not necessarily dependent on meeting all basic needs beforehand. Maslow describes them as 'transient moments of self-actualisation. They are moments of ecstasy which you cannot buy, cannot guarantee, cannot even seek…. but you can set up the conditions so that peak-experiences are more likely.'[51] and we should 'Help people to recognise these little moments of ecstasy when they happen'.[52]

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[48] Maslow, A. H. (1987). Motivation and personality (3rd ed.). Delhi, India: Pearson Education.

[49] Joshua Cutts, "Herbert Marcuse and "False Needs"," *Social Theory and Practice* 45, no 3 (2019) 353-370, accessed Nov 10, 2020, https://www.jstor.org/stable/45237362

[50] Maslow, A theory of Human Motivation.

[51] Abraham Maslow. "Self-Actualisation and beyond," 1965 accessed at Ed.gov, 2019, pg 9, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED012056. accessed 23 March, 2024.

[52] Ibid.,9

There are similarities between the works of Rogers and Maslow; Maslow's hierarchy culminates in the concept of self-actualisation and similarly Rogers' concept of the fully functioning person reflects a state wherein individuals are open to experiences and capable of achieving their fullest potential. While their terminology might differ, the core principles of Rogers and Maslow complement each other in promoting personal growth and self-fulfilment.

1.7.2 Adapted framework - core conditions for safety and flourishing.

Referring to Maslow's hierarchy proved beneficial in developing my own framework for creating effective conditions to enhance creativity. Although Maslow's original presentation of his theory did not include a pyramid structure, I found the now-common pyramid format to be well-suited for my framework and have therefore adapted this to form my own hierarchy based on the theories discussed in this chapter.

The first level of physiological needs can be effectively addressed by ensuring a comprehensive risk assessment has been carried out, providing access to water, maintaining a suitable temperature, and ensuring the space is accessible. These measures can satisfy most physiological needs. Engaging in a welcoming conversation with participants can help ensure that any physiological issues are addressed promptly.

The second level, safety, was particularly important and thought provoking when developing my framework for practice. Throughout this chapter, various aspects of safety have been discussed, with the question 'What do we need to feel safe?' becoming a key developmental inquiry in the formation of my hierarchy. While ensuring physical safety—such as securing the space from public access and removing hazardous objects (once again related to a basic risk assessment) is essential, the exploration of emotional safety was even more significant and thought-provoking. Establishing a code of conduct with the group, ensuring that participants felt emotionally safe, not expecting them to participate in activities that made them anxious, and allowing them the freedom to leave at any time became crucial factors in this second stage of the hierarchy. For facilitators, considerations of their body language, facial expression, and prosody are also important elements in this stage.

In order to enhance the social (love and belonging) stage of the adapted hierarchy, facilitators should pay attention to participants who appear unsure or disconnected and make adjustments to activities to promote inclusivity. It is important for facilitators to exhibit a high level of congruence and

demonstrate unconditional positive regard. Consider inviting family members to a final presentation of completed projects and encourage socialisation outside of structured workshops to help develop deeper bonding and relationship building. Facilitate shared experiences and promote active listening among group members to cultivate a sense of community and belonging.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development and Comfort Stretch Panic model are significant factors in supporting self-esteem towards self-actualization. It is crucial to consider a participant's limitations and strengths and determine where they fit within these models to prevent the participant from feeling overwhelmed. Offering praise and kind words of encouragement is essential for boosting self-esteem and adopting a congruent approach while acknowledging the participant's own expertise contributes to maintaining their self-esteem. Practitioners taking on tasks beyond a participant's capabilities, such as assisting with challenging chores they may struggle with or encouraging them to take on more responsibility where possible, demonstrates support and helps nurture their growth and confidence.

Maslow's concept of self-actualisation represents the pinnacle of his hierarchy of needs, where an individual realises their full potential and seeks personal growth and peak experiences. Similarly, Rogers' notion of the fully functioning person describes someone who is open to experience, lives authentically, and is in touch with their true self. Facilitators can support participants to attain an experience of this level by providing an environment that encourages creativity, self-expression, and personal growth, allowing participants to explore and realise their full potential in a safe and supportive setting. Participants can be encouraged towards greater autonomy and responsibility if it does not become overwhelming and can keep their esteem needs at bay by being encouraged to help other participants. Facilitators should observe from a distance as reaching a point of perceived self-actualisation is not the end point, and there is no guarantee that a person will remain so far up the hierarchy.

The adapted framework is a model I developed and evolved across the span of my PhD projects and discussed with practitioners throughout the process. I was however mindful that, as Joshua Cutts states ‘Human flourishing seems to require more than simple need satisfaction: It demands that needs

be satisfied in particular ways, in ways that meet the subjective demands of Individuals'.[53] Working in a person-centred way means I have had to be adaptive and flexible and in the words of Pete Sanders provide core conditions of empathy, congruence and non-judgemental warmth, 'enabling exploration of experiences, strengthening the self-concept and the tendency towards actualisation'.[54]

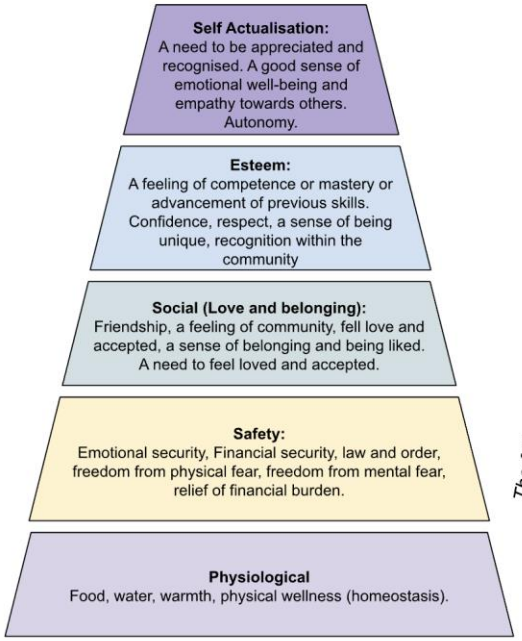

Figure 1.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

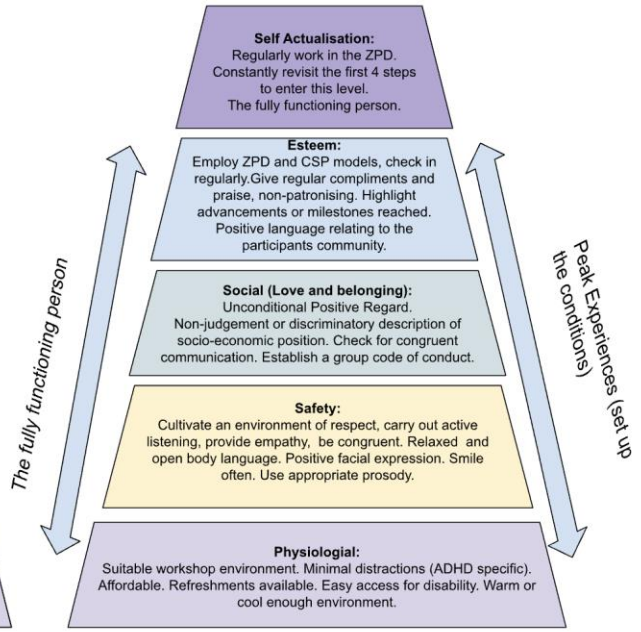

Figure 1.4 My adapted Hierarchy

1.8 Working with Neurodiversity

Throughout this project, myself and other leaders have worked closely with participants who present with different forms of neurodiversity. While some have openly shared their neurodivergent status, others have not disclosed this information. Neurodiversity poses no barrier to participation, but may necessitate accommodations and adjustments when appropriate. The most prevalent neurodivergence observed among participants has been ADHD. I am highlighting this specifically

[53] Joshua Cutts, "Herbert Marcuse and "False Needs"," *Social Theory and Practice* 45, no 3 (2019) 353-370, accessed Nov 10, 2020, https://www.jstor.org/stable/45237362

[54] Pete Sanders, *First Steps in Counselling* (Ross-On-Wye: PCCS books, 2014) 38

because I have found it necessary to implement additional strategies and boundaries when working with individuals presenting with ADHD, compared to participants with other neurodivergence.

1.8.1 ADHD terminology.

Over time, the terminology for Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has evolved. Initially categorised into subtypes like ADHD predominantly inattentive type, ADHD predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type, and ADHD combined type, the classification has now been streamlined. The preferred term is simply ADHD, which encompasses all presentations, including predominantly inattentive, predominantly hyperactive-impulsive, or combined types. The term Attention-Deficit Disorder (ADD) is no longer the standard in current diagnostic practices.[55] While some direct quotes in the following chapters may use ADD as labels, I have chosen not to alter them so the research context has remained unchanged.

ADHD is experienced within a wide range of behaviours and challenges, with traits varying from person to person, symptoms (in diagnostic terms) are defined within a spectrum of three specific traits; hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention. This impacts daily activities, relationships, and overall life. Understanding the heterogeneity of ADHD has been key for creating group plans that address each individual's specific needs. This was particularly the case when producing the *Time Paradox house* radio play. This is discussed in Chapter Four and explores the nuances of working with primary school children presenting with ADHD, with behavioural symptoms including high distractibility, memory issues, organisational struggles, impatience, excessive movement, talkativeness, interruptions, and difficulties with turn-taking. The chapter delves into the challenges faced in the classroom and the strategies attempted to overcome them, emphasising the positive aspects, such as the creative potential and freedoms that the condition can offer.

1.9 Ethics

In Projects one and two (*The Magic Paintbrush* and *Medea Maria*), post-hoc analysis was conducted on project outcomes. It wasn't until projects three and four (*Seeing Music, Hearing Colour* and *Time Paradox House*) that my research expanded to include a clear focus on formal evidence collection and the processing of this data, leading to the necessity of undertaking a much more extensive formal ethics approval through the University process in place at that time. (During the period over which these works were written, the requirements and processes through the University changed

[55] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013), 59.

several times, requiring each project to be approached anew). While these latter projects included greater emphasis on more on data collection and targeted questioning to evaluate the effectiveness of a person-centred approach, they of course also continued to follow the established safeguarding forms and policies of the school and participating groups in undertaking the work itself.

However, broader ethical considerations, including questions around the identity of, and interaction with participants were prioritised throughout every workshop of each project. During the preparation for *The Magic Paintbrush*, for example, I met with teachers before workshops began to review media consent forms and Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) for all participants. I also made efforts to identify any young people who might be sensitive to specific triggers within the workshops, such as negative reactions to focused questioning, being asked to present solo lines, or the in-depth exploration of certain elements of the storyline, which may have caused traumatic responses due to personal circumstances. Other issues also emerged; for instance two participants were flagged as not having consent for their faces to appear in photographs or on film, so this involved working with the videographer to ensure they were appropriately blurred in footage (although both participants ultimately did not attend the final performance, we had to plan for this scenario in advance). Each school provided their own Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, as well as their Inclusivity and Diversity Policy, both of which were reviewed in detail. All workshop leaders had to undergo DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, and each school ensured that at least one staff member was present during the workshops to support safeguarding and participant welfare.

Such a process of care was consistent across all projects, although much more simple was Medea Maria, where data collection was more limited and focused primarily on informal conversations and email responses (as explained in 3.6.1 and 3.6.2). Throughout all projects, the emotional safety of participants was consistently prioritised. Open communication with teachers and group leaders ensured that the research could be conducted in a way that was transparent and respectful of participants' needs. Participants were of course fully informed that the projects were being used as part of my research to support my PhD portfolio, aiming to strengthen my own working practices and approach to inclusion.

At the start of each project, I clearly communicated my positionality, explaining that feedback was entirely optional. Sometimes the processes themselves made this apparent; Feedback for the final two projects was gathered via recorded conversation and film and were given the option to opt out or remain anonymous. Important in developing relationships was that I continually reassured participants that confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained in line with their preferences. I also emphasise – as I considered it important that no informal pressure was involved – that it was perfectly fine *not* to contribute feedback as the primary focus was on the successful outcome of the project and ensuring that participants could engage fully without fear of judgement or any expectation of positive feedback being given.

1.10 Conclusion

The adapted framework has evolved with the progress of the projects, where the significance of addressing the concept of 'safety' as a key element to facilitate participants in moving towards higher levels of 'self-actualisation' was highlighted. It is crucial to emphasise that progression within the

framework is adaptable, and individuals may require support across various levels simultaneously. This flexibility is exemplified in the upcoming chapters detailing project processes, all of which are grounded in person-centred care; meeting individuals at their current stage and providing necessary support. While the adapted framework offers suggestions, both fellow practitioners and I have had to remain flexible and adjust to each unique situation based on the individual's needs.

A relational approach to therapy highlights the significance of the therapeutic relationship in promoting personal growth. As John Rowan asserts, "The relationship is the therapy." [56] Even though at times the work with participants has proven to be more intricate than this statement implies, it is undeniable that cultivating and nurturing relationships with participants has emerged as the gateway to developing a trustworthy and secure environment for unleashing creativity. Having looked in detail at each of the four projects of the portfolio, I revisit the importance of the practitioner / participant relationship in my final conclusion as through the progression of the projects the value of forging strong, congruent and trusting relationships with both participants and workshop leaders (chosen for the projects) has emerged as a vital underpinning for a successful project.

[56] John Rowan, *The Transpersonal in Psychology, Psychotherapy and Counselling*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 22.

Chapter 2 – The Magic Paintbrush

Score file:

Madden_201043241_Magic Paintbrush_Score.pdf (technical score used for projections prompts and light changes).

Performance recordings:

Madden_201043241_Magic_Paintbrush_Dearne.mov

Madden_201043241_Magic_Paintbrush_Goldthorpe.mov (opera begins at 19.10)

2.1 Introduction.

The Magic Paintbrush is a folk opera written for professional actors / musicians and school groups of varying ages and backgrounds. I had originally intended to create a piece involving approximately 40 participants of school age, supported by actors and musicians. The project was intended to provide individuals who typically lack access to professional venues and performance opportunities with the possibility for such an experience. The idea originated from my involvement in conducting music workshops and providing piano accompaniment for school performances at Greenacre Special School (Barnsley). I wanted to create an immersive educational experience by bringing the students into a novel performance setting whilst facilitating collaboration with seasoned actors in an inspirational venue.

The number of participants tripled from my original plan, due to being granted £14,300 by Arts Council England (ACE). The funding not only allowed for an increased number of workshops but also enabled engagement with more groups of children, resulting in two separate operas, with a total of 151 participants. Holding two distinct performances, with different groups of pupils, provided an opportunity to explore and compare the process with the varied demographics and diverse geographic

areas of the participants. The operas were designed for a cast of five actors and four professional musicians, alongside four workshop leaders (three drama, four music practitioners and one art). I served as the composer and additionally as workshop support. Four groups of school children participated in the performances, which were performed at The Dearne Playhouse for the first opera and at Barnsley Civic Theatre for the second.

This chapter explores the unique processes and different approaches required when preparing and presenting the same structure of an opera, with two different groups, writing a script and score to accommodate participants with complex needs, developing trusting relationships with the participants, writing collaboratively with young primary-aged children and using professional actors and musicians to support a cast of predominantly non-experienced and nervous participants.

During the initial planning stage (as a strategy board member of Barnsley Music HUB), I had been communicating with Dame Judith Weir and extended an invitation for her to visit schools and music projects in the Barnsley borough. I conducted a guided tour of Greenacre School with Judith, during which she expressed admiration for the rich curriculum offer and the engagement of the pupils. During a Q&A session one of the children asked Judith if she would write them a school anthem, which Judith happily consented on the proviso that it would be a collaborative effort with the children and myself to create theanthem as part of the opera project, with its premiere taking place at the performance of the opera by the Greenacre pupils. I collaborated with the pupils to write the lyrics, which Judith then transformed into a vocal piece with piano accompaniment. I subsequently arranged this for the Barnsley Concert Band to accompany the pupils at the opera's premiere performance.

2.1.1 Funding stipulations:

Funding was granted based on my proposal, which included the following specific stipulations that I established:

1. The project raised aspiration and an exploration of the arts in an economically and culturally deprived geographic area.
2. The project helped to develop cultural awareness in a demographic characterised by a predominant representation of individuals of White British ethnicity.

3. The project was inclusive of individuals with diverse abilities.
4. The project helped to develop already existing skills of both participants and leaders, with a focus on inclusive practice.

Delivering two performances permitted the exploration of participant's differing demographics and diverse geographic regions, as requested by the funding stipulations.

Greater detail of participants and locations are given below, but to give an introductory overview:

Opera One (Based in the Dearne) primarily centred on exploring points 1 & 2: Introducing a novel art form to a predominantly white British community that had limited exposure to artistic opportunities, whilst Opera Two (Based in central Barnsley) placed particular emphasis on exploring points 3 & 4 : Fostering inclusivity and actively involving participants with a wide range of abilities. This division between the two operas was not rigidly defined, as both productions incorporated elements from all four points.

2.2 Participants

In order to provide insight into the diverse methodologies and facilitators required in the two opera groups, it is beneficial to present a brief summary of each school and its participants (links to OFSTEAD reports for the schools at the time the projects took place are included in the footnotes, providing deeper insights into the geographical location of the schools). This aspect is particularly relevant for Goldthorpe and Gooseacre schools, which are located in the trauma hotspot areas discussed in Chapter 1. The following information is taken from OFSTED literature.

Gooseacre (Thurnscoe) Primary: A Larger than average-size primary school (353 pupils) where most pupils are white British. The majority of children are supported by pupil premium [57] (the proportion is

[57] Pupil Premium is a funding scheme provided by the UK government aimed at improving the educational outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Schools in England receive additional financial support for students who are eligible, with the intention of closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers.

high) and the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus [58]or with a statement of special educational needs is high (Ofsted 2014).

Year 5 students took part in the project - 34 pupils in total

Goldthorpe Primary: An average-size primary school (287 pupils) where most pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and /or disabilities is above the national average, as are those with an education, health and care plan. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for support throughout the pupil premium funding is significantly above the national average. Seven out of every 10 pupils are disadvantaged (Ofsted 2014).

Year 5 & 6 students took part in the project - 51 pupils in total.

Barugh Green Primary School: This is a larger than average primary School. It Serves a suburb of Barnsley with privately owned and local authority rented housing. Almost all the pupils are white British. The proportion of people with learning difficulties and or disabilities is in line with the national average as is the proportion entitled to free school meals (Ofsted 2007).

Year 2 students (2 combined classes) took part in the project - 54 pupils in total

Greenacre School: Greenacre School is a large special school which provides for children and young people with severe and complex learning difficulties. A number of students have profound and multiple learning difficulties and many also have additional special educational needs and/or difficulties including physical and sensory impairments or difficulties on the autistic spectrum. All students have a statement of special educational needs. They attend the school from across Barnsley local authority and from neighbouring authorities. There are a small number of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are taught alongside children of pre-compulsory school age (Ofsted 2013).

[58] School Action Plus was a stage in the old Special Educational Needs (SEN) framework in the UK, specifically under the Code of Practice that was in use before the 2014 SEND reforms. It was designed to provide additional support for students with special educational needs who required more assistance than what was available through School Action, but not yet the level of support that would require a formal Statement of Special Educational Needs (now replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans, known as EHCPs).

Year 10-13 students with an interest in performing arts took part in the project - from an existing performing arts group from within the school - 12 students in total.

The schools were grouped as follows:

Opera One participants – Goldthorpe Primary school and Gooseacre Primary School - based in Goldthorpe and Thurnscoe (areas of the Dearne Valley).

Opera Two participants - Barugh Green Primary School and Greenacre special school - based within a two-mile radius of central Barnsley.

Darton High School GCSE dance group also became involved in the final performance when it emerged that pupils of the Barnsley central opera were facing a challenge in remembering positions during the "chase scene. They quickly choreographed a dance sequence with the actors, relieving the pressure on the students. Additionally, Darton High School's art department expressed interest in the project, and subsequently volunteered to create masks for the sea creature in the final scene. This not only enhanced the production but also served as valuable portfolio work for the art students, acting as a mock commission.

2.3 Timeline

The timeline presented challenges as we needed to work around the existing commitments of the schools, including school terms with inset days, planned activities, and the availability of The Dearne Playhouse and Barnsley Civic Theatre. The workshops were conducted between November 2016 to February 2017, intentionally planned to be delivered within a short timescale to ensure sustained engagement and focused participation from participants Figure 2.1 illustrates the overall timescale, while Figure 2.2 depicts the breakdown of workshop content.

Initial (introductory) workshops	Weds Nov 23rd to Weds 7th Dec (2016)
Drama / music/ art workshops	11/01/2017 – 08/02/2017
Final performances	Dearne – 13/02/2017 Barnsley – 15/02/2017

Table 2.1 Overall timeline of the project.

Week 1	Initial workshops, introducing the story and character. Ideas planted for scene development and creation of props and scenery
Week 2 - 8	Music and drama workshops to
Week 5 - 8	Art workshops
Week 6-8	Musicians rehearse
Week 6-8	Actors take part in school workshops
Week 9	Premiers

Figure 2.2: Breakdown of workshop content.

Each school received eight drama / music workshops and one art workshop. Figure 2.3 gives brief overview of workshop allocation:

Week		Drama / music practitioner 1	Drama / music practitioner 2	Drama/ dance practitioner	Art	Musicians and actors
1	W/B 21st Nov AM	Barugh Green (weds)		Goldthorpe (Friday)		
	PM	Greenacre (weds)		Gooseacre (Friday)		
2	W/B 28th nov - AM	Barugh green (weds)		Goldthorpe (Friday)		
	PM	Greenacre (weds)		Gooseacre (Friday)		
3	W/B 5th Dec - AM	Barugh green (weds) Goldthrope(fri)		Goldthorpe (Friday)		

	PM	Greenacre (weds) Gooseacre(fri)		Gooseacre (Friday)		
4	W/B 9th Jan - AM	Barugh green (weds)				
	PM	Greenacre (weds)		Gooseacre (Friday)		
5	W/B 17th Jan - AM	Barugh green (weds)		Goldthorpe (Friday)	Goldthorpe Tuesday AM	
	PM	Greenacre (weds)		Gooseacre (Friday)	Gooseacre Tuesday PM	
6	W/B 23rd Jan -AM		Barugh green (weds)			
	PM		Greenacre (weds)			
	Sunday 29th Jan					Full Day
7	W/B 30th Jan - AM	Barugh green (weds)		Goldthorpe (Friday)	Barugh green Tuesday AM	
	PM	Greenacre (weds)		Gooseacre (Friday)	Greenacre Tuesday PM	Emperor Greenacre Weds
8	W/B 7th feb - AM	Barugh green (weds)	Goldthorpe Fri	Goldthorpe (Friday)	Greenacre Tuesday PM	Emp -Barugh Green (weds)
	PM		Gooseacre fri	Greenacre (weds)		Emp Gooseacre & Goldthorpe (fri)
	Sunday 13th Feb Full Day	Full actor/ musician rehearsal				Full Day

Table 2.3 Workshop allocation.

The challenges arising from the tight timeline are addressed in section 2.8.3, but the project was successfully executed, ensuring that workshops and performances took place as scheduled.

2.4 The narrative

The opera was based on the Chinese folk story of 'The Magic Paintbrush'. This is a traditional story, widely retold and documented in various iterations, with a notable contemporary version by Julia Donaldson.[59] This recounts the tale of a young Chinese boy named Liang, who receives a magical paintbrush. Everything he paints turns to life. As Liang grapples with the responsibility of his gift, he encounters great obstacles when a greedy emperor takes notice of his talents and compels him to work for him, promising untold riches and wealth. Liang only wants to paint for the needy and must hatch a plan to keep his brush for himself and outfox the emperor.

Donaldson's version was published in 2017 though I was not aware of this until workshops were underway. I read various online interpretations including Lawrence Yep's extended version for additional research and context, but decided on the Ladybird 'Read it Yourself' version for workshops.[60] This script had an optimal length for reading during the initial workshops (approximately 12 minutes) and utilised language and terminology that the participants could easily understand whilst providing a descriptive narrative that effectively portrayed the protagonist and the environment and culture in which he existed. I also utilised this version to outline the basic structure of my script, as it vividly unfolded in my mind's eye upon reading, making it well-suited for visual interpretation. Furthermore, there was a readily accessible YouTube video featuring a narrated version of the book, making it a valuable resource for schools to revisit the material. This also enabled students to access the content from home if necessary.[61]

As a young child, this narrative had captivated my imagination, and I now imagined it could also offer an inquiry into the intricate fabric of society, culture, and ethics during workshop sessions. The decision to adapt this story into an opera format served a dual purpose: firstly, to give participants

[59] Julia Donaldson, *The Magic Paintbrush* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2017)

[60] Barbara Hunia, *The Magic paintbrush* (London: Penguin books Ltd, 1979)

[61] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZUWxiCJPrE

the opportunity to collaborate with experienced performers in an enriching environment, and also to explore the moral dilemmas faced by the central character of the story. Secondly, the goal was to foster ambitious aspirations, boost confidence in creative arts such as drama, music, scenery, and prop-making, and provide a first-hand introduction to the world of opera, which may have seemed unfamiliar or out of reach to the participants.

2.5 The process and ethos

The first step was to write a fixed skeleton script for the actors, with space for the school groups to insert their own devised scenes (based on the narrative of the story), which I named 'portable scenes'. School groups were given designated scenes and asked to develop the story and visual presentation in workshop sessions. The scenes were carefully allocated to incorporate the ages and abilities of the participants, e.g. Year 2 students were given 'the marketplace' due to the fact that the historical context of these scenes could be easily researched and explored, with the main actors taking the lead in producing the narrative. The Year 2 teacher expressed concern that younger students might feel apprehensive about handling too many solo lines, suggesting that the experienced actors would be better suited to deliver the narrative. In all scenes the pupils could choose to deliver spoken words within their scene or remain as purely visual support. This was the perfect opportunity to begin giving the pupil a feel of being the 'expert' drawing from the 'Mantle of the Expert' system of teaching where the pupil is given autonomy and freedom to take control of their learning, apply their knowledge and skills in a practical setting, and collaborate with peers to creatively explore and shape their own drama scene.[62] By assuming the role of the expert, the pupil gains a sense of ownership, responsibility, and empowerment which, in doing so, creates a deeper understanding of the subject matter and promotes active engagement in the learning process. This approach not only encourages creativity and critical thinking but also cultivates confidence, teamwork, and communication skills.[63]

The musical element of the project called for collaboration with the children but considering the limited experience of the participants and the time available, a deliberate effort was made to regulate and contain the level of collaborative input to a manageable extent. Therefore, the children were

[62] Dorothy Heathcote and Phyl Herbert, "A Drama of Learning: Mantle of the Expert," *Theory into Practice* 24, no. 3 (1985): 173–80, accessed Sept 10, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/1477037

[63] Heathcote *Drama of Learning*, 178

tasked with contributing to song lyrics and the creation of melody lines during music workshops. Additionally, they provided insights into the styles, moods, and textures they envisioned for the music to be composed. In section 2.7.3 I detail the integration of iPad and thumb piano for generating soundscapes, along with the rationale behind this decision.

To create a dynamic stage setup, we incorporated props made by the children into these portable scenes. The props were designed to be easily brought onto the stage during the performances. Additionally, we used images of artwork created by the children, which were projected onto a screen as a substitute for physical scenery and backdrops. This approach not only allowed us to showcase the children's creativity and craftsmanship through their props and art, but it also eliminated the need for elaborate and cumbersome physical scenery. Overall, this approach added depth and visual interest to the performances while involving the children in the creation of the stage elements. It gave them the opportunity to contribute their artistic abilities and made the stage design an integral part of their collaborative experience.

2.5.1 Autoethnographic approach

I adopted an autoethnographic approach to my work in both the Dearne Valley and Barnsley central areas. I have a personal connection to the Dearne area, growing up there and attending Lacewood Primary School. After moving away and residing in Leeds for a decade during my 20s I returned to live in Barnsley, close to Barugh Green Primary School. This has allowed me to develop a deep understanding of both areas and their respective community attitudes.

As a member of the Barnsley Music Service HUB strategy board, I also have access to music engagement data from schools and young people from across the borough. These records indicate that engagement levels in the Dearne area have remained consistently low. This is partly due to the geographical location of the Dearne, which is isolated between three distinct urban conurbations (Barnsley, Rotherham, and Doncaster), which has resulted in young people experiencing barriers to accessing centrally located activities unless their parents are able to provide transportation. Furthermore, despite discounted lesson rates and free instrument hire being made available through the music service, school administrators have noted financial challenges and fed back to the strategy board that the impact of low aspirations and financial struggles lead many parents to de-prioritise music lessons for their children.

Having familiarity with the area allowed me to predict minimal parental connection or attendance at the Dearne opera. This insight prompted the decision to provide the necessary props and costumes for the students, rather than requiring them to procure specific costumes. Drawing from personal childhood experiences, and those of my peers, I also recognised that some pupils might feel uneasy about performing on stage and participating in an unfamiliar activity such as opera singing, which differs from the typical offerings in schools. This is addressed further in 2.6.

2.5.2 process v outcome

While emphasising the importance of the process and the artistic growth and value that participants would experience through the opera, I also took care to ensure that the final result was something participants could take pride in. During workshops we avoided excessive pressure on participants to achieve perfection by operating within each individual's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD - see chapter 1). This approach was implemented with the goal of engendering feelings of success, as it is widely acknowledged that such emotions contribute significantly to students' self-confidence and self-esteem.[64] We had fun, and in post-project conversations with the children, many mentioned that the process had been unique and enjoyable, the fact that they had 'performed on a big stage for all the parents to watch' was 'something they would never forget because they had never been given a good part before'. Some participants stated that being given the opportunity to create their own scenes meant they were able to engage in a way that felt both safe and creatively involved. One participant noted 'it felt less scary and more real' than a part that they'd not created themselves. (Gooseacre participant).

2.6 Workshops leaders, actors and musicians

Careful consideration of what was required from workshop leaders and performers in the project was key to its success. The selected workshop leaders were seasoned performers, which proved to be highly advantageous as the opera premiers approached. As noted in the challenges section, some group members withdrew from the Dearne opera at the last minute, resulting in the need to fill large gaps in the classroom scenes of the opera. Consequently, the workshop leaders stepped into the role

[64] Toni Noble and Helen McGrath, "The Positive Educational Practices Framework: A Tool for Promoting Wellbeing in Schools." *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 18 (1), 1-12.

of 'teacher' during these scenes, offering crucial support where the dialogue had to be altered due to the absence of pupil drop out. In the Barnsley opera, the workshop leader also assumed the role of a teacher as the younger students required guidance and on-stage assistance from an adult.

The actors needed to be prepared to improvise and assist the young performers if they encountered difficulties such as line memorisation issues or stage fright. Selecting the right actor to portray 'Liang' was particularly challenging. It was essential to identify a young performer who could swiftly grasp the songs and narrative of the opera, while also being able to confidently engage with the younger participants, particularly a neurodiverse individual. The professional actress who portrayed 'the Guardian of the Brush' recommended a high school student studying musical theatre at her local theatre school, who had ample vocal performance experience, but wanted to expand her acting skills. The actor portraying 'The Emperor' injected vitality and humour into his role, collaborating effectively with the entire cast, including the young actor playing Liang, who benefited from his guidance on stagecraft and acting techniques. The actor assuming the roles of narrator and beggar brought an operatic quality to the performance and played a vital role in the dream scene, ensuring the pacing was suitable and the language remained age appropriate. Her expertise and collaborative spirit were instrumental in crafting a harmonious and captivating performance for both the cast and the audience.

Deliberation was necessary for the vocal styles employed in the opera, as I considered ways to navigate the potential perception of opera's elitism that participants might bring. To address any such issue, I branded the project a "folk opera," aiming to introduce a new genre to the audience in a relatable and engaging manner. Thus, the decision was made to predominantly incorporate musical theatre voice types, with only a single voice of a more traditional operatic style. This choice was influenced by my personal ethnographic experiences and the recognition that the operatic voice can sometimes be met with ridicule, misunderstanding, and potential resistance from the audience. This was part of an effort to offer our audience a chance to encounter an "opera" while acknowledging their limited exposure to this art form. My aim was for them to realise that they had, indeed, just witnessed an opera, but in a more accessible form. My intention was to craft this as an introduction that gently guided them into a fully sung performance, mindful that watching a complete opera often demands endurance and familiarity. Therefore, the choice of performers was explicitly defined by these requirements.

I had previously worked with all the musicians on former projects, some as part of a contemporary music ensemble.

I specifically selected them for their strong improvisation skills and score reading ability. In rehearsals they collaborated seamlessly with the actors, resulting in a harmonious, cohesive and relational team dynamic. The entire team worked exceptionally well together, creating an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for everyone involved. Throughout the project, I have developed an even stronger conviction in the value and efficacy of a person-centred approach. Witnessing the empathy, compassion, and person-focused methodology exhibited by all the practitioners and musicians has solidified this belief.

2.7 Workshops

Although the timetable specified separate drama and music workshops, these only functioned independently when a specific song or scene required focused or separate attention. As scenes were developed, musical styles and lyrics emerged organically as we envisioned how a song or underscore might sound, such as the entrance of the emperor given as an example in section 2.7.2. The following sections provide an overview of workshop content and explain how and why certain creative decisions were made to generate conditions of safety, social belonging, and esteem as presented in the adapted hierarchy.

2.7.1 Initial workshops

The initial workshops conducted in each school were pivotal in determining the trajectory and structure of the subsequent sessions. During these workshops, decisions were made that significantly influenced the writing, composition, and overall content of the following weeks. It was crucial to observe the students' reactions when introducing the project to them and witnessing their initial attempts at independently creating scenes. The focus was on identifying and utilising the students' existing skills while also providing assistance to help them overcome any obstacles or emotional barriers to effective performance. Additionally, a brief vocal warm-up game helped assess confident singers and the group's ability to learn a new song under time constraints. Following the initial workshops, I gained a clearer understanding of how the opera could evolve and which aspects of the storyline would be best carried by the main actors.

During the initial workshops in each school, I began the session by introducing myself and the workshop leader, who then read the story to the class. This served as a launching point for a discussion on culture and the historical background of the story. To gather information and better understand the pupils' experiences, I conducted a brief survey (by way of a show of hands) and noted responses which gave a revealing insight into the groups we collaborated with and the following statistics were collected across all participating schools; the survey revealed that 10% of the participants had never travelled beyond Yorkshire, while 62% had never ventured outside the UK. Additionally, the workshops consisted of 94% white British pupils who showed a strong eagerness to explore and learn about China's cultural heritage and historic community living. To enhance the authentic development of their scenes and provide students with a deeper understanding of other cultures, classroom teachers agreed to facilitate discussions on early Chinese culture in class. Through these explorations, students were able to gain valuable insights and broaden their perspectives. They enjoyed sharing their learning and ‘expertise’ during subsequent workshops.

During the first workshops with each class, I observed students' behavioural, emotional, and communicative conduct. We were informed that all schools, except for Barugh Green, implemented Team Teach, a positive behaviour management approach designed to empower individuals to handle challenging situations safely and respectfully. Due to the potential for high levels of disruption and volatility in some classes, we were always supervised to ensure a safe and structured environment.

The first workshops provided valuable insights. It allowed us to identify student leaders, those who lacked confidence, individuals who were disruptive in classroom settings, and students who would benefit from smaller group work or a more personalised approach. Participants from Greenacre School presented significantly more challenges in terms of physical ability, and the level of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) among some participants was considerably higher than in mainstream schools. A detailed overview of each participant was shared by the school to assess physical capability and safety, enabling bespoke planning for workshops and scene content. Identifying individual needs was crucial for enabling effective participation. For example, during a first workshop, one student expressed interest in participating but did not want to act. He indicated a preference for contributing to the writing aspect of the workshops. Though initially withdrawn, he exhibited high levels of creativity and curiosity about the project. During a discussion about what pupils would paint if they had their own magic paintbrush, he shared that he would use it to "paint all the colour back into the world." This comment prompted an extended conversation, revealing that he

displayed clear indications of synaesthesia, particularly grapheme-colour synaesthesia, where he associated colours with letters or numbers. He also linked colours with emotions and experienced sensations of greys, blacks, and whites while listening to the story of the Magic Paintbrush. He expressed a desire for the protagonist to 'paint all the colour back into the world'. While the workshop leader conducted group activities, I spent time with the pupil discussing his colour associations, sharing my own experience with synaesthesia to demonstrate that he was not alone with this experience, and we discussed how this could be creatively beneficial. Subsequently, he actively contributed to developing the lyrics and melody for a section of the opera where Liang discovers the magic brush. Ensuring that the colours of the lyrics and melody aligned with his synesthetic experiences was really important to him, and this conversation allowed him the experience of feeling heard, valued, and accepted as a creative contributor. To the amazement of his class teacher, he became fully invested in the development of the opera.

In these one-on-one interactions, elements of the adapted hierarchy were utilised to significantly valuable effect. By addressing this particular student's needs for safety, social belonging and esteem, he was able to progress to and remain in the higher levels of the hierarchy.

2.7.2 Subsequent workshops

During the second workshop with pupils, key moments from were identified and listed (Appendix 2.1)

The following changes were decided collectively and agreed by all groups:

- The main character became female, this was due to the children questioning why the main characters were often boys. We researched female Chinese names similar to Liang and decided on 'Ling'.
- I had wondered if the children would prefer a softer ending to the emperor dying. In the original story the emperor demanded Ling stop painting the sea as it was becoming dangerous, but Ling painted until the boat sank and the emperor was gone forever. The pupils were given the option for the emperor to sail away to a deserted island and be trapped there forever -but they decided he must die!

- In the original version of the story, the pictures would come to life once Ling had completed painting them. In our adaptation, the pictures came to life once Ling signed her name. This concept was visually represented by a group of students using blossom branches to create a tableau resembling a tree.
- With each signature, Ling would twirl, adding a dynamic element to the scene.

After these decisions were finalised, the scenes were allocated as shown in Tables 2.4 and 2.5.

Opera 1 - Goldthorpe Primary and Gooseacre Primary			
		School	Leader
Scene 1	Can I come to school	Goldthorpe Year 5	1
Scene 2	Dream Scene	Gooseacre year 5 (4 pupils to become tree)	3
Scene 3	Village / market scene	Goldthrope year 5	2
Scene 4	Dream reprise	Gooseacre Year 4	1
Scene 5	Here comes the emperor	Goldthrope year 6	1
Scene 6	Jail	2 pupils Gooseacre Y5 - Guards - Greenacre Y5 chorus	3
Scene 7	Beggar / ling captured	Gooseacre Y4	2
Scene 8	Ling paints sea, creatures and boat	Goldthope Year 5 & 6	3 / 1
Scene 9	Celebration	All	3 / 1

Table 2.4 Scene allocation - Dearne

Opera 2 - Barugh Green Primary and Greenacre School.			Leader:
Scene 1	Can I come to school	Barugh Green Year 3	2

Scene 2	Dream Scene	Greenacre - All	2
Scene 3	Village then market scene	Barugh Green Y2 / 4 pupils to become tree (Y3)	2
Scene 4	Dream reprise	Greenacre - All	2
Scene 5	Here comes the emperor	Greenacre - All	2
Scene 6	Emperor and Dancers only		
Scene 7	Beggar / ling captured	Barugh Green Y2	2
Scene 8	Liang paints sea, creatures and boat	Barugh Green Y3	2 / 3
Scene 9	Celebration	All	2 / 3
Additional:			
Scene 5 & 9	Omar to visits the school to format the scene with pupils - strong scaffolding required here		
Scene 6 & 7	Support from dancers from Darton Academy.		

Table 2.5 Scene allocation - Barnsley

The music writing process evolved organically as students developed their scenes. We envisaged creating songs or underscores and discussed how they might sound. Consideration was given to the inclusion of spoken narrative intertwined with the music. As an example, the process of writing 'the entrance of the emperor' created in collaboration with Greenacre school is discussed below.

Through dialogue, a collective decision was made that the emperor required music to highlight his unkind and selfish nature. Greenacre students were allocated a 'market scene' where the emperor appears, searching for Ling. We discussed what kind of sound and tempo the music required. I played various examples on the piano, with pupils suggesting faster or slower tempos, and offering opinions on the tonality and pitch. One pupil suggested that it needed to sound like a 'big scary drum that people can march to, but not a drum because we need scary music'. I played a few examples and when I played the piano part shown in figure 2.4 the student clapped stating 'that's the one'. This felt like a

truly collaborative moment with an outcome that provided not only an important layer to the product but an experience of creative achievement for the pupil.

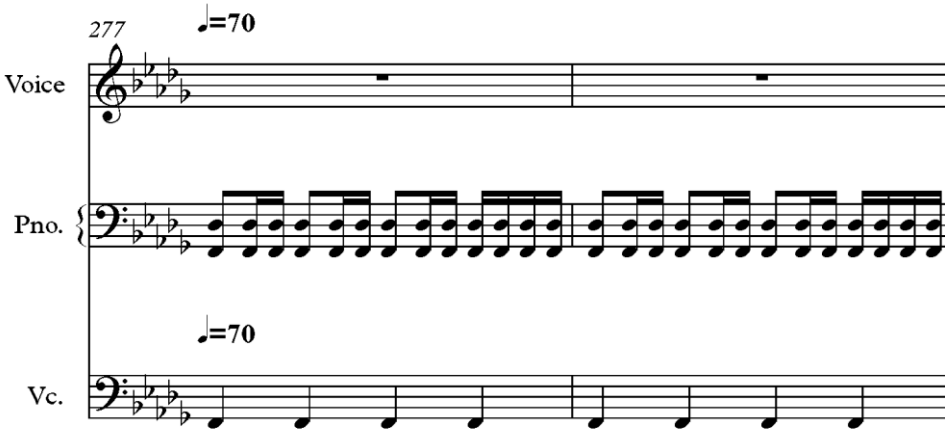

Figure 2.1 The entrance of the emperor

The creation of the lyrics followed, with the pupils contributing strong ideas to how the villagers wished to convey their feelings in the presence of the emperor. To ensure easy recollection by the students, we aimed for simplicity, opting to chant the words to align with the piano rhythm (Figure 2.2).

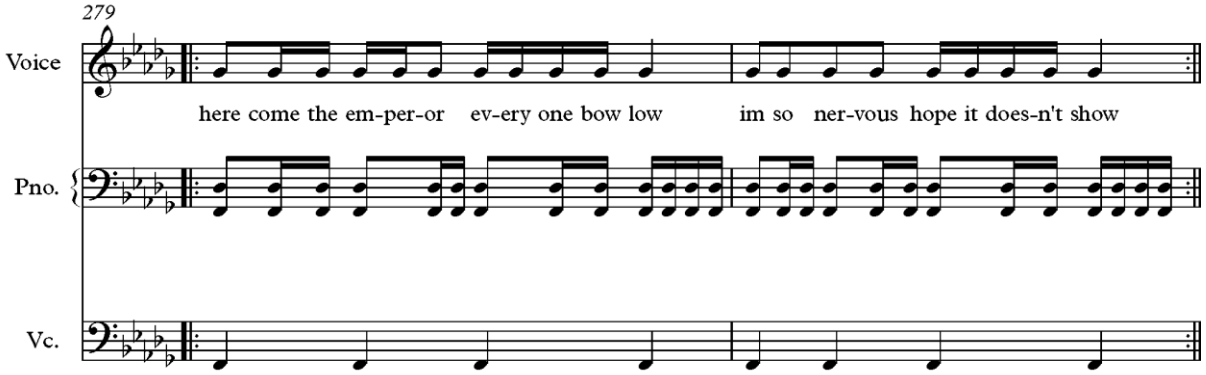

Figure 2.5 Villagers chant.

We then crafted the village scene where the villagers would approach the emperor and make a request for an item to make their lives more comfortable. The choice was entirely up to the students; they were given free rein to choose the content, with gentle guidance to align it with the historical

period and the needs of the ordinary people of the time (as proven in the video of the performance, this request proved to be too constricting for certain pupils, and their imaginations took flight!). The scene was then rehearsed with the workshop leader temporarily taking the role of the emperor. A recording of the piano part was produced so the pupils could practise walking in step while chanting the lyrics.

This participatory approach was common in the development of many of the opera scenes, with pupils from all schools contributing to shaping the musical elements.

2.7.3 Inclusivity

As the performance date approached, the Greenacre students started posing questions about the emperor. Initially these were practical queries such as 'What will the emperor say?' and 'Will he use the same lines as the workshop leader?' It soon became increasingly apparent that some pupils were feeling anxious about the emperor's physical appearance, with one mentioning feeling frightened as they found the emperor 'scary and not nice' in the opera. Recognising the growing apprehension among the students and the necessity for clarity on how the scene would unfold with the 'real' emperor, I made the decision to invite the actor portraying the emperor to a rehearsal earlier than initially scheduled. Meeting the actor in their everyday persona allowed the students to establish a connection and understand that the transformation into the character on stage was simply a performance. We used humour during the parts where the emperor would be angry, to defuse any perception of threat and to foster an environment of safety. This ensured that they knew what to expect and felt more comfortable during their interactions on stage. The success of incorporating the actor into the workshop with the Greenacre students prompted me to extend the same opportunity to each of the other schools. I was aware of the varying ages and potential emotional traumas that many students may have experienced, understanding that anger, and the possible perception of the emperor being a hostile person, could serve as a trigger into a state of fear. Therefore, to ensure a supportive and inclusive environment, contingency funds from the budget were allocated to facilitate the participation of the emperor in one extra workshop with the other schools.

A sensitive situation needed to be addressed during the preparations for opera 2 at Barugh Green and Greenacre School. The Year 2 students at Barugh Green, aged 6-7, were set to perform alongside the

older Greenacre children with diverse needs, some especially profound. It was crucial to delicately introduce the concept of inclusivity and collaboration, considering the various abilities and disabilities within the group. From the outset of the introduction of this consideration, we strived to nurture an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and teamwork. In alignment with the themes of inclusivity woven into the exploration of the magic paintbrush story, we gently raised awareness about different disabilities and challenges that their fellow performers might experience. We encouraged open discussions about how the children might feel about interacting with peers who have different needs. We asked for their help in learning and singing the newly written Greenacre school anthem, which aided a sense of empowerment and community. By fostering positive attitudes, establishing and encouraging a supportive environment, the able-bodied students were well prepared to engage with their peers from Greenacre School, with disabilities, and aimed to create a harmonious and inclusive setting for all participants involved in the production.

In order to include the students from Greenacre School, it was necessary to make physical adjustments that considered their individual challenges, which included the incorporation of character-driven entrances and exits onto the stage. Following thorough evaluation, it was decided that the Greenacre students would take on the dream scenes, as these could be supported by teaching assistants and workshop leaders in flowing manner without the necessity of dialogue or memorisation of specific lines.

To create effective dream scenes, we experimented with different iPad apps, ultimately settling on Brian Eno's 'Bloom' app, a generative music app that allows effortless creation of ambient music through screen taps.[65] By synchronising all iPads to play in the same key/scale and locking the screen, Bloom ensured seamless operation for spontaneous soundscape creation. The musical score was tailored to match the app's scale, enhancing the visual impact on stage. Dimming the stage lighting, Bloom's colourful patterns on surrounding iPad screens illuminated the sleeping Ling. These patterns evolved even when not touched, ensuring a constant visual presence. This setup not only provided adequate lighting for visually impaired students but also complemented the vibrant artwork projected behind performers. The absence of wrong notes in Bloom simplified the participants' task of entering the stage while interacting with the iPad screen, encircling the sleeping Ling, and exiting. Numerous

[65] https://generativemusic.com/bloom.html

rehearsals were conducted to practise this sequence, but the plan for the pupils to walk around Ling proved to be too challenging for some students and posed a risk of her being stepped upon. Ultimately, it was decided that the students would maintain a static position instead.

2.7.4 Art Workshops

In the fifth week, art workshops were introduced, focusing on ancient Chinese art, particularly from the Ming Dynasty. The workshop leader shared examples of patterns and colours from that era. They were tasked with creating artwork for projection as scenery. When exploring dream scenes and images of opulence, the workshops explored how emotions can be visually represented, emphasising the role of colour and shape. The workshop leader demonstrated various painting techniques to evoke specific moods. The flat wash technique, for instance, set the painting's initial mood, with colour choices symbolising the scene's atmosphere and narrative. Wet-on-wet painting, where paper is dampened before applying paint, created delicate and feathered effects, offering a broad artistic range. The wet-on-dry method involved applying paint to dry paper and layering with a wet brush, allowing underlying colours to show through. Another technique, blooming, involved applying water-rich paint to the canvas, semi-drying it, and repeating with adjacent colours. This process seamlessly blended colours, creating natural gradients. Pupils also crafted props for the opera, designed to be portable for convenience during performances. While not intended as art therapy, a discussion arose about how colour and shape can both reflect and evoke emotional states. As an observer, this was revelatory when discussed with a class teacher who noted that the students wouldn't normarily engage so easily in this dialogical content. Similarly, within many of the workshops, there were revealing moments; for example, the discussion of China and differences in culture provided a platform for discussing the lack of travel many students had experienced, highlighting the socio-economic challenges they faced and exploring their aspirations beyond primary school. These informal conversations revealed much about the day-to-day experiences of the students, particularly in the Dearne schools, where travel outside the area was markedly limited and rarely expected to occur.

2.8 challenges

Having never previously managed a project of this size, from the outset I faced numerous challenges through the span of the project, due to overseeing the curation of the entire process almost single-handedly. From the writing, submission and approval of the funding proposal, a challenging timeline rapidly emerged which included organising workshops, communicating with schools, workshop

leaders and performers (to arrange workshops and rehearsals), booking venues, composing music in tandem with the development of school scenes, coordinating the production of artwork (including conversion to files for projection during the opera performances), managing costume-makers, the design/printing of souvenir performance programs and project accounting. Overseeing a project of this scale was a new endeavour for me and, while I was ultimately satisfied with the overall planning, financial management, and the success and hugely positive audience feedback, there were huge and important takeaways. Specifically, improving communication with schools, and allocating additional time for dress rehearsals would have lent to an even greater experience for me as discussed in the following three subsections.

2.8.1 Commitment and attendance

One of the challenges we faced was related to the school's communication and promotion of the opera to parents, which encountered difficulties. Moreover, there was a lack of parental support in the Dearne area, a situation that I had anticipated based on prior knowledge. However, the lack of support surpassed my initial expectations. It emerged that Goldthorpe Primary School had very recently presented its own play at the Dearne Playhouse Theatre, potentially affecting their involvement in promoting *The Magic Paintbrush* to parents resulting in diminished perception of its uniqueness. Efforts were made during the workshops to address this issue and encourage parental engagement. On a couple of occasions pupils had expressed doubts about being able to participate as it meant a parent having to pick them up after school hours, which parents were incredibly reluctant to support. However, I then learned that the school, despite having project/parental consent forms for over six weeks, had only distributed the forms to parents one week prior to the performance date, significantly limiting the time available to obtain necessary permissions and promote attendance. Consequently, I had to make the incredibly tough decision to proceed with the final workshop (and performance) solely with children from whom we had received parental consent. This required significant adjustments to scenes and performers' stage positions. Myself and workshop leaders experienced genuine sadness for the pupils who were unable to participate considering their commitment and enthusiasm during the workshops.

One of the performers, despite lacking parental consent at first, demonstrated exceptional dedication and a strong desire to persuade a parent to pick them up after the performance, even if they did not attend the performance. This not only highlights the performer's remarkable enthusiasm and

commitment but also underscores the challenges faced in engaging parents in the area. Despite these obstacles, the performer's unwavering passion for the project was truly inspiring. They successfully convinced a parent to attend the performance, enabling their participation. Throughout the process, this performer had played a crucial role, developing a genuine enjoyment for acting and performing. Their enthusiasm, determination, and ultimate success in being part of the project stand out as a highlight of the final production.

On a positive note, other schools were highly committed and proactively communicated with parents in advance. This proactive approach resulted in high attendance and the performance at Barnsley Civic was completely sold out.

It is important for future endeavours to reflect on the hurdles encountered in an environment with minimal parental support, indicating a need for the exploration of additional strategies to enhance engagement.

2.8.2 Budget

In order to address the financial challenges faced by families in the community, the ticket pricing for the opera had to be carefully considered and realistically priced, especially for Opera One in the Dearne Valley. Recognising that attendance to the opera was already a concern, I reached out to another local school and proposed that their choir perform before the opera. This decision not only enriched the overall audience experience but also granted choir members and their families the opportunity to witness the opera, thereby expanding the reach of the event. This strategic move contributed positively to ticket sales and facilitated the attraction of a broader demographic, as articulated in the ACE (Arts Council England) application. Navigating the project within the confines of a restricted budget proved to be a daunting task, demanding significant time and dedication. Nonetheless, I had had the foresight to include a contingency fund in the budget which proved fortuitous, enabling the absorption of unforeseen expenditures (such as the replacement of batteries for musician lighting, provision of extra refreshments for children during the dress rehearsal and the extra workshop sessions required for the emperor scenes) which made the overall running of the project much smoother.

2.8.3 Timescale

The time constraints presented specific challenges. These challenges included the limit of time to write the score and teach the songs and soundscape elements to the students within such a short space of time between workshops. Creating physical props also posed a time challenge, but all schools were cooperative and facilitated additional classroom sessions to complete the artwork. We successfully maintained momentum and found that the intense burst of activity proved effective for the participants. The regular interaction with pupils and short intervals between sessions contributed to sustaining enthusiasm, memory retention and overall focus, and the anticipation of the final project motivated pupils to eagerly commit the material to memory.

The dress rehearsal posed another challenge, marked by limited time for the children to become acquainted with the stage and navigate entry and exit strategies. With just a single run-through available, on-the-spot adjustments at times disrupted the flow of the rehearsal. Due to financial constraints and the added costs of extending theatre rentals, the on-site dress rehearsal time was significantly shorter than desired. However, the selection of actors had factored this in from the start, ensuring they could provide additional support to the students if needed. Despite logistical hurdles, the main performance proceeded successfully, benefitting from the suggestions and feedback gathered during the dress rehearsal, being fresh in the minds of the students, and ultimately enabling a seamless execution of their scenes.

2.9 Performances and feedback

The opera's final performances were fluent and vibrant, receiving incredibly positive feedback from the audience, which I will now outline in the sections 2.9.1 and 2.9.2.

2.9.1 Opera 1 - The Dearne Playhouse

I conducted an entry and exit questionnaire to gauge the audience's previous exposure to opera and their initial perceptions. From the entry questionnaire, it was determined that 95% of the audience had never witnessed an opera before, and 89% expressed scepticism towards this art form. However, the exit questionnaire revealed that 83% of the audience members were pleasantly surprised by the

content of the performance, as it was not what they had expected. Interestingly, the same 83% also expressed their willingness to attend similar productions in the future.

Elements that resonated with the audience included the well-developed story arc, the comedic portrayal of the emperor, the visually striking projected artwork, as well as the music and songs. While the operatic voice of the narrator did not receive negative feedback, the young protagonist was highly praised for her exceptional voice and skills. The opera had a duration of approximately 45 minutes. 76% of the audience expressed a desire for the performance to be slightly longer, indicating that they were engaged and would have been willing to watch more. On the other hand, 24% believed that the length was just right and felt satisfied with the duration, not wishing for a longer performance.

The last-minute challenges, such as the decreased number of participants requiring swift adjustments to choreography and content, were seamlessly overcome in the final performance. Teachers from the schools reported that both parents and participants had a positive experience and continued to discuss the performance for many days after.

2.9.2 Opera 2 - Barnsley Civic Theatre.

Entry statistics revealed that 67% of the audience had never witnessed an opera before, and 54% held scepticism towards this art form. However, obtaining data for the exit questionnaire proved to be more challenging as the audience were directed towards an alternative exit from the theatre due to slippery conditions, which was not anticipated or relayed to the volunteers conducting the survey. Nonetheless, from the responses that were obtained, it was discovered that 97% of the audience members were impressed with the production, and the same 97% expressed their willingness to watch something similar in the future.

Notable positive feedback included the vibrant and engaging storyline, the incorporation of comedy and thought-provoking moral questions. Additionally, the Greenacre anthem received praise, and the inclusion and professionalism of Greenacre students were highlighted as impactful elements of the performance.

Judith Weir (CBE at the time, now Dame Judith Weir) attended the opera, which featured the premiere of the Greenacre anthem on which we had collaborated. Afterward, she penned a blog post praising the opera, its arrangement, and the performance.[66] She praised the music and use of instrumentation, the skills of the performers and the 'beautiful abstract images with intense colour saturation' that were projected during the show. Initially, she thought these visuals were paintings by Howard Hodgkin, but later discovered they were created by the 'talented youth of Barnsley.' This acknowledgment was shared with the pupils, sparking a sense of pride among them that someone who 'worked for the Queen' had commended their work.

2.9.3 Teacher feedback

Verbal feedback from teachers was highly positive. Following the performances, each class of children completed evaluation sheets and participated in group discussions during a post-performance visit I conducted in person. An example of a feedback sheet created by a student at Barugh Green Primary School is shown in Figure 2.6. The class teacher also took notes and offered informal feedback on the children's experiences. The vast majority of responses highlighted increased confidence, a deep enjoyment of exploring another culture, and a sense of delight in visiting and performing at a professional venue.

In one of the classes, I was informed by their teacher that a child of Chinese heritage had been hesitant to discuss his culture in front of peers due to issues of self-confidence and uncertainty around cultural differences. Having been informed of this prior to the start of the workshop, I mentioned that I wished I had an expert to guide me on Chinese culture and food that might have been historically available at a village market stall, or anything related to Chinese cuisine in general, as I was struggling with that aspect. I left it at that. The following week, he approached me quietly and offered to share more about Chinese cuisine. After acknowledging my lack of expertise, he had spoken to his grandmother to learn about traditional food and other aspects of ancient Chinese culture, particularly regarding bygone cuisine. When I asked if he would be willing to share this information with his group, he agreed and proceeded to share his knowledge with the class. Over time, he became our 'resident expert' and took pride in sharing his evolving cultural knowledge as the workshops continued. It is also noteworthy that another non-white British pupil of English / Chinese heritage played a key role in selecting and advising

[66] https://www.judithweir.com/single-post/2017/02/17/the-civic-barnsley

on costumes for other classmates and participated in the performance in traditional Chinese costume. In the context of the project objectives, both particpants were thriving in the higher tiers of the pyramid, exploring self-actualisation.

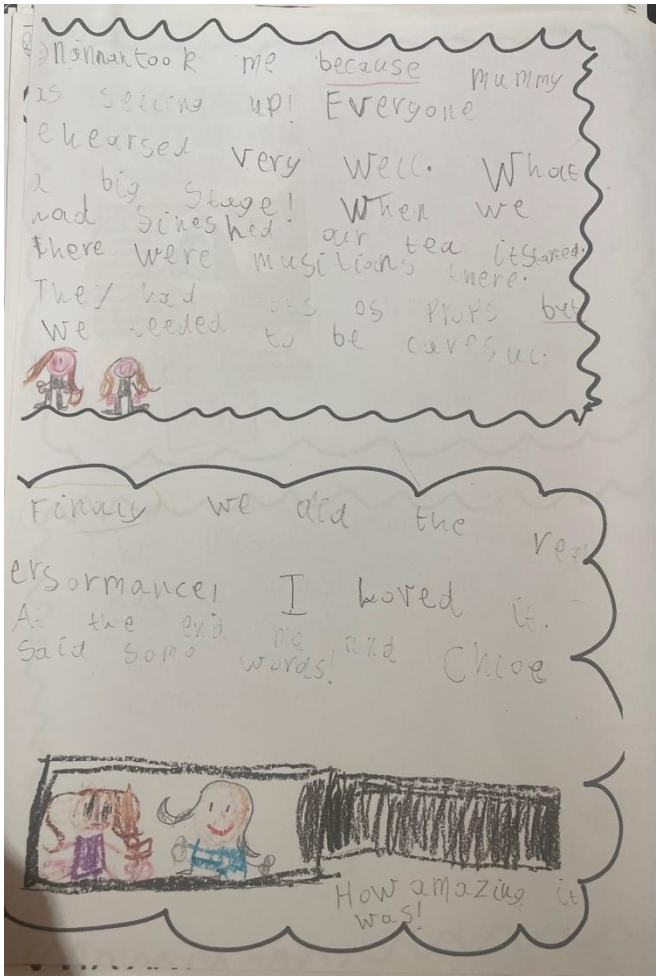

Figure 2.3 – example of worksheet completed by the children.

Several performers from Greenacre School expressed significant anxiety before the performance began. However, the teachers, experienced in supporting students through such challenges, provided focused assistance during dress rehearsals and in the lead-up to the performance. Additionally, myself, the Emperor and Guardian of the Brush, spoke with the

students to help calm their nerves. Despite their initial anxiety, all participants successfully performed and were exhilarated afterwards.

In the week following the performance, I visited the school and spoke with both the class teachers and the performers. I had badges created featuring the Magic Paintbrush logo, which the performers proudly accepted. Teachers shared that the students couldn't stop talking about their onstage experience, especially the pride they felt in performing for such a large audience and receiving so much applause. One student, who had been particularly nervous beforehand, expressed that he now wanted to perform again and even hoped to continue acting after leaving school.

This positive response was echoed by the rest of the group. In a follow-up visit three weeks later, I spoke with the Performing Arts lead teacher, who confirmed that many students continued to talk about the experience. For several, the performance had significantly boosted their confidence, mood, and self-belief. The teachers noted that the experience of overcoming their stage nerves had also helped students approach other challenges in their lives with a similar mindset, stating that if they could perform on stage, they were more than capable of tackling whatever came their way. They had steadily moved back and forth through the tiers of the hierarchy, particularly experiencing the ‘esteem’ segment after the performance, and were quite often working in the ‘stretch’ zone, which enabled them to view other challenging tasks within their daily lives with greater optimism.

2.10 Reflections

I was absolutely delighted with the final performance of both operas despite the challenges I have mentioned. The balance between the process and the product worked exceptionally well. The entire experience was a valuable learning opportunity for me. Previously, my work had mainly involved composing and being an invited workshop leader for arts organisations, but never through directly applying for funding. The Arts Council England funding application process, although lengthy and daunting at first, turned out to be an excellent tool for meticulous planning. It greatly assisted in time management, financial accuracy, and maintaining the project's focus and objectives.

However, I slightly underestimated the time needed for some aspects of the project's organisation and curation, and subsequently the concentrated three-month period of intense activity presented a challenge. As a result, certain organisational and curating tasks impacted time that could have been dedicated to refining the musical content, especially in the final scene depicting the sinking ship. I had planned to include more scored music rather than relying predominantly on improvisation. Nevertheless, rehearsing this scene with musicians and the conductor resulted in a successful improvised section.

I am satisfied with how I managed project finances; Creating a sturdy contingency fund proved to be a wise decision, leading to an underspend of £56, which was donated to Greenacre school for the use of their facilities during musician rehearsals (previously given in kind).

2.10.1 Areas for development and improvement:

There are three key areas that warrant further development and reflection. Firstly, it is essential to acknowledge the additional time required when composing a score in a short time frame, especially with younger students and those presenting with disabilities or a neurodiversity. Secondly, allocating more time for the preparation of costume and projected imagery (photographing artwork and converting to the correctly ordered PNG files) is crucial. Thirdly, enhancing communication with parents through the school is another area that could be improved and would benefit projects requiring parental consent/engagement.

While I believe that the condensed schedule had some advantages, the time restrictions imposed on a three-week turn-around period was less than ideal for managing the entire project while finalising the musical score simultaneously. Furthermore, the students from Greenacre needed additional support and greater preparation to understand what to expect at the performance venue. A possible solution to address this challenge would be to schedule a visit to the venue in advance, providing the students with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the space. Additionally, discussing the potential emotional and other difficulties that may arise during the performance, and how the presence of professional actors can serve as a source of reassurance, could be beneficial.

The need for dedicating additional time and focus to costume design became apparent as the premier drew closer. During the project, the production of paper hats and sashes for costume was postponed until the latter phases. While the schools supported the students in crafting these items during class hours, improved coordination could have facilitated a more seamless workflow. This experience has highlighted for me the critical nature of focusing on the minutest details to achieve the desired aesthetic outcome. Subsequently, I have recognised the value in adopting a more deliberate and thorough approach to enabling sufficient time for the careful consideration of these subtle yet important elements.

As highlighted earlier, enhancing parental communication via the school office is a key area for reflection. For upcoming projects, I intend to initiate broader discussions with school secretaries or administrative staff to gain insights into the school's protocols for engaging with parents. This dialogue would be an important step to initiate at the very outset of communication with the school and would commence well ahead of the performance to ensure parents are kept informed throughout the process.

Furthermore, I would boost the frequency of communication and explore potential incentives to motivate parental participation during the event.

2.11 Summary

2.11.1 Personal growth and reflection

Through leading this project, my artistic practice expanded and evolved considerably. I gained a deeper understanding of project management and recognised the importance of clear communication with both teachers and participants. Aspects of my composition skills improved, notably I became more efficient in crafting simple yet impactful music. The pentatonic scale was used regularly throughout the score to aid a recognisable cultural reference, for example the introduction before Ling entered the stage for the first time. It was crucial for the music to be beautiful and engaging, without being overly complex or distracting from the on-stage action. It needed to be accessible to an

audience who may not be familiar with this genre, while still serving as a supportive, immersive and dramatic element of the performance.

Overall, my connection to this project was deeply emotional and revelatory. I had the opportunity to observe, experience and learn from the compelling communication and relationship-building between practitioners and participants, and I was truly inspired by the growth of these connections and professional bonds. I gleaned valuable insights from observing these interactions, and this supported the development of my own relational approach to assisting workshops, communicating effectively with younger performers and writing according to the needs and skills of a range of participants

For many pupils, it was their first interaction with professional actors and musicians, and it was wonderful to observe how valuable this experience was in creating a sense of excitement and inspiration as they anticipated performing the opera on a large stage.

Chapter 3 - Medea Maria

Score:

Madden_201043241_Medea_score.pdf

Performance recording:

Madden_201043241_Medea_Performance_Beverly_.mov

3.1 Introduction

Medea Maria is a two-act opera written for a semi-professional cast. The opera had three performances at two different venues: York Theatre Royal (18th March 2018), and Beverly Arts Centre (26th and 27th March 2018). For this project, my role was composer, with the intention to write the musical score in dialogue with the director / librettist, with limited interaction and collaboration with cast and musicians. Due to the reasons outlined below, my involvement evolved into a collaborative, person-centred work that retained operatic elements while incorporating improvisation and developing substantial interaction between the composer and musicians. As the process of composition and my collaboration unfolded, it became evident that many of the cast and musicians required support and consideration specifically in respect to their confidence and abilities. Merely providing a finished score without taking into account their current skill and confidence level felt too incongruent an approach in this semi-professional cohort. The writing process organically evolved into a more intricate and nuanced one, where I engaged in not only on a mentorship role but also actively collaborated with the musicians on a personal level, applying Carl Rogers' core conditions as discussed in chapter one, to create an environment of collaboration and mutual regard throughout the entire process. Taking inspiration from Natalie Rogers' belief that individuals develop creative confidence and self-direction in an empathetic, honest, and caring climate,[67] I fully committed to supporting the cast and musicians as they moved towards new levels of awareness and self-actualisation, and this felt incredibly pertinent as the primary focus of my PhD research had already evolved organically in this direction. This collaboration stemmed from a public call, in July 2017, for a composer, initiated by Alexander Kaniewsky, who was designated as the inaugural Theatre Artist-in-Residence by York St John University in conjunction with the York Theatre Royal Graduate Prize (2017-2018). As part of his

[67] Natalie Rogers, *The Handbook of person-centred psychotherapy and counselling second edition* (London: Palgrave MacMillian, 2013), 240

residency, Alexander aimed to develop his work as an opera director. Within this context, he sought to craft a contemporary opera that drew inspiration from Euripides' *Medea* while interweaving an exploration of the life and legacy of opera singer Maria Callas. The terms of the residency mandated that the director must collaborate with students at York St John University (henceforward 'York St John') and local artists to bring this vision to fruition. To write the musical score, a composer was sought through a public request for potential partners.

Finding the proposal intriguing, and looking to engage in a new large-scale project without assuming the burdens of curating a whole project myself, I contacted Alexander to discuss the opera's scope, timeline, artistic processes, and conceptual inspirations. With the premiere planned for the following March (2018), as part of the York Literature Festival, the projected time frame was workable, affording me an opportunity to further cultivate my compositional proficiencies. Consequently, an agreement was reached to collaborate on this work.

In what follows, I will discuss the challenges and adaptations to the original planned writing process and timeline, as well as the approaches I utilised to sustain musician/participant engagement, where 'the relationship was the central agent for change'.[68]

3.2 Timeline and Ethos

The initial meeting with the director took place at York Theatre Royal in July 2017, when he outlined his overall approach, which revolved around the exploration of gesture, movement, and image within the context of theatrical performance; with an interest in the aesthetic of theatre arts and how the moving body can produce evocative visual engagement. The director mentioned that an application to Arts Council England was also planned as there was currently no available fees for any of the performers (a combination of actors and musicians) and only a very limited budget for production costs. The work was written for a cast of six, who were already recruited from York St John, but with only one of the cast experienced and confident in vocal performance. Further recruitment was scheduled for chorus members and musicians, with auditions planned to begin at the start of the academic year in September 2017.

[68] Stephen Paul and Divine Charura. *An introduction to the therapeutic relationship in counselling and psychotherapy* (London: Sage, 2015), 21.

I agreed to compose the music on an unpaid basis to gain more experience in writing large scale works. Alexander outlined his musical vision for the score, along with examples of the music he intended to use as temporary scores during rehearsals. He drew clear inspiration from minimalism, citing Reich and Adams as prominent composers who influenced his work, with Philip Glass' *Einstein on the Beach* being a particular favourite. This was a valuable insight and aided my own preparation and research before commencing with the composition. Alexander stated that he wanted to include improvised music into the score and by proposing improvisation workshops for musicians, the ACE funding application was strengthened as it encompassed opportunities for skills development and innovative approaches to music creation for musicians unfamiliar with improvisation. I proposed that once the musicians were appointed, and their ability and confidence assessed, extra improvisation guidance and instruction could be delivered. Recruiting the musicians would involve drawing upon the directors' personal contacts within York St John, with those chosen for their musical abilities (the criteria being Grade 8 and above). With these points considered, a new timeline would be created to incorporate additional workshops and rehearsals with the musicians.

By mid-September, notices were posted to recruit members for the musical ensemble, chorus, and a musical director. Lack of greater levels of funding made it a challenge to recruit a committed musical director however, by mid-October 2017, an MD was finally appointed but there was an ongoing issue with recruiting musicians. We concluded this was a result of the lack of funding to pay musicians and an unwillingness on their part to contribute their time for free, which was entirely understandable yet surprising given the ensemble experience on offer and the support which was available.

I had attended rehearsals (with the actors) of the initial scenes and my belief that a purely 'minimalist' score may not be universally well-suited, especially during times of rapid emotional escalation and decline, had been reinforced and solidified in my mind. The musical score was essential in underpinning the contrasting character differences between the two central characters in the piece, Medea and Callas, during the slow movement on stage. Rather than employing a leitmotif, the possibility of utilising distinct scales or modes to capture the essence of each character was explored with the director. His clear musical ideas were acknowledged, and an agreement to avoid creating a direct imitation of the minimalist style was reached. This phase was crucial in determining the trajectory of the music.

Full cast and ensemble rehearsals were initially scheduled to commence in early December 2017. However, by November, a complete ensemble of musicians had still not been secured, and although satisfactory progress had been made with piano sketches, I had concerns that the project was in danger of running into timing issues. Due to outside commitments, the Director's lack of availability to manage the music-related aspects of the production further exacerbated these concerns. The original agreement was that I would concentrate exclusively on the composition, with no involvement in the organisational aspects of the opera however, given my experience of managing the Magic Paintbrush project, and these pressing circumstances, I approached the situation sensitively, recognising the Director's level of anxiety regarding the progress of the project, particularly pertaining to musician recruitment and rehearsal organisation. Subsequently, to address this challenge, I tasked the Musical Director to recruit musicians and implement additional vocal rehearsals for the two lead performers.

An ensemble was created by mid-December and, in January 2018, the music rehearsals commenced. I had started to orchestrate the existing piano music based on the assumption that all instrumentalists were skilled readers but, attending the first rehearsal in early 2018, I observed that the level and ability of the musicians differed significantly from previously stated. Most were York St John students, and three were community members. Many of the performers were uncertain about the rhythmic content of the score and struggled with some of the fragmented or rapid elements of the first draft, and it was immediately apparent that I would need to rewrite some of the existing material, taking into account the ability of the musicians (when writing and orchestrating the remaining scenes). It was also becoming clear that in order to keep the musicians engaged, I would need to adopt a more personalised approach to cultivate strong relationships built on trust and confidence.

There was always the fear that musicians might leave the ensemble if the music became too challenging or they didn't feel a personal investment or connection to the process. Strategically employing the person-centred approach, the collaborative integration of musicians in the compositional process emerged as a critical factor; remaining within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and exploring where they may be placed in the Comfort-Stretch-Panic Zone (CSP) and involving them as much as possible.[69] For example, the opening solo clarinet section was initially more complex and included extended techniques, which the clarinettist found difficult and frustrating. Working closely with them to rewrite this section made the solo manageable whilst remaining effective. I continued to support building their confidence by spending time exploring interpretation,

[69] The concepts of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Comfort-Stretch-Panic zone) are detailed extensively in chapter 1.

utilising rubato and envisioning the impact of the solo line in the theatrical setting, which were all performance techniques they had no previous knowledge or awareness of. The outcome for the clarinettist was one of delight at their achievement and a strong sense of ownership through collaboration.

This approach worked well for the musicians who were present for the initial rehearsals, though it wasn't until mid-February that a permanent, fully committed ensemble was established. Thereafter, my observation was that despite full musician recruitment, there were issues with time keeping and rehearsal attendance throughout this period. This observation aside, rehearsals continued and improvisation workshops were integrated into the schedule in February and March. The musicians were able to attend a full dress rehearsal before the opening night and the opera premiered as planned.

The ethos of maintaining open communication and cultivating a supportive relationship with the cast and musicians remained prevalent throughout the rehearsal and performance period. This approach led to a full ensemble performance at the premiere, with members noting a positive learning and performance opportunity that enhanced their skills.

3.3 Cast and Musicians

The acting cast consisted of six individuals, with two additional children in non-speaking roles. One actor had extensive vocal experience, another had some prior experience, while the rest had none at all.

Initially, the ensemble was intended to consist of four string players, five woodwind musicians, three brass players, guitar, bass guitar, piano, percussion, and three singers serving as a chorus. However, as rehearsals progressed, the production encountered a drop out of musicians, requiring the ensemble to be significantly scaled down to include only a violin, cello, flute, clarinet, trombone, piano, and three singers.

The musical ensemble was reduced from 15 members in December, to just nine by late January. In contrast, the acting cast and chorus demonstrated steadfast dedication from the outset, eagerly seizing the chance to improve their musical abilities. One actor took the initiative to arrange extra rehearsals with fellow cast mates to perfect the more demanding vocal segments. Leveraging his opera background, he made a significant contribution to the rehearsal proceedings.

3.4 The Process

3.4.1 Composing and adapting the score.

I created a final Structural Plan in order to merge the ideas presented by the director and myself, which served as a comprehensive framework and synthesised our collective thoughts.[70] Deciphering Alexander's vision and his specific requirements for each scene often posed a challenge. However, consolidating his insights, suggestions, and my own ideas into a single document proved to immensely useful. Although a large document, this became an invaluable resource throughout the composition process. The numbering of the scenes is retained from the director's original notes.

By utilising the details from the structural plan, observing recorded rehearsals, and attending rehearsals in-person, a piano score was created and recorded. This allowed the director to offer constructive feedback on how well my ideas aligned with his vision and their overall impact. Additionally, the piano score served as a definitive guide for the actors during rehearsals, serving as a permanent point of reference unlike the temporary track given at the outset. I imported rehearsal videos into Logic, a digital audio workstation, to craft a piano accompaniment that harmonised with and enhanced the actors' movements. For instance, in section 1.1, which encompasses the introduction of the Nurse character (Figure 3.1). By closely observing her movements, I composed a complementary musical arrangement that followed her gestural motions until her departure from the stage. Similarly, another example is found in Bar 1091, where the musical notation evokes the resonance of tolling bells, synchronising with the actor's physical movements.

[70] This is presented in the Appendix

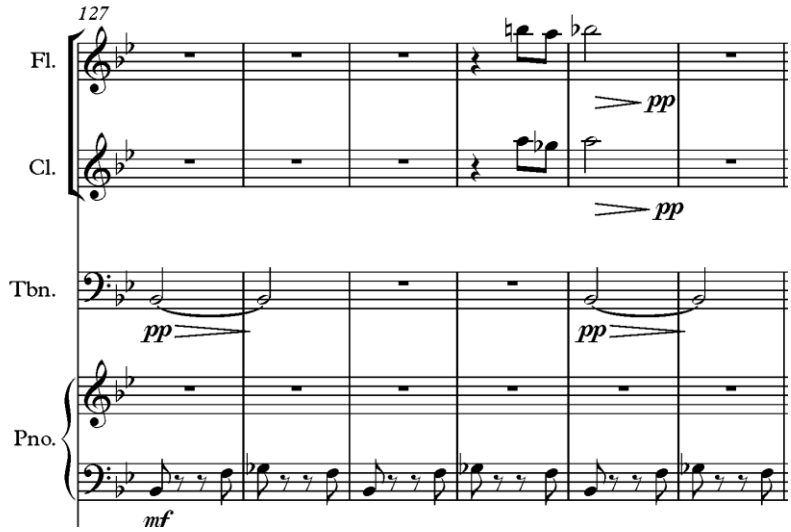

Figure 3.1. Extract from Nurse's introduction.

The director specified a preference for the vocal elements to primarily consist of non-linguistic sounds, devoid of specific meaning, while also including a limited selection of Greek words. In rehearsals, I collaborated with the chorus performers, and we agreed to minimise vocal repetition by substituting some repeated phrases with instrumental sections.

Despite the original intention for percussion to drive many scenes, the absence of a percussionist led to the choice of removing percussion/drums from the score entirely and revising certain parts of the composition. As a result, the piano took on the role of the rhythmic foundation and became the driving force for the scenes where drums would have played a prominent role. For example, in Scene 3.2 the death of the children (Figure 3.2) was originally intended to be driven by a drum beat but was rewritten for piano to provide a solid minim beat instead.

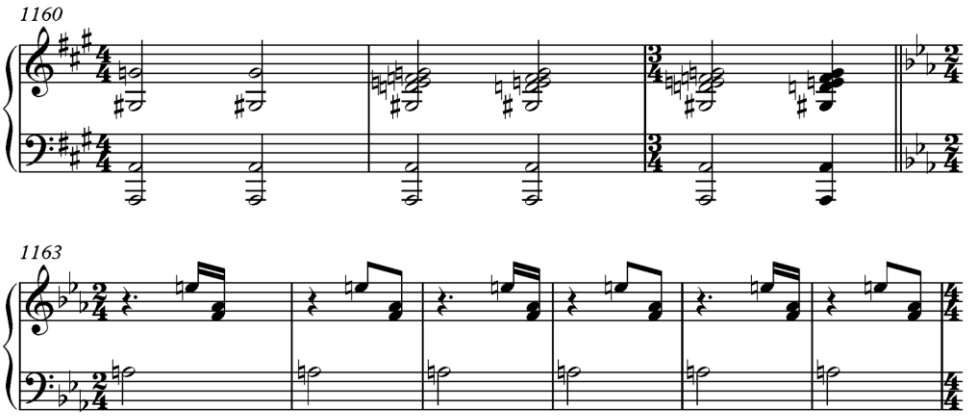

Figure 3.2 Extract from scene 3.2 (Death of the children).

Much of the movement on stage required a pulse and although at times irregular time signatures were used, the piano provided this rhythmic support.

Due to the decreased ensemble size, a number of sections required a re-write. For instance, in the segment at bar 205, a denser and more sombre but energetic texture was originally imagined, highlighting the vibraphone, bass guitar, and french horn. However, given the reduced ensemble, the challenge arose in creating a vibrant and dark texture that still remained within the performers' capabilities.

In retrospect, elements of the score showcase the influence of my jazz background, particularly evident in the chord extensions and harmonic ambiguity of the melodic line. Additionally, the inclusion of more extensive piano chords, such as those employed in the Golden Fleece section and the final duet, bear subconscious traces of my experience of listening to works by Messiaen, particularly the *Turangalîla-Symphonie*. For instance, The Golden Fleece (Figure 3.3) exemplifies the use of discordant voicings and incorporates melodic fragments that intentionally go against the established harmony.

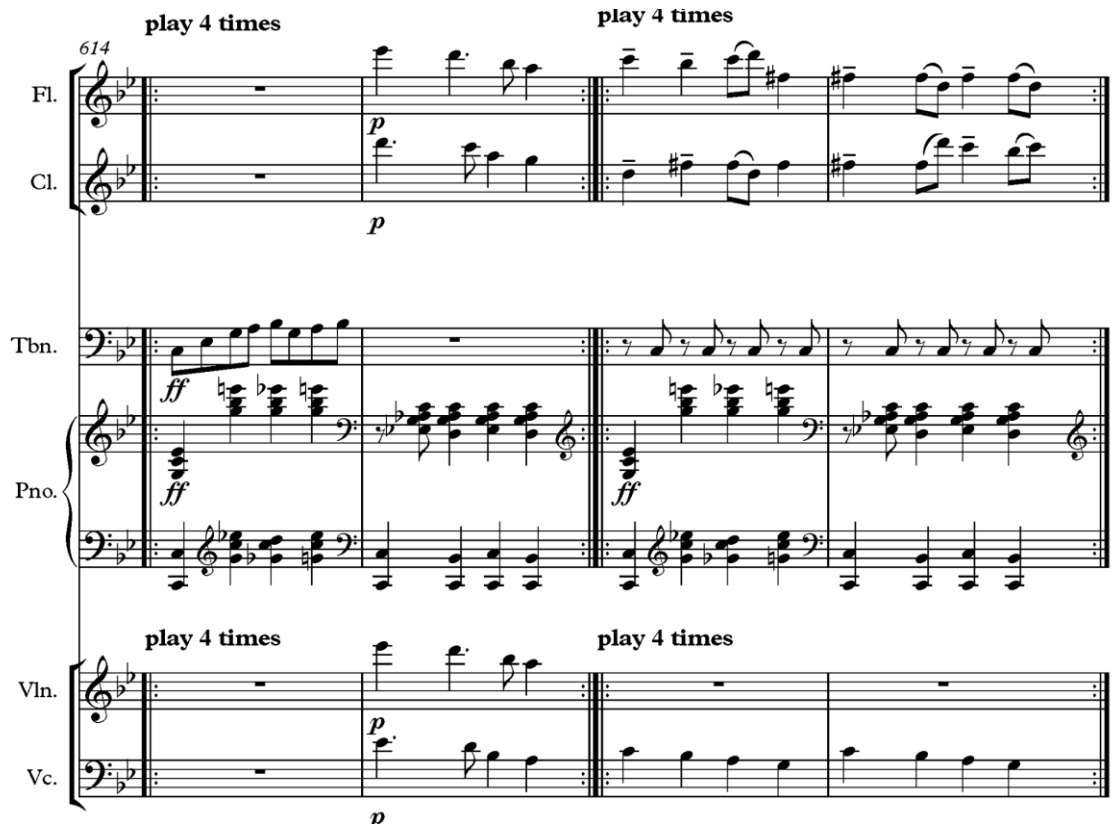

Figure 3.3 Extract from *The Golden Fleece*

While it is true that certain portions of the score veered away from the initial suggestions and requests made by the director, I consulted consistently with him throughout the entirety of the process.

3.5. Challenges

The initial task of composing for an ensemble of experienced music readers and performers evolved into a multifaceted process marked by complexities. There were various types of challenges within the project, encompassing aspects such as interpersonal challenges, logistical problems, linguistic and vocal obstacles, music reading and improvisation inexperience. Therefore it was necessary to address the scoring process with regard to the musicians' reading and playing proficiency, the integration of language within the text and the incorporation of improvisation techniques

3.5.1 Logistical issues

As noted above, numerous adjustments and modifications were necessitated within the score owing to the fluctuating commitment of the ensemble. Given that this project was voluntary and some performers found the music challenging, I was concerned about the continuing commitment shown by some members. To address this issue, I implemented a person-centred/relational approach, where dedicated time was allocated to engage in individual conversations with each musician, to establish a trusting working relationship. Conversations aimed to identify and resolve any issues or obstacles they faced, and to provide an honest assessment of their feelings about what they were being presented with. Frustratingly, by the time these individual meetings were conducted, a portion of the original ensemble had already departed. By opening lines of direct and honest communication, I was able to maintain the focus and interest of the remaining musicians. Following these conversations, it was decided that certain passages needed rewriting. Before proceeding with this task, it was deemed useful to organise workshops to assess the current level of comfort with rhythms and note reading. This step aimed to avoid rewriting something that might prove too challenging once again.

3.5.2 - Skills challenges

Numerous musicians encountered difficulties in rhythm reading, particularly when playing syncopated#, non-unison textures at rapid tempi. In response, I provided two 30-minute rhythm workshops, focusing on both clapping and creating unconventional rhythms. We explored Reich's *Clapping Music* (1972), which served as a basic introduction to the minimalist style. Initially, we

clapped through the duet rhythms at a slow pace before splitting into two groups to perform different parts. The exercises not only provided a profitable experience for the group, many of whom had never been exposed to these concepts, but also allowed me to identify the stronger readers within the group.

From a person-centred perspective, Cockey's[71] observation of fortunate or unfortunate circumstances in the musician's journey was a driving factor behind ensuring that none of the participants felt intimidated or frightened by the music presented to them and wanted to continue pushing themselves within their stretch zone. The sessions proved beneficial in multiple ways. Firstly, they helped the musicians gain a greater sense of confidence when it came to reading rhythms. Additionally, these sessions provided valuable insight into the musicians' skill levels, enabling the composition of music which would help the musicians to remain in the ZPD. As a result of these workshops, sections of the score were rewritten to exclusively include more repetitive semiquaver rhythms. Although these rhythms still posed a challenge for some musicians, due to their speed and irregularity, they became much more manageable. The workshops also delved into concepts such as duplets and triplets, which allowed us to retain certain passages in the score that incorporated these rhythms.

3.5.3 - Language and choral challenges

The libretto and sung words were, with the exception of the interviews with Callas, delivered in Greek. In order to navigate this unfamiliar language, we relied on translation tools to convert words and phrases. To ensure the accuracy of the translations, I sought the assistance of a native Greek speaker who reviewed and verified the translations. Some words needed to be presented phonetically on the score to aid ease of performance and speed of learning. It became evident that the soprano singer possessed the most experience and proficiency among the three chorus performers and, as a result, some sections were rearranged, with the soprano taking the lead to handle the more complex parts. Additionally, numerous parts were sung in unison, leveraging the soprano's skill to instil confidence in the alto singers. Consequently, some sections were adjusted to produce a unison rhythm. As some sections were acapella the Soprano was instrumental in maintaining pitch security.

3.5.4 Improvisation

[71] Linda Cockey, "Body, Mind, Spirit: Being at one with your instrument" *American Music Teacher* 57, no 6 (2008): 42-44.

Having watched rehearsal footage of the scenes requiring an improvised underscore (1.4 Callas in conversation, 2.3 Callas in conversation, 3.1 The painting) I was apprehensive that a purely improvised approach was appropriate or the best method of support, particularly as some musicians had expressed anxiety regarding this. However, as this was clearly a part of the directorial vision for these scenes, and having previously agreed to provide improvisation workshops with the musicians, I provided two further workshops for the conductor and musicians.

The workshops explored rhythmic and basic blues improvisation using simple rhythmic and one note responses to begin, leading to a group 'conversation'. Titles were assigned to the conversations, such as "angry phone call" or "morning alarm on a winter's day," and a musical dialogue, intentionally avoiding a constant rhythm, was improvised to effectively convey the emotion and atmosphere associated with each title. The musicians were encouraged to draw from their own recent conversations, considering their phrasing, pauses, speech patterns, and articulation used.

The musical director was given separate instruction on techniques for constructing a soundscape through sculpting the music via gesture and bodily movement. Engaging in group discussions about the emotional tone of the improvised scenes supported a deeper comprehension of the specific mood that the music needed to convey. A worksheet based on the conversations in the first workshop was written prior to the second workshop to demonstrate the chosen notes for improvisation. The Greeks identified three primary scales in their music, one of which was the Dorian scale.[72] Therefore the Dorian scale formed the basis of the improvisation for scenes 1.4 and 3.1. After some practical experimentation using the worksheet, we watched video clips of rehearsals of scenes 1.4 and 3.1 and implemented some trial improvisations, noting where the dynamic could rise or the delivery of fragmented notes could follow the narrative of the conversation and serve as aggressive or soothing. The successful outcomes of the workshops meant the improvised sections could be incorporated into the score.

[72] Barry Phillips, "Greek Music," *The Music Quaterly,* 5, No. 4 (1919): 580

3.5.5 Process vs. outcome.

Once again, I found myself grappling with the tension between process and creative outcome when making musical choices. There were moments in the composition where I envisioned more intricate and complex music, but I had to be realistic and consider the abilities of the ensemble, for instance Bars 56-58 (Figure 3.5). These were originally more complex and included fragmented and less repetitive rhythms. After undergoing numerous revisions, I took great care to ensure that the timing of the piece was both manageable for the instrumentalists and maintained auditory appeal, while also staying close to the envisioned sound.

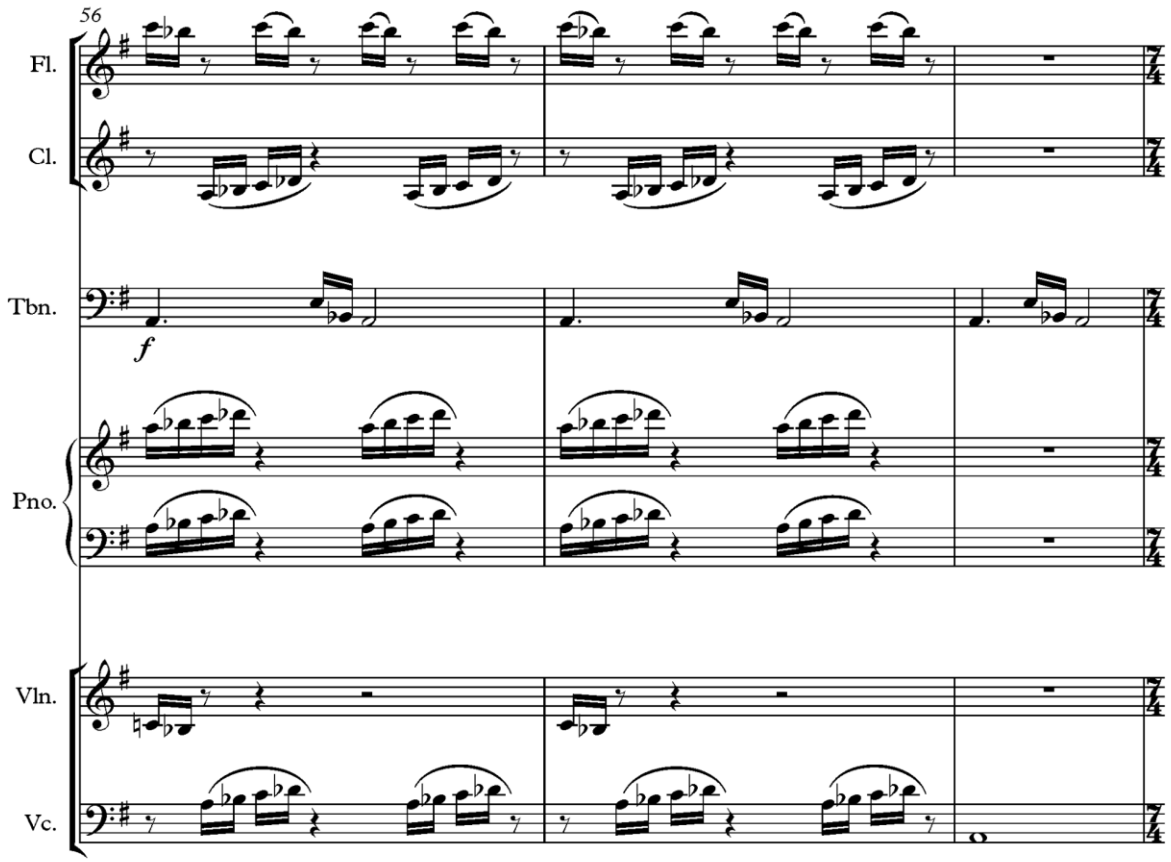

Figure 3.4 Extract from Bars 56-58

In the week approaching the premier, the original pianist left the ensemble due to a personal situation. The new pianist was highly skilled and comfortable with reading complex music which allowed me to rewrite section 2.2, the Golden Fleece (see again Figure 3.3 above) with a more intricate piano part using extended, rapidly shifting chords that I had envisioned in other sections but couldn't write originally due to the limitations of the previous pianist. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to

modify any other piano parts (which, indeed, may have confused the already rehearsed musicians); however, I was pleased with the final result.

3.5.6 Relational challenges.

Several challenges hinged on relationships and verbal transactions between key participants; notably, an interpersonal dispute occurred between the MD and an older mentor assigned to them as part of the residency provision. As a result of this dispute, the MD threatened to resign from his role. In and of itself this is not a usual situation, indeed it is fair to note that these kinds of relational dynamics can be played out in any working environment. It is, however, indicative of how affecting interpersonal dynamics can result in rupture for individuals and, in some instances, create challenges for productions or projects. In this specific situation, the MD had forged valuable, cooperative relationships with the ensemble and the improvisation scenes benefited from his unique input. In an attempt to address the conflict, I utilised a technique that I had previously used in schools and colleges, which involved examining both the "pre-conflict" and "actual conflict" contexts[73]. This approach helps identify potential signs or indicators before a conflict arises and informs the resolution process. However, in this specific instance, there were no clear pre-conflict indicators to consider, except for the differences in perception between the two individuals. Was this a dispute or a conflict? It became evident that there was a significant imbalance in how they acknowledged each other's skills and achievements, with little recognition for one another's reputation. To address this, I privately asked both individuals to verbalise a set of skills that they found admirable and impressive about the other, considering their respective age and experience. This exercise helped shift their perspectives slightly and fostered a new understanding of each other. Although their working relationship never became completely comfortable, there was noticeable improvement, and a more functional dynamic was established. They collaborated closely in the remaining rehearsals, successfully averting any breakdown in the relationship. This led to the establishment of a more open and empathetic communication.

[73] Hill, Barbara J. “An Analysis of Conflict Resolution Techniques: From Problem-Solving Workshops to Theory.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 26, no. 1 (1982): 109–38. http://www.jstor.org/stable/173673.

3.6.1 Feedback

The culminating performances of the opera garnered favourable verbal responses from the audience. However, as no press pack had been compiled, reviews from critics were limited. On a personal level, I was content with the reviews[74] which generally expressed a favourable inclination towards the musical score and recognised some of the employed musical styles and techniques.

The verbal feedback received from the cast was positive, particularly as they expressed that the musical component had successfully pushed their boundaries and facilitated growth in their abilities and skills. The musicians and MD were equally positive. The incorporation of improvisation during individual sessions proved to be enjoyable for all participants, and they expressed that the time spent in these sessions facilitated their development in reading and overall musical competency. Additionally, they felt the experience of being heard, valued, and respected within a non-judgmental environment had fostered their growth.

3.6.2 Self-evaluation and reflection

Overall, I feel that the score gradually transformed into a cohesive piece that integrated the director's vision with my own artistic influences and subtle touches. I was extremely pleased with how the Golden Fleece (scene 2.2) turned out. The revised piano part effectively conveyed the desired harmony and intensity that I had envisioned for much of the piece. On reflection, although there could have been more variation within the repeated sections of the score, considering the speed at which the rewrites were done, I was satisfied with the overall musical outcome. Long sections like 2.4 (the poisoned ropes) could have been enhanced with greater rhythmic development and unpredictability. However, achieving this would have necessitated more rehearsal time with both musicians (to feel comfortable reading the music) and actors (to anticipate metre changes). Texture and dynamics throughout could have been more widely explored, taking the dynamic to greater extremes. Utilising extended techniques for the instrumentalists could have added depth and added sonic interest to the scoring, but it became clear once I had met the musicians that this aspect of development would not

[74] https://www.thereviewshub.com/medea-maria-theatre-royal-york/ https://playstosee.com/medea-maria/ https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/leisure/16109956.medea-callass-stories-passion-tragedy-overlap-alexander-kaniewskis-new-play

align with the project's timeframe. In future projects this is certainly an area of exploration should the right conditions allow.

Considering the constraints, I find the score satisfying, and implementing any alterations would have demanded more time beyond my availability, especially since I chose to extend myself to working with musicians and actors separately. Through this experience, my belief and confidence in utilising a nuanced and person-centred approach to working with performers was further and greatly strengthened. As I spent time getting to know the musicians on a personal level, I maintained a clear awareness of each individual's abilities. I composed music that ensured they were consistently working within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Through verbal feedback, I learned that while the musicians felt challenged, they also felt supported, valued, and heard. They consistently expressed that their skills were improving. This approach aligns with the 'esteem' layer of the pyramid, as prioritizing their confidence and well-being fostered a stronger sense of self-esteem throughout the process. Despite the time-consuming nature of the rewriting process, the recognition and praise received for the outcome, as well as witnessing the growth and accomplishments of the musicians, validated the effectiveness of my approach.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, through engaging in this project, I was able to conclusively determine what I had previously experienced in the Magic Paintbrush project; the vital role that developing strong, congruent and empathetic relationships from the outset plays not only in the successful outcome of a performance but, more importantly to me (from a humanistic perspective), in the development of greater levels of self-worth and validation. Fostered with positive and supportive verbal transactions the individual can move towards a greater sense of safety, relational depth and a deeper connection to their creativity. This points back to Paul's observation that our drive to connect motivates us which in turn strengthens our sense of belonging and develops an improved sense of self. Striving to meet the self-esteem component of Maslow's hierarchy through relational connection and a person-centred approach, most musicians were able to operate within their Zone of Proximal Development and progress towards self-actualisation, all while relishing their involvement in a musical team that yielded positive results.

Chapter 4 -The Time Paradox house

Script:

Madden_201043241_Time_Paradox_Script.pdf

Performance:

Madden_201043241_Time_Paradox_Audio.wav

4.1 Introduction

The Time Paradox House began as a collaboration involving 24 young people attending the Inyerface Arts community group in Sheffield[75]. The original intention was to write a musical theatre piece from scratch through workshops with the participants, with a goal of performing the finished production at the Fox Valley Music Festival in Sheffield. However, as we progressed, the project took an unexpected turn due to a number of external pressures and events, resulting in a change of the collaborating partnership, and the musical script evolving into an adapted radio play performed by six primary school children.[76]

This chapter outlines the journey of creating our final piece as it shifted from a visually oriented musical to an auditory experience in this revised form. The chapter also details the concept of relinquishing creative control to empower children with autonomy and the freedom to create their own script. I also detail the importance of 'play' to foster imagination and the promotion of creative freedom, peer interaction and collaboration after COVID-19 lockdowns. I document the process of building personal connections with neurodiverse children, incorporating natural sound and sound effects to aid auditory comprehension, integrating basic mobile technology such as iPads in educational settings, and fostering higher levels of ambition and aspiration among primary school students. I take a deeper look into the experience and challenges of the ADHD child when asked to

[75] A constituted voluntary community group providing affordable tuition and performance opportunities to young people in the area.

[76] Lacewood primary school – Bolton on Dearne.

undertake quiet vocal recordings whilst in a visually stimulating setting, and the unconditional positive regard employed to steer them towards self-actualisation.

4.2 Participants and Timeline.

In the beginning stages of the project with the Sheffield group, I served as a workshop leader, collaborator with the participants and another workshop leader who specialised in drama, and composer. The curation and administration aspect was managed by the leaders of Inyerface Arts (supported by volunteers), with my contribution focused on the creative elements of the project. The administrator was confident in obtaining funding of a similar amount to *The Magic Paintbrush* and gave assurance that actors and musicians would be available to perform the final product.

The planning process commenced in March 2021. Although the original plan was to begin earlier, the second and third COVID-19 lockdowns resulted in significant uncertainty. It was crucial to take into account the safety of our participants, particularly those identified as being at increased medical risk. Consequently, determining the appropriate time to launch the project without excluding these individuals required careful and necessary considerations.

In addition, there was a significant event that necessitated an empathetic approach towards planning and continuity. Sadly, during the second lockdown of COVID-19, we experienced the sudden untimely and unexpected loss of one of the Inyerface administrators, and main project leaders. He played a pivotal role in driving the project forward and was deeply committed to fostering the arts within communities. Together with his wife, he had been instrumental in launching the project. As a friend, I understood the importance of upholding her husband's legacy and offering a compassionate and enfranchised form of support.[77] This transformed the project into something even more personal, serving as a tribute to his memory.

[77] Emma Logan, Jennifer Thornton and Lauren Breen, "What determines supportive behaviours following bereavement? A systematic review and call to action", *Death Studies* 42, no. 2 (2018): 104

Our initial virtual meeting took place in March 2021, followed by a face-to-face meeting the following month. I had obtained a small amount of funding from Creative Minds[78], and we were able to use this to kickstart our summer workshops. Table 4.1 shows the planned timeline of activity.

March 2021	**Initial planning meeting (online)**	
July – August 2021	First workshops (4)	Exploring /analysing script. Characterisation and sketching potential plot
September 2021	Drama and writing workshops	Writing the script, exploring dramatic techniques and improvisation
Jan 2022- Sept 2022	Script writing workshops	Practical sessions developing the script via practical sessions and converting to script
April 2022-Sept 2022	Script writing / music workshops	Script finalised; lyrics created / musicians incorporated.
Sept 2022- Dec 2022	Casting and Rehearsals	Parts allocated and script rehearsal inc. 2 dress rehearsals with musicians.
16th December	Final performance	Final performance

Table 4.1 Planned timeline for the project

The initial group of participants attending the first workshop in July comprised 24 young individuals aged 11-17, 8 male and 16 female. Some participants possessed background experience in the performing arts, while others were in the early stages of exploring music and drama. Within the group, four participants had additional needs, one with complex needs.

Due to various factors, such as fluctuating COVID-19 restrictions, illnesses of the administrator and drama specialist, and the delayed effects of the bereavement mentioned previously, a significant number of scheduled rehearsals were cancelled or rescheduled. As a result, by January 2023 momentum for the live performance of the piece was lost, and the project was all but abandoned.

[78] Creative minds are a charity hosted by South West Partnership NHS foundation trust - they provide funding to groups and projects using arts based practice in the community.

However, a small core group of participants involved in the initial stage of the project were committed to finishing the writing of the script. This dedicated group remained hopeful that the finished script would come to life in some form. I was also determined that the work and vision of the young people in creating this unusual and humorous story would not be lost, and therefore the script was offered to Lacewood Primary School as a performance opportunity, where the project resumed in April 2023. Table 4.2 details the new compact timeline created around school holidays and outside trips. Six pupils from Year five were chosen to initiate the launch of the project, (the selection process of the children is detailed in the adapting the script section).

1. Weds 26/04/2023	Revise script for audio, produce a list of sound effects, explore characterisation.
2. Thurs 4/04/2023	Rap writing and script rehearsal – AM Song writing workshop with Maria Roberts - produce a character song PM
3. Thurs 11/04/2023	Sound effects recordings - Full day
4. Thurs 18/04/2023	Script recording - half day (PM)
5. Thurs 27/04/2023	Sound effects recordings and editing foley (All Day)
6. Thurs 18/05/2023	Soundscaping - ¾ day (Am and 1 hour PM)
7. Thurs 8/06/2023	Script recording - Full day
8. Weds 14/06/2023	Script and Gerald song recording - Full day
9. Weds 12/07/2023	Re-records - half day

Table 4.2 - Radio Play - workshop plans.

Creative Minds required the allocated funding to be used by the end of July 2023 and it was agreed with the school that all recording would be completed by the end of the summer term.

4.2.1 Including extra participants.

During the new timescale as outlined in table 4.2, the list of participants expanded naturally within the given timeframe. The chance to incorporate additional contributors was embraced and brought an added layer of depth and collaboration to the final product.

I enlisted the support of four musical theatre students from York St John University to voice additional adult parts. During an unrelated workshop where I discussed the story and process of The *Time Paradox House*, these particular students expressed their desire to participate. In response, I conducted two additional workshops where they recorded the voices of extra supporting characters and composed a song for one of the main protagonists (indicated on the submitted script).

In another initially unrelated workshop with year eight students from Bradfield School in Sheffield, we read parts of the script to encourage the concept of composing soundscapes to represent mood and atmosphere. The students were enthusiastic about incorporating short snippets of non-notated compositions to support the storyline. Consequently, I organised two extra sessions where we read the script and assigned scenes for composing these small snippets to be included in the final recording (indicated on the submitted script).

Given the limited time available in the primary school, I sought assistance from Horizon Community College's year 10 and 11 GCSE students to collaborate on the creation of some of the short soundscapes. In return, they were offered a workshop focussing on sound design and an exploration of some functions in GarageBand and Logic software programs. After carefully reviewing the script together, we discussed the siren song and the use of a leitmotif. The process of developing this is detailed in 4.4.3, but this was a pivotal moment in marking the direction and development of the soundscapes and musical support of the character ‘Thomasina’.

It is the result of this activity that drove the radio play towards completion and provided motivation to schedule the tight yet manageable timescale given above. The enthusiasm displayed by all participants, including those who joined the process later on, combined with the chance to integrate and explore various elements from my customised framework introduced in Chapter One were instrumental in completing and submitting the radio play for the portfolio.

4.3 The Processes and Ethos

4.3.1 Creating the Narrative.

As workshops with Inyerface Arts began, we were emerging from Covid-19 lockdowns and enforced isolation, I felt it beneficial to give the children the space to create freely and interact in a playful and unencumbered manner with their peers, whilst in the safety of adult supervision in the more structured parts of the workshops. As Whittaker states 'Children will achieve dopamine release through play…. therefore positive, playful and happy times with adults is something that will have a significant impact on developing self-esteem and confidence.'[79] This was particularly pertinent as research was emerging on the impact of Covid-19 and 'loneliness among children and young people as the peer interaction which occurs through play decreases.'[80] Taking into consideration these newly emerging research findings, play and safety became even more focused core elements of the planning process.

In total, four workshops took place through August 2021, which were structured to fuel participants' enthusiasm for crafting their own narrative and script. The workshops were split into two sections. Morning sessions included various activities to stimulate creativity and play, for example dynamic games centred around improvisation scenarios and the use of picture-based flashcards to inspire improvised narrative and new storylines. The analysis of existing musicals, exploring their musical content and narrative arcs was an important factor of beginning to understand story structure and

[79] Dave Whittaker, *the Kindness principle* (Wales: Independent thinking press, 2021), 65

[80] Theresa Casey & John H. McKendrick, "Playing through crisis: lessons from COVID-19 on play as a fundamental right of the child," *The International Journal of Human Rights*, (2022) 27:9-10, 1369-1388, accessed Nov 6,2023, DOI: 10.1080/13642987.2022.2057962

character. During afternoon sessions participants were encouraged to initiate discussions and generate ideas within small groups, ultimately aiming to identify a potential theme for our upcoming musical project.

It was a challenge resisting the urge to influence or steer the storyline towards what I personally deemed as reasonable or suitable. In his book *Do Your Own Thing* [81] Richard Phoenix explores what can happen when participants are given the freedom to 'get on with things and not worry about where it might lead', and I was keen to investigate this philosophy during the project. Therefore, the participants were encouraged to unleash their imaginations and explore straightforward or unconventional ideas. The result was the creation of fantastical scenarios set in diverse locations and at various points in time. During the afternoon sharing session, when the groups presented their story ideas to each other, there was unanimous agreement on an intriguing concept - an almost haunted house that transcends different eras. The enthusiasm for this idea was palpable among all the participants. The beginning of the plot is reminiscent of Authur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953) with a mother and daughter ostracised by the community and accused of being witches due their experimentation with science and farming. In the first scene, the Queen commits an act of murder, killing Tabitha, the mother. She then appoints Tabitha's daughter, Thomasina, as a servant. At the end of the opening scene, Thomasina turns the handle of a machine, resulting in a sudden shift to the present day. From this point on, a comedic adventure unfolds as an uncle, his nephew, his niece, and two bumbling policemen enter Thomasina's time paradox house. Their objective is to rescue her by breaking a curse that was placed upon her when she turned the handle of the machine. As they navigate through the house, they encounter rooms that are trapped in different eras. To free Thomasina (and themselves) from the house and escape eternal entrapment, they must solve a challenge or riddle in each room they encounter.

By granting the young participants greater creative autonomy, *The Time Paradox House* offers a fresh and innovative narrative that reflects the diverse ideas and visions of the individuals involved in its creation.

4.3.2 - Adapting the script to Audio only

[81] Richard Phoenix, *Do your own thing* (England: Rough Trade, 2023), 9.

In what follows I explore the challenges faced in producing a purely audio product in a bustling school premises, delve into the complexities of collaborating with children who have ADHD and other unique needs, and highlight the prioritisation of the students' well-being, and the enjoyment of the creative process, over the perfection of the final product. I also note some of the opportunities which were presented for raising aspiration and awareness of roles in an arts-based career.

At this point where the script was finished by the remaining five member of Inyerface arts, I was still primarily considering producing this as a theatrical performance. At this point, I was working with another group of young people exploring the experience of living in and attending school in the Dearne area.[82] The transfer of the project to a school located in the Dearne turned out to be an ideal opportunity to take into account the trauma hotspots of the area (presented in Chapter 1) and subtly explore aspiration and civic identity. In reflecting on Kathleen Turner's words in Chapter 1, and her assertion that communities should not be characterised by limiting language of disadvantage, I was aware that this has long been the case for schools in the Dearne. Working in a small group setting over a short period of time enabled me to explore aspiration and engender creative skills which may have previously been perceived as irrelevant or non-existent in the progression towards adulthood.

At the time of my first visit to the school, it hadn't yet been determined how the script would be adapted for the school, but it felt essential to begin the process by conducting a script read through with six children. This would allow me to gauge reaction to the story and help to guide creative decisions moving forward. Six children from Year 5 were selected to read through the script who, if they enjoyed the process and wanted to contribute, could continue working on the project to its completion. The teacher was instructed that the selection process should not be based on academic achievement or prior performance experience. Instead, the focus should be on choosing pupils who could benefit from focused small-group time and an opportunity to explore creative collaboration. Ability was not an important factor, and the teacher informed me that these particular six children had been chosen because they struggled to maintain focus in class for extended periods of time, and a practical project may be an alternative approach to encourage focussed reading and verbal

[82] I was providing workshops for young leaders who were part of the 'authoring our own stories' project, a project where young people from diverse backgrounds across England have developed research projects to explore their peers' perception of civic identity and how this research can improve accessibility to youth services. The Barnsley project explored the impact of growing up in ex-mining areas and 'where it's rough' (title of project quoted from one of the young people).

communication. In the initial session it became apparent that performing this script as a visual production would pose many considerable challenges. With a cast of six actors and a significant amount of dialogue, there was concern that the young age group, and their potential extra needs, might have difficulty learning their lines. Additionally, creating even basic stage props would require time and resources that we lacked. However, the impact of the script on the school children was instantly clear and they expressed a strong desire to perform it in some capacity. We explored the option of selecting one scene, rehearsing it extensively, and incorporating music, however there was not a particular scene that stood out as better or equally balanced in dialogue than the rest, and the children were enthusiastic about presenting the entire script.

As an aside, by this time I was teaching on the sound and perception module of the BA in Music Production at Teesside University, which included the exploration of Hildeguard Westerkamp's philosophy of acoustic awareness and environmental consciousness via her *Kits Beach Soundwalk* (1989). As a class we had also explored John Cage's *4'33* (1952), *Child of tree* (1975) and *Ryoanji* (1983), exploring the ambient sounds which occur within the performance space and amplifying sounds made by nature to create a sonic experience.

Inspired by these concepts, I imagined removing the visual element of a script and focusing solely on the auditory aspect. This would allow the pupils to perform the entire script without needing to memorise lines. It would also encourage them to explore vocal expression, experiment with creating foley and sounds as music, and time permitting, compose accompanying soundscapes using natural sounds with the basic apps at their disposal (such as GarageBand). It was my aim to provide the students with an opportunity to think about, and experience, approaching sound in an innovative and completely new way. By encouraging new perspectives on what constitutes music and how it can be created, I hoped that they may develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for the power and potential of sound as a creative medium.

The pupils were enthusiastic about adapting the script to audio and workshops were planned around this new approach (as stated on Table 4.2 above). In workshop 1 we analysed the script and examined each scene, discussing and compiling a comprehensive list of potential sound effects that could enhance the overall audio experience (Table 4.3). We also talked through what would need to change in the script now there were no visual clues. How could sounds and voice replace something that the audience would originally have been able to see? This was a highly engaging session with the pupils

showing the same focus as during the initial read through. Additionally, we identified the overarching mood of each scene discussing potential opportunities for incorporating music into the production. Towards the end of the session, students were encouraged to reflect on their assigned characters and develop a deeper understanding of the character's personalities, as depicted in the script.

Scene	Dialogue / placement / effect	Resource / zoom recorder
1	***Tabitha and her daughter Thomasina are feeding chickens and cooking in a cauldron attached to a wooden machine.*** Chickens, wooden machinery noise. Bubbling?	Chicken: sound library Machinery: **Zoom 3,** playground apparatus
1	***What does this bit do?*** Sounds of a primitive machine	**Zoom 3**: playground shed lock.
1	***Queen Elizabeth and guards enter -*** *Marching sounds - 'Halt'*	**Zoom 1**: Marching and walking on gravel - voice.
1	***Background sounds & 'Now Thomasina turn the handle'*** Sounds of experiments, creaking machines	**Zoom 2**: Shed door and latch
1	***Queen: Off with her head -*** Head chopped off	Sound library
1	***Sky darkens and there is a flash of thunder -***Thunder and cackling laughter	Zoom 4 - metal sheets and sound library.
2	***'Come on you two, just a bit further and I promise we'll go to the cafe'*** Walking and birdsong	Zoom 3 - walking on gravel, birds.
3	***Door opening,*** Classroom door	From class file
3	***Kissing and puking***	Sound library and voice
4	***Clatter and shouting and the sound of Bunden dragging his feet, blowing his nose loudly etc***	Sound library and Zoom 4
4	***Knocks on the door*** ***Spooky music / soundscape -*** Knocking on classroom door	Zoom 2 - knocking Compose music on GarageBand
4	***4 loud kisses***	Sound library

5	***Sound of fire - lute player***	Zoom 1: rustling of grass! Original guitar piece
5	***Walks forward and touches the Plague doctor's beak***	Zoom 2: Wooden sounds from shed
6	***Dinner party*** sounds and drops of wine. ***Side effects of the grape pox***	Zoom 3: school dining room Water pouring Sound library
7	***Yorkshire music,*** sounds of cups and tea being poured, slurping noises	Zoom 4: slurping Sound library
8	***cowboy room -*** introductory music, cowboy inspired	Lacewood pupil whistling, bell tolling
final	House fading and decaying	Zoom recorder 3, scraping with echo and reverb GarageBand, Siren song with effects.

Table 4.3 Sound effects requirements.

4.4 Workshops.

The workshops were focussed on three specific areas: Songwriting, recording sound effects and preparing / recording the script.

4.4.1 Songwriting workshops.

There were three songs included in the recording, utilising the process detailed in this section. The songwriter who ran the workshop in week 2 is a professional musician/psychotherapist who specialises in working with young people. The workshop provided a safe and supportive environment for the students to explore their characters' emotions and motivations in meaningful and insightful ways. Consequently, during the workshop, we successfully crafted the song *This is Me* specifically for Scene 4. While the resulting lyrics may appear to be concise and simplistic descriptions of each character (only one line per character), the process of writing the song significantly deepened our understanding of the characters. Moreover, it prompted valuable discussions centred around issues that the students themselves or their peers might face in their own lives. The workshop proved

instrumental in helping the students establish a deeper understanding of the emotions and relationships of their respective characters. While the script itself contained light-hearted and humorous elements, there were opportunities for more in-depth discussions around ethical issues. For instance, we delved into the feelings of Tabatha and Thomasina in the opening scene when they were ostracised and rejected by society. We also explored how PC Butt might react to Inspector Bunden's incessant teasing and mockery. Furthermore, we contemplated Thomaina's emotions as she endured years of confinement to the house, devoid of any hope for escape until Gerald's arrival. Throughout the workshop, we actively explored words such as "dark" and "sad," aiming to assign a tangible physical sensation to these concepts. Our intention was to uncover lyrics that delved beyond superficial descriptions, enabling us to capture the profound essence of the characters' experiences.

By way of contrast, and once more aiming to involve some aspects of play and light-heartedness into the process, the pupils were encouraged to collaboratively write some lyrics to describe what side effects might be experienced by the character of PC Butt when he drinks wine, due to his grape allergy. "The Grape Pox Rap" (Scene 6) was composed almost entirely by the pupils themselves. After I explained the concept of structure and incorporating rhyming elements, one student assumed a leadership role and quickly composed the majority of the lyrics within a span of 15 minutes. To accompany their rapped vocals, GarageBand was utilised to create a beat and bassline for the students to layer a vocal onto. A student who initially refused to take part in music sessions (see foley and sounds as music section) was instrumental in creating the backing track.

The third song was written by York St John University students. I had initially just invited the students to participate in recording the dialogue for scene one, as the presence of more mature and varied voices was required. After reading the entire script, the students expressed interest in further involvement and asked if they could contribute to other aspects of the production. Consequently, an additional workshop was arranged in June, where we collaboratively composed Gerald's Song in Scene 8. Together, we crafted lyrics, devised a chord sequence, and developed a melody, which was subsequently recorded for "Gerald" to learn and perform. Lacewood pupils then produced the instrumental backing track and recorded vocals using GarageBand for both elements.

4.4.2 Sound effects workshops.

Sound Effect workshops were carried out with Lacewood School students. An added benefit of pivoting the project's direction towards a radio play was the opportunity to explore the integration of technology in the classroom, specifically leveraging school Apple iPads and iMacs with GarageBand. The recordings for this project were created using user-friendly and readily available hardware and programs, including the iPad with either its internal microphone or Zealsound USB condenser microphone (decision based on the environment), the Zoom H4 handheld recorder with a basic condenser microphone, and digital audio workstations (DAWs) such as GarageBand (primarily), Logic, and Ableton. While the entire project could have been effectively managed using GarageBand and a microphone, access to additional expertise and equipment allowed students to explore sound design in greater depth and discuss the many facets involved in creating an effective auditory experience for the listener, intently listening to natural environments and sound. Engaging in practical activities by starting with a simple sound effect recorded on an iPad or Zoom recording device, and then enhancing it with effects and EQ adjustments, shifted the student's mindset from settling for a satisfactory result to striving for excellence by exploring new ways to make the product even better. The evolution of a sound effect from acceptable to lifelike could require around thirty minutes per effect, offering students insights into setting higher goals, hence stretching out of their comfort zone just a little further, creating something even more realistic than they could have imagined. Some pupils stated that they had already 'messed around with' GarageBand on the school iPads, but noted that they didn't really know how to use it and were keen to learn about the program.

In the Sound effects workshops it was explained to the pupils that sound effects would also play a crucial role in capturing the ambiance, setting, and actions depicted in the play. These particular workshops were offered to four additional pupils who were not involved in the script recording process. One pupil initially exhibited significant reluctance to participate in the workshop. Their teacher explained that the pupil had an 'unusual and intense reaction' whenever they were informed about taking part in a "music session". The pupil would adamantly refuse to participate and occasionally display dysregulated behaviour when pushed. During the introductory sound effects talk (which included a very brief description of some of the methods of Hildegard and Cage), the pupil expressed disbelief upon realising they were participating in a music project that did not involve traditional singing or playing instruments. They questioned, "So music can be just sounds and not singing or an instrument?" After providing reassurance that the session focused on exploring sounds for special effects, the pupil fully engaged and actively participated in the workshop (he consequently

asked to participate in any remaining workshops to observe the process and contributed to the vocals of *this is me* and the *grape pox rap*).

In the first workshop the pupils were introduced to a portable Zoom recording device and microphone and experimented in pairs with recording a simple sound effect - the frightening creak of a door opening (as in Scene 3). Fortuitously, the classroom door provided a grating squeak when opened. We explored different recording approaches, such as varying the speed of opening the door and finding the optimal microphone placement to capture the best sound. Once the sound effect was recorded, it was imported into Ableton. The students were given the opportunity to direct the workshop leader on which effects and pitch adjustments worked best for enhancing the sound of the door required by the script.

This approach was then embedded into the capture and manipulation of other sound effects. One student was taken aback to discover that capturing sounds and incorporating them into audio or visual productions could actually be a profession. This led to a brief but valuable discussion about the plethora of job opportunities available in the creative industries, which proved to be enlightening for all the students.

During the second sound effects workshop, and with the students already acquainted with the equipment and possibilities of the software, they were tasked with collecting specific sound effects from locations within the school interior and surrounding grounds as listed in Table 4.3. There followed a practical session where the workshop leader imported the sound effects into Pro Tools and the pupils guided him to utilise Plugins and EQ to create the sounds they preferred. Some sounds were realistic enough to be imported into GarageBand with only minimal alteration, others required more production manipulation. Not all zoom recordings made suitable sound effects, so the students were introduced to an online sound effects library [83] to search for sounds they had not been able to create. In some instances, there arose a need for music snippets to accompany scene introductions, which the students did not have the necessary skills or time to create. For example, in the introduction of the 'Roman room,' where the sound of a lute is heard. To optimise time management, the students conducted research on music from the given era, then with their guidance, the songwriting leader

[83] https://sound-effects.bbcrewind.co.uk/search

adapted and created a guitar-based composition that aligned with the appropriate style, using guitar instead of lute.

In the third sound effect workshop (workshop 6) we embarked on the creation of soundscapes by importing various sound effects (including zoom recordings, sound libraries and the sirens song played on flute and guitar) into GarageBand and manipulating parameters such as EQ and filters, alongside implementing effects such as flanger, phaser, and echo to create more unusual sounds and melodies.

4.4.3 The siren song (leitmotif).

The siren song (Figure 4.1) was an eight-bar homophonic melody which occurred regularly throughout the script. This short melody was the focus of a workshop with year 10 and 11 students at Horizon Community College. The students were provided with a vocal recording of the melody, which they were instructed to adapt and manipulate throughout the script. One student, a flautist, recorded an instrumental rendition of the melody, offering the class and alternative instrumental version to use. Furthermore, I created a piano harmony that, upon a student's suggestion, was reimagined as a harmonised guitar version of the motif. This guitar version was then used to open the play. The students used Plugins in GarageBand and Logic to experiment with the manipulation of the line (indicated on the script).

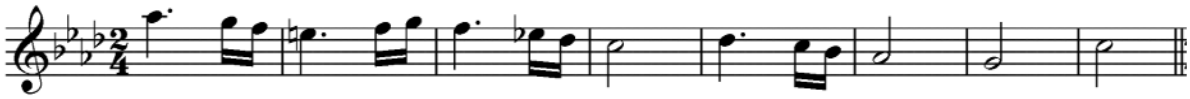

Figure 4.1 the Siren Song

4.4.4 Preparatory and recording workshops.

This aspect of the process proved to be the most challenging due to sound spillage caused by the busy location in the school where we recorded the script. Additionally, the pupils encountered difficulties in maintaining focus due to the visually stimulating and distracting nature of the environment of the small room. Therefore, much of the workshop process is included in the challenges section (4.5) below. However, it is important to note that these workshops held 'the child at the centre of the enterprise by being a member of a *responsible team'*[84] with teamwork and creating a mutually respectful

[84] Hywel Roberts,*Oops! Helping children learn accidentally*. (Carmarthen: Independent thinking press, 2021). 5

environment at the heart of our time together. Hywel Roberts' book *Oops! Helping Children Learn Accidentally* has served as great inspiration in workshop delivery with primary aged children, and his statement 'If we can help children…. achieve their potential by engaging them in meaningful activity, then they will shine'[85] has served as an underlying theme in my planning and communication efforts. It was important to empower the students to take ownership of their assigned characters, allowing them to fully embody the persona of the character and express themselves authentically during performances. Drawing inspiration from the pedagogy of Dorothy Heathcote and the 'mantle of the expert' approach, I embraced a delivery style where 'the traditional role of giver of information is relinquished in favour of becoming a member of the group and sharing in the group construction of knowledge.'[86] I emphasised to the pupils that while the script was predetermined, the characters were now theirs to understand and shape as their own. This aligns with Rogers' notion that we should not be perceived as the expert, but facilitators who create the conditions of safety to enable self-discovery and personal growth.

During the first read-through of the script, it became evident that one of the pupils faced challenges with reading, requiring additional support from a teaching assistant. Despite enjoying the process, she expressed doubts about her ability to fully participate in the project due to her slower reading pace. However, she demonstrated a strong desire to continue with the project and I reassured her that she would be an important part of the process, that we would find a way to ensure she felt comfortable and confident in her abilities. Together we re-read her parts, and where she felt the dialogue was too long or contained challenging words which may disrupt her vocal flow, we either re-wrote or reassigned the text. It was emphasised to her that conversations do not always occur at a rapid pace and that breathing space is beneficial and the sound engineer could edit the recording to cut out some of the gaps and hesitations in the reading if it was really noticeable. It was important for her self-esteem and confidence that she remained a key character in the story, and that she felt that she had some control over some of the script editing decisions.

[85] Ibid

[86] Dorothy Heathcote and Phyl Herbert, "A Drama of Learning: Mantle of the Expert," *Theory Into Practice* 24, no. 3 (1985): 173–80, accessed Sept 10, 2022, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1477037.

The challenges section below further documents the difficulties of recording in a busy environment, the struggles experienced by some of the neurodiverse pupils and the person-centred strategies employed to maintain engagement and a move towards positive self-regard.[87]

4.5 Challenges of the project

The challenges experienced in this project were often unexpected, requiring a quick and flexible response. The journey towards the final version of the radio play posed numerous and sometimes significant challenges, most notably the withdrawal of the original Sheffield participants during the rehearsal phase, the tight timetable for recording the radio script, the limitations and challenges of the recording environment within the school, concentration issues encountered with some students, and addressing the balance of process against the desired high-quality outcome.

4.5.1 Sheffield workshop curation.

The attendance and management issues of the Sheffield workshops are detailed above, but it is crucial to reinforce the impact that this disruption during the creative process had on both the participants and myself. The disruption of a consistent schedule and regular workshops led to a decline in enthusiasm and focus among most participants. Managing the project and the various situations that arose required a delicate balance of sensitivity and compassion for the administrator, while also employing a determination to stay committed and bring the project to completion. The dedication of the remaining core participants served as a source of motivation to see the script through to a successful finished product, and served as a meaningful tribute to one of the administrators who passed away during the initial planning stage.

4.5.2 Neurodiversity and focus.

Neurodiversity and the impact of ADHD on focus and communication was a major factor in the planning development of strategies of this project.

[87] Stephen Paul and Divine Charura, *an introduction to the therapeutic relationship in counselling and psychotherapy,* (London: Sage, 2015). 138

Within the small group of pupils who were chosen to narrate the script, four of the six had an ADHD diagnosis, two male and two female. Amongst these participants, there was a combination of what have previously been classified as the three subtypes of ADHD: inattentive, hyperactive/impulsive and combined type.[88] The person centred approach means that the needs of each individual are assessed regardless of a diagnosis, but I observed that all four diagnosed pupils displayed inattention and impulsivity. They were easily distracted and moved around frequently, even when engaged and interested in the session. This in and of itself was not a problem in the creative workshops but became much more of an issue when a recording session was in progress and total silence was required. As a result, the recording would sometimes capture the sound of papers rustling or movement in the room. Additionally, some pupils would occasionally miss their lines due to distractions immediately after delivering their own dialogue, requiring prompting when they needed to speak their lines again. One solution could have been to ask pupils to leave the room until it was time for their spoken lines, but that would have broken the fluency and mood of the dialogue, particularly the conversational flow between characters. I was mindful that this may have resulted in distress and confusion to the pupil, that they might wonder why they were being asked to leave the room. I was also aware that this had the potential to create a sense of shame, possibly affecting their ability to develop competence, which Michael Kahn states as a primary need for the development of a healthy self. [89] With this in mind, two solutions were implemented: Socratic questioning and implementing alternative tactile options (discussed in the recording and mastering challenges section).

The pupils occasionally began the workshops in a tense and uncommunicative way, sometimes exhibiting distress or non-verbal displeasure due to events that had happened in the classroom that day. To address this, activities such as a quick game or a conversational walk around the playground, under the pretence of searching for possible sound effects, were implemented. These interventions proved highly effective in improving the students' mindset, mood and readiness for the workshop. Notably, one particular student consistently complained of stomach aches on entry to the classroom and required additional attention. However, once engaged in the workshop, this pupil quickly settled and left each session in a better emotional state than when they arrived. This individual exhibited a

[88] Hilde M Geurts et al, "ADHD Subtypes: do they differ in their executive functioning profile." *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology,* 4, (2005) p 457-477, accessed Jan 20th, 2023, https://doi-org.libproxy.york.ac.uk/10.1016/j.acn.2004.11.001

[89] Michael Kahn, *Between Therapist and Client* revised edition (New York: Holt, 1997), 95.

high level of creativity, and it was reported by his class teacher from our time together that the creative stimulation served as a beneficial factor for their overall well-being.

4.5.3 Recording and mastering challenges.

The issue of noise in the school environment presented significant challenges. Unfortunately, there were no immediate solutions. I experimented with recording at different times of the school day, but the only available classroom was divided by a concertina door that was not soundproofed. As a result, sounds from the adjoining room, including noisy group activities and raised voices of teachers and pupils during reading groups, could be heard. An alternative option was using a pagoda located in the school grounds, a good distance away from the school building. However, the microphone picked up the enthusiastic birdsong from the nearby trees, which was perfect for outdoor scenes but unsuitable for the indoor scenes. Furthermore, due to high temperatures, we had to keep the door open, which allowed noise from traffic or nearby housing to disrupt the recordings. The presence of other students having PE lessons on the field also became a distraction for the children involved. Additionally, one of the students suffered from severe hay fever, and being in an outdoor environment exacerbated their symptoms to the point where we had to abandon the recording and move back inside.

The pupils were asked to listen to one of our recordings containing movement and paper rustling sounds, and it was deemed appropriate to employ simple Socratic questioning to prompt the students to identify and propose solutions for any unintended noises they noticed. The Socratic method in the classroom is widely used to promote critical thinking by encouraging students to solve their own problems through guided questioning, fostering independence and deeper understanding of the subject matter.[90] This is equitable to the ideas of Heathcote, who states that when we stand back as instructors and let pupils take some responsibility for finding solutions, this switch 'separates the role of the teacher from a giver of knowledge to an enabler of knowledge'. [91]

The pupils acknowledged the rustling sounds and the movement occurring within the room and when asked for a possible solution one pupil suggested that now that they were aware of the sounds, they could consciously try to avoid making them. Another suggestion was to mark the floor to indicate specific locations for each pupil to stand, aiming to confine movement within those designated areas and reduce unnecessary movement. I had noted pieces of sticky tack on the walls around the classroom and the pupils would place attention on finding, moulding and manipulating the tack

[90] Richard Paul and Linda Elder, "The Role of Socratic Questioning in Thinking, Teaching, and Learning," *The Clearing House* (1998): pp. 297-301, accessed March 1, 2024, https://www.jstor.org/stable/30189379

[91] Heathcote, "A Drama of Learning," 174.

constantly.[92] In order to address the issue, any visible tack was removed from the walls to lessen the distraction (The pupils were made aware of this and acknowledged that it had occasionally led to distractions). However, it was still challenging for the pupils to stand still without any tactile support. To alleviate this, I purchased a hedgehog ring[93] for each pupil and we marked the floor according to their recommendations.

While this solution proved partially successful in confining movement, there were still instances when paper rustling could be heard, and the layout of the classroom meant that equal spacing around the microphone could not be achieved, therefore the volume of the recording became unevenly distributed. In an attempt to further minimise background sound and distractions, I requested permission from the school to transfer the script onto an iPad, which was unfortunately not possible. I held open conversations with the pupils about their need to move and the challenges in keeping still and quiet, stating that I also faced these challenges in my own working life, particularly during meetings. I hoped that by utilising congruence, openness and authenticity, they might understand that their behaviour was not shameful but that it might have consequences. In bringing this into dialogue, it was my intention to develop their awareness of the option to explore helpful strategies which they could carry forward into the classroom after the project ended.

External noises remained a challenge even after the recording process was completed. To ensure the highest quality in the final mastering of the recording, the assistance of an engineer and students from Teesside University was sought. We selected Ableton software, and attempted to refine the recordings, addressing specific concerns including background noise and gaps in the narrative (for instance if a pupil became distracted). The elimination of background noise was significantly challenging and a different ambience was perceivable in many places due to the need to record the York St John scenes in a different (much quieter) location, and the change from pagoda to classroom.

The plugins and effects used were

- Compression
- Convolution reverb

[92] This is called stimming, also known as self-stimulatory behaviour.

[93] Round, chunky, rubber spiked bracelet fidget toys.

- EQ eight plugin
- Adobe audition noise reduction.

This yielded partial success; however, portions of background noise were captured and intertwined with the dialogue. As a result, certain extraneous noises had to remain in the final mix. Given the inherently bustling environment in which the recording took place, this was an expected obstacle which unfortunately was not completely eliminated.

4.6 Process and creative outcome.

This project created significant personal challenges in striking a balance between prioritising the process over the final product, especially concerning sound quality and the rendition of the song *This Is Me.* It required introspection and consideration of the benefits for the children involved, even in instances where imperfections were present. Therefore, I encountered a dilemma when determining the extent to which I should pursue re-recording sessions. This decision was made to safeguard the enjoyment, focus, and uniqueness of the project, and limit the amount of times the pupils were asked to repeat imperfect recordings. Nonetheless, it felt crucial to maintain standards and illustrate to the pupils the importance of exerting effort to produce a high-quality finished product. To tackle this issue, and acknowledge the philosophy of Maté, who posits that 'To foster creativity, the main thing to honour is the intention and the effort, rather than evaluate the result,'[94] I arranged a final session where we listened to the recorded dialogue and songs as a group. I encouraged the students to identify any aspects they were not satisfied with and offered to re-record those particular sections. Three out of six pupils requested to re-record certain lines of dialogue. One pupil asked in private if they could re-record a line of their vocal as they had been practising and thought they could do it better. This demonstrated a desire for improvement and by giving the pupils autonomy to decide what was acceptable to them. They made their *own* evaluation of the end result without being told what needed changing, intrinsically creating a felt sense of control over the final product. The challenge of background noise has already been addressed but is worth noting here as a personal prominent quandary, I could have opted for the quality of recording to take priority by asking pupils to keep re-recording or to leave the room if they couldn't be quiet. However, as Maté states in *Scattered Minds,* opting for the short term goal (in this case a perfect recording) can be ruinous to the long term

[94] Maté, *scattered minds,* 147

objective (enjoyment, esteem building and the discovery of new skills).[95] It was a hugely important aim of the project that the pupils developed a sense of self-belief, experienced an advancement towards self-actualisation and pride in their work, and that the relationship between us was congruent[96,] based on trust, that they felt heard and acknowledged. I did not wish to risk sabotaging this in any way, so did not request any re-records further to the scheduled sessions.

The final recording of the song 'this is me' (scene 4) posed a similar quandary. With the exception of two students, most of the students lacked confidence in their singing abilities and did not enjoy listening back to their vocal lines. Despite our efforts, the recordings contained vocals that were out of time, and the lyrics were unclear. This presented a dilemma - should we leave the vocals as they were, or should we try to re-record with different singers? I once again sought the opinion of the students. We attempted to re-record some of the lines, but the students struggled with the task. Eventually, time ran out and I suggested that the songwriter or a different pupil sing the lines with them. In this instance, the students were content with the solution. I made sure to reassure them this was a result of time constraints, not personal attainment.

4.6.1 Feedback

The performers at Lacewood School were interviewed twice during the process: once midway through the workshop series and again after listening to the finished product. Throughout the recording sessions, the students were always excited to see me when I arrived at their classroom door to take them to the workshop sessions. When asked if they found the sessions valuable and enjoyable, they unanimously agreed, noting that even though they occasionally missed outdoor games, the feeling of being chosen and their desire to create the recording were more significant. I made a point to address both the 'safety' and 'social' needs within my adapted hierarchy, which was evident in the feedback from one participant, who observed, 'I liked that we all decided in the first class to be nice to each other and not say if someone's reading was bad. It was nice to help someone if they were stuck with a word, and it was good when someone else helped me, because sometimes in class I feel a bit stupid.' Establishing a verbal contract proved to be highly useful and effective in this situation. After learning how the pupil often felt in class, it became clear that creating conditions to ensure a sense of 'safety' needed to be the top priority. This foundation allowed the pupil to

[95] Ibid., 218

[96] In therapy this is often defined as authenticity, consistency and genuineness.

progress into the 'belonging' and 'esteem' levels of the hierarchy. This can be illustrated by exploring the experience of the pupil who portrayed the character of Gerald.

Case study: Gerald

From the final interview (after the project was completed) 'Gerald' spoke about his enjoyment when recording the music and the pride in letting his peers hear his song . He was also looking forward to receiving a copy of the radio play to play to his family, stating 'I really enjoyed singing the song, and I want to play it to all my family because I want singing lessons and this will show them I can do it'. He was the strongest singer in the group and I made sure extra time was given to address and re-record the tuning of a line in 'Gerald's Song' which he was not happy with. He was delighted with the final result and said 'I am glad we recorded the part about the blue eyes again because it didn't sound good before, but now it sounds like I can really sing'. This small attention to detail aided his advancement through the 'esteem' level of the adapted hierarchy. After the project concluded, I spoke with his class teacher, who shared that this pupil was often restless in class but responded well to routine. Typically, he disliked interruptions to his schedule, especially by unfamiliar people. This challenge was heightened by our workshops, which, due to school timetabling, did not occur on the same day or at the same time each week. When he arrived at the workshop space for the first session, he was agitated and complained of a stomach ache. When this also happened in the second week I made a point to listen to his concerns and reassessed his experience of his first moments entering the workshops. I began to collect him personally from his classroom and chatted as we walked to our room, I then assigning him small, manageable tasks such as organizing the script pages or setting up the microphone as the session . I praised him for completing these tasks well and then continued with the session with ease. By the end of the project, his attitude had shifted significantly. He often didn't want to leave and would ask if I could stay longer. When I gently asked him about his initial reluctance to participate in sessions, he said, "I always think things are going to go bad when I go into another class, but then it feels OK and normal. I enjoy making the songs and reading the play, and I don't want to leave." Early on, I observed that giving him a task immediately helped distract him from over-assessing his surroundings. Pairing this with smiles and informal conversations with the class eased his anxiety. For this pupil, creating a sense of safety—consistent with the strategies outlined in 1.5 and the adapted hierarchy in Level 2—proved highly effective. This began as soon as he stepped out of his classroom, even during the walk down the corridor, facilitating a seamless transition into the new environment. This case study highlights how fostering a safe, person-centred environment at the start of sessions enabled him to adapt to his disrupted routine and feel secure enough to perform and sing to the best of his ability.

4.7 Future Considerations

The continuity and momentum of the Sheffield workshops posed an obvious and significant challenge in the execution of this project. While much of this can be attributed to circumstantial factors, this experience has instilled in me the importance of proactive involvement in the administrative processes, even if from a remote standpoint unless more proactive action is required. This would enable me to step in and intervene when necessary. Maintaining continuity and adhering to the workshop schedule are crucial considerations. I observed that prolonged intervals between workshops lead to a loss of enthusiasm and focus, therefore for future projects like this, a more condensed timeline would be implemented.

One significant area of future consideration for audio projects, particularly when working with children bringing an ADHD diagnosis, is the environment in which workshops and recordings take place . During this project the geographic environment was not controllable, and I had to adapt to and work with the provided spaces. Moving forward, I would prioritise finding a suitable environment that offers minimal distractions, akin to a blank canvas. During this project I considered incorporating mindfulness techniques in the classroom but employed caution due to my lack of familiarity with the children and their backgrounds. Sue Parker-Hall's cautionary advice regarding the use of mindfulness, especially with individuals who may have experienced trauma, resonated with me. In particular, she references Bessel van der Kolk's findings that if participants became silent and started to pay attention to themselves during the meditation exercises, their internal sensations could be so intense that they felt overwhelmed and, without the tools to work through those sensations, they would dissociate.[97] Instead, I would be keen to incorporate groundedness exercises, without delving too deep into internal connection. Exercises which include free movement to gentle music, or simple tai chi exercises would form a starting point. Mate tells us that “the person with ADD feels discomfort at having to keep still for even short periods of time.”[98] While acknowledging that not all projects may include individuals with ADHD, I am committed to ensuring that accommodations are in place for those with additional needs. This might include working in spaces that offer the option of breakout rooms, and incorporating activities that involve movement during break times. Although the project did not begin

[97] Sue Parker Hall, “Being mindful of Mindfulness: Exploring the dark side”, *International Journal of Cohesion, manipulation and abuse* 1 (2020) 19, accessed 24/07/2021, DOI: doi.org/10.54208/ooo1/1001

[98] Maté, *scattered minds,* 130

as an exploration into working so closely with neurodiversity, the genuine connection and bond that developed with the pupils served as a powerful motivation throughout the process, and has provided inspiration for further research into working with young people presenting with ADHD, alongside the implementing more strategies given in the mantle of the expert system.

4.8 Summary

The radio play faced technical challenges that had to be overcome, but the recording serves as a genuine documentation of the process. Despite encountering numerous hurdles, the project brought many advantages and moments of joy to the participants**.** The class teacher reported that attendance of the six pupils was better on the days when workshops were scheduled (there were only two absences throughout the whole project, due to family holidays) and the anticipation of the workshops were verbalised frequently. The participants also enjoyed sharing their expertise of capturing and evaluating natural sounds with the rest of the class and general confidence in reading aloud in class was improved.

The initial engagement of the Sheffield writing group and their unbridled imagination served as a valuable personal experience, reminding me of the potential for unexpected benefits when embracing a less cautious approach.

The immense pleasure and dedication exhibited by the pupils who recorded the script propelled me to strive for a high-quality outcome, while still encouraging their authenticity and a sense of innocence in the recording. Referring to the adapted framework in Chapter One, all of the stages were considered and implemented throughout this project. Some of the song-writing and recording tasks were a challenge for the younger students, but by ensuring consistent support and working in the ZPD, esteem and aspiration was raised. The project took place in a busy environment and physiological and emotional safety was always a high consideration. A code of conduct (a contract) was created and agreed in collaboration with the six pupils who made the recordings, who were always supportive and kind to the less confident readers and performers. In a post-project conversation with the group, it was evident that the social and self-esteem elements of the framework had been addressed consistently through the project and students felt a very clear sense of achievement and pride in their finished product.

Chapter 5 - Seeing Music, Hearing Colour

The following files are referenced in the chapter. All other files relating to this project are submitted as .mov files and mentioned in the appendix.

Video Files: Madden_201043241_Seeing_Music_Project.mov

Madden_201043241_Seeing_Music_Penistone.mov

Madden_2-1-43241_seeing_music_concert_excerpt.mov

Madden_201043241_Seeing_Music_Formula1.mov

Audio Files:

Madden_201043241_Seeing_Music_Concert_Audio.wav

5.1 Introduction

Seeing Music, Hearing Colour is a multi-faceted portfolio of work that merges a personal experience of synaesthesia with group-based improvisation and the interpretation of music in visual form. This was achieved through the creation of music-inspired artwork and of compositions influenced by visual art through working with community and education groups (Penistone Heartspace students, Creative recovery and Projects 14, detailed below). The rationale was to employ colour perception as a stimulus for both creating artworks and compositions, and using visual art as a springboard for collaborative music composition between professional musicians and participants who were new to both music composition and interdisciplinary approaches. Participants had the added incentive of having their final artwork displayed in the Barnsley Civic gallery for one month, along with a QR code allowing access to their corresponding composition. Furthermore, the composition would be performed during a concert at the exhibition opening.

Collaborating with one school and two community groups in Barnsley, I led an Arts Council England and Creative Minds funded project working as composer, curator, musician and workshop leader, alongside an art therapist and a group of five other musicians. The project sought to blend music and visual art in a way previously unexplored by the majority of the participants. The groups engaged with an original composition of my own, *I Will Kiss You Forever, my* synaesthetic interpretation of the artwork with the same name by Robert Smith, composer/vocalist of the popular music band, The Cure (Figure 5.1) (synaesthesia and a detailed description of the composition process is explained below). Participants were asked to translate the composition into personal art pieces or sculptures using colours that they felt embodied the music's essence.

The process was then reversed and participants developed an original piece of art using colours that held personal significance to them, and which they wanted to translate into music. They collaborated with the musicians to create musical interpretations based on their artwork and chosen colours.

Figure 5.1 I will kiss you forever - Robert Smith[99]

[99] Permission was given by Robert Smith (via his sales agent - Heart UK) to use copies of his images freely throughout the project.

My composition was shared with six synesthetic artists from around the world who had responded to a call through a Facebook group for synesthetes. These artists were provided with the audio track and created artwork inspired by the emotions and imagery evoked by the music.

The culmination of the project was an exhibition in a gallery space at Barnsley Civic Theatre, where the final artworks were showcased for a month with QR codes linking to the corresponding compositions (via YouTube) which had been recorded with the musicians. Visitors to the exhibition were encouraged to listen to the music through headphones while viewing the art. The exhibition launch also featured a concert of live performance of all the compositions, with the associated artwork projected as a backdrop to the performance.

In what follows, I start from my own personal experience as a synaesthete, before moving onto exploring each step of the creative process in turn, leading to the evolution of the opening concert and cumulative art exhibition. I also list the challenges within the project, which were mainly related to the ongoing fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, but also acknowledge the many positive relational moments within each group of participants.

5.2 Synaesthesia

Rather than exploring in detail the many facets of synaesthesia[100], in what follows I will focus on my own personal experience of the condition, and how this inspired and contributed to the framework of the project. The UK Synaesthesia Association provides a clear and concise explanation of how synaesthesia is experienced in various forms:

> Synaesthesia is a truly fascinating condition. In its simplest form it is best described as a “union of the senses” whereby two or more of the five main senses that are normally experienced separately are involuntarily and automatically joined together. Some synaesthetes experience colour when they hear sounds or read words. Others experience anavar cycle tastes, smells, shapes or touches in almost any combination. These sensations are automatic and cannot be turned on or off.

[100] This is the English spelling - the American spelling is synesthesia. I use English spelling throughout.

> Synaesthesia isn't a disease or illness and is not at all harmful. In fact, the vast majority of synaesthetes couldn't imagine life without it.[101]

I became aware of my own synaesthesia around the age of 20 when a friend gave me a puzzled look in response to my question about which shades of green and grey they could hear in Rachmaninoff's third piano concerto. It was only when I realised they could not relate to the same sensory connections that I discovered that not everyone experienced these colour associations. Further research led me to understand that this phenomenon is known as synaesthesia and in my case chromesthesia, where one sensory perception triggers another, leading individuals to perceive music as colour and vice versa. I also experience a secondary type of synaesthesia: auditory-gustatory. For example, hearing a particular musical note may trigger a specific taste sensation, such as sweetness or bitterness. This is not as prominent as chromesthesia, which is the primary form.

Whilst working in education and community settings I found myself growing increasingly intrigued by how individuals who do not have synaesthesia may interpret colour as sound. In school projects I observed that children often connected colours like yellow with higher pitches, and darker shades like black and grey with lower tones. This observation inspired the idea of creating artwork to music and vice-versa, pondering whether adults share similar colour-sound connections or if they employ more intricate sound processing and understanding. The project was not conceived as an empirical, scientific or psychological study, but served as a creative exploration of the connections that synaestheses and non-synaestheses may experience between colour and sound. Furthermore, it encouraged participants to embrace a multidisciplinary approach towards the creation of art and music, fostering experimentation and innovation in the process, using colour as a stimulus and starting point, and providing relief from the sometimes overwhelming apprehension of the blank page.

[101] UK Synaesthesia association [homepage of the Uk Synaesthesia association] accessed February 10th, 2021, https://uksynaesthesia.com/

5.3 Workshop Participants.

I worked with three distinct groups during the project; Penistone Grammar School (Heart space students), Creative Recovery adults and Project 14 adults.

Penistone Grammar School, which educates students from year 7-13, is located in the West of Barnsley. The school's specialist provision is delivered by Heart space (directly within the school premises) offering support to students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The intensive three day project was delivered to students from years 7-11 who were full time students of Heart space. A class of 12 pupils participated in workshops, though some were sporadic in attendance due to their one-to-one support sessions with key workers and group interventions which clashed with the workshops. Other Heart space members would dip in and out of art sessions and were welcomed enthusiastically. In total seven students attended all three workshops and completed art works and compositions for the exhibition and concert. This was a manageable number for the final music workshops.

Creative Recovery, based in central Barnsley, is a charity using creative activities to support people in recovery from addiction or mental health issues. They offer a variety of arts-based programs and workshops to help individuals express themselves, build confidence, and develop new skills in a supportive environment. Their initiatives aim to promote mental well-being and recovery through artistic engagement. They deliver programmes and activities to promote healing and positive welfare through creative expression whilst seeking to improve mental health, build more resilient communities and bring about social change. The Seeing Music, Hearing Colour project fitted perfectly within their core delivery strategy, allowing us to collaborate with adults already using creativity as a tool for expression. We worked with a core group of eight adults who presented with wide-ranging mental health challenges.

Project 14 is a Dearne Valley based CIC (Community Interest Company) providing support and advice for community members, with a strong focus on suicide awareness and prevention. They offer activities aimed at promoting personal development, social engagement, and skills-building among community members. The organisation also focuses on helping young adults' to navigate life challenges , encourage self-growth and provide support to anyone affected by suicide. The group was

seeking arts-based projects and saw the Seeing Music project as a potentially valuable addition to their programme of activities.

5.3.1 Additional participants

By exploring the intertwined relationship between music and colour, the project also explores the experiences of five artists who experience the chromesthesia type of synaesthesia (music to colour or vice versa). A call was posted via a Facebook synaesthesia group requesting artists to create digital artworks inspired by listening to a specific piece of music (my original piece of music). Their art was requested in digital format for the practical reason of minimising shipping costs and reducing any issues arising from international transportation. Responding to the call, five artists from different countries (Argentina, Poland, USA, Holland, and Canada) created unique digital artworks while listening to *I will kiss you forever*. Video File Madden_201043241_ seeing_music_Project.mov shows the art and comments of the artists in a short video accompanied by the original composition.

5.3.2 Musicians as workshop leaders

Choosing the workshop musicians was vital, given their anticipated close interaction with vulnerable young people and adults. It was essential that they had experience of working in a person-centred manner, and the ability to navigate any potential emotional challenges which may arise. The musicians I included in this project had played key roles in the Magic Paintbrush. I had seen their collaborative strengths in action and respected their excellent working methods and relational skills and I knew they would be valuable assets to the project. Morag Galloway, Tracey Smirthwaite and Peter Birkby were core musicians in The Magic Paintbrush, and this project saw the addition of Peter Morton and Art Therapist Charlotte Watson, alongside Art Therapist Chiomah Akanwa-Dey. To enhance their emotional well-being and preparedness for the project, all leaders underwent Mental Health First Aid training, a requirement specified in the project's funding proposal.[102]

[102] This was provided by Mental Health First Aid England (MHFA) https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/news/MHFA-England-launches-new-Mental-Health-First-Aid-cou

5.5 Timeline

A timeline of 6 months was planned (see Table 5.1) taking into account the need for school workshops requiring weekdays, Creative Recovery requiring a mix of daytimes and weekends and Project 14 weekends only.

Date	Where / What	Who is required?
Sat 27th Nov 2021	First recording - DC Studios Barnsley	Musicians, Helen and Chiomah (all)
Mon 10th Jan 2022	Creative recovery introductory workshop	Helen / Chiomah
Sat 15th Jan 2022	MHFA half day training	All
Mon 17th Jan 2022	Creative recovery art	Helen / Chiomah
Thurs 20th Jan 2022	Creative recovery music	Helen
Mon 24th Jan 2022	Creative recovery art and music	Helen / Chiomah
Thurs 27th Jan 2022	Creative recovery art	Helen / Chiomah
Sat 29th Jan 2022	Creative recovery music and recording	All
Mon 7th Feb 2022	Penistone Heartspace 1st workshop	Helen / Chiomah
Thurs 10th Feb 2022	Penistone Heartspace Art workshop	Helen / Chiomah
Friday 11th Feb 2022	Heartspace music and recording	All
Sat 5th March 2022	Project 14 Introductory workshop	Helen / Chiomah
Sat 12th March 2022	Project 14 Art workshop	Helen / Chiomah / Morag/ Charlotte
Sat 19th March 2022	Project 14 Music and recording	All
Sat 30th & Sun 1st June 2022	Musicians record final pieces	All

Sunday 1st May 2022	Musicians rehearsal	As above
2nd-6th May 2022	Set up exhibition	Helen / Chiomah
Sunday 8th May 2022	All	All

Table 5.1 Timeline of workshops.

5.5 Ethos

In their examination of mentorship, Tsedal Beyene et al emphasise that 'friendship, nurturance, open-mindedness, and trustworthiness are key to mentoring relationships'.[103] These elements were at the core of this project. This chapter illustrates both the creative processes and some of the personal connections forged, as well as the natural reciprocity that developed between participants and workshop leaders. Almost everyone involved became active participants in this project (albeit sometimes unintentionally), including workshop leaders, group administrators and volunteers; this was not an engineered action, but participation occurred naturally and organically. While the workshop leaders were initially perceived as 'experts' by the participants as the project unfolded it became clear that they served more as facilitators supporting the personal journeys of the participants, which intertwined or bore resemblance to their own experiences. This is representative of Rogers' theory that therapists (in this case workshop leaders) are the facilitators of the clients' (participants') self-discovery and growth[104] - as discussed in the introductory chapter. In many instances the only notable distinction between the leaders and participants lay in their expertise as professional musicians and artists. At times, the musicians participated in the artistic process by creating a personal artwork, with one musician creating a sculpture and accompanying original composition for the project.

We are driven by the need to relate[105], and this was a deeply relational project, allowing for creative freedom within a supportive environment that led to powerful and emotional moments. As the

[103] Tsedal Beyene et al., Mentoring and Relational Mutuality: Proteges' Perspectives *The journal of humanistic counselling, education and development* 41, 2 (2002) 87, accessed 3rd June, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-490X.2002.tb00132.x

[104] Carl Rogers, *On Becoming a Person : a Therapist's View of Psychotherapy* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961.

[105]Stephen Paul and Divine Charura, an introduction to the therapeutic relationship in counselling and psychotherapy, (London: Sage, 2015), 49

hierarchical lines between participants and leaders blurred, the fostering of mutual understanding and a shared exploration of personal stories and relationships, drawing inspiration from individual experiences expanded.

The pieces showcased in this portfolio offer glimpses into the profound emotional experiences encountered by numerous participants, notably from the adults. This was anticipated as I had come to understand, from speaking to a therapist prior to the project, that adults are more likely to speak openly about their emotions. However, it is evident that in many cases, the end product took a back seat to the transformative process, and power of creating lyrics, producing artwork, directing and creating a composition and in some cases taking part in a final performance. At times I had to deviate from my original theme of colour to support the trajectory of individuals who had tapped into an alternative stimulus. Dean Nimmer, an artist I was researching at the time, states 'I discovered that all the ideas I held sacred were in fact holding me back from real discovery and new possibilities for my art'[106]. These words resonated with me as I was conscious of not implementing inflexible structures and placing creative demands on participants who were experiencing flow and creative discovery by rerouting their path. To conclude Nimmer's quote 'I came to understand it was much better to allow my instincts and intuition to show me the way, and to stop being so self-conscious'[107], which resonated deeply with me, and I tried to implement it across all groups, particularly with those participants who were showing doubt in making an art / music connection.

The concept of congruence, as explored in Chapter One, played a crucial role in fostering relationships within the project, especially within the Creative Recovery and Project 14 groups. The Creative Recovery group was already a connected community, so integrating ourselves (myself and Chiomah) required us to consistently exhibit a deep level of congruence in our communications/interactions.

As Stephen Paul states in respect of the therapist role, 'the more genuine and present they are, then the more they are able to be with their client'.[108] As a small yet significant example of this kind of

[106] Dean Nimmer, *Art From Intuition: Overcoming your Fears and Obstacles to Making Art* (New York: Random House, 2008), 5.

[107] Ibid.,6

[108] Paul, *An introduction to the therapeutic relationship in counselling and psychotherapy*, 137

connection; on greeting a client of the Creative recovery group (who had previously been reserved in communication) on a morning when I was feeling cold and unwell, the participant asked me if I was OK. I answered truthfully and explained that a recurring illness was hindering my well-being that morning and I may appear a little distracted and tired. Had I pretended I was well, then become distant or demonstrated tiredness during the session, the client (who struggled with anxiety and low confidence) may have thought that my lack of focus and enthusiasm was due to something they had said or done. As it was, they made me a drink and were able to demonstrate empathy. As Kai Kupferschmidt puts it 'empathy is the bridge that allows us to cross into the territory of someone else's feelings, it establishes a connection between two people and it's the reason we enjoy reading novels and watching movies'. [109] This seemingly simple interaction opened a gateway to communication between myself and the participant - who was noticeably more communicative and relaxed afterwards. Openness with participants in both the Creative Recovery and Project 14 groups was essential in developing trust for some of the difficult conversations which I anticipated would take place due to the demographic of these groups. As stated in Chapter one, the leader not being perceived as the emotional expert was beneficial to this group, we could demonstrate our musical skills, but we needed to show ourselves as non-judgemental practitioners to become trusted members of the community. As Alexander Kirtz-Veil states, 'The facilitator is sensitive to people's needs and does not impose power on participants'.[110]

In the subsequent accounts detailing the processes undertaken by each group, some of the everyday conversations are included as they played a pivotal role in unlocking creativity. Our discussions were crucial catalysts that allowed for genuine and unrestrained expression in creative endeavours.

5.6 Process

The first stage of the process was to record my compositional interpretation of *I will kiss you forever* and once this was completed the workshops could begin. The framework for the creative process was

[109] Kai Kupferschmidt, "Concentrating on Kindness," *Science vol 341* (2013): 2, accessed March 20, 2020, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42619338

[110] Alexandra Kertz-Welzel. "Daring to Question: A Philosophical Critique of Community Music." *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 24, no. 2 (2016): pg116, accessed February 1st, 2023, https://doi.org/10.2979/philmusieducrevi.24.2.01.

consistent across all groups: initially, the participants listened to *I will kiss you forever* and were prompted to produce artwork that captured the colours they perceived in the music (they were not shown the original artwork until they had created their own). The next stage involved the participant creating an artwork inspired by colours of their choice, which could be transformed into a musical composition. The final stage involved collaborating with the musicians to create a musical piece that represented their artwork and presented an aural interpretation of colour they had worked with. The musicians wrote the pieces under the direction of participants and restrained input where necessary, so they were not overtly influencing the participant's creative vision. The musicians made their own notes (no formal scores were produced) and we made a field recording of each composition for reference. The pieces were subsequently recorded in a professional studio and rehearsed for the opening performance.

Each individual composition is submitted in this portfolio as a video file, either alongside the corresponding artwork, or within an appendix item (see table 5.1).

Title	Reference	type	Brief description
I will Kiss you Forever	File 5.1	.mov	The audio with brief description of the process accompanied by synesthete art and their experience of the process
Heartspace - our journey through music and colour	File 5.2	.mov	Post project interview, shown at the exhibition opening concert.
Lego scene	Appendix 5.1	.mov	Heartspace participant one. Video of art and accompanying composition
Flickering	Appendix 5.2	.mov	Heartspace participant two. Video of art and accompanying composition.
Starry Night	Appendix 5.3	.mov	Heartspace participant three. Video of art and accompanying composition.
Glitter shaker	Appendix 5.4	.mov	Heartspace participant four. Video of art and accompanying composition
Can't buy me love	Appendix 5.5	.mov	Heartspace participant five. Video of art

			and accompanying composition
Formula 1	Appendix 5.6	.mov	Heartspace six Participant six. Video of art and accompanying composition
Five finger count	Appendix 5.7	.mov	Creative Recovery Participant one. Field recording made in situ with the participant playing piano.
Praying for something / tiny hands	Appendix 5.8	.mov	Creative recovery participant two. Video of art and accompanying composition.
Our Dearne	Appendix 5.9	.mov	Our Dearne. Video of three movement work by participants of Project 14.
Exhibition opening	File 5.3	.mov	First 30 minutes of live performances including the premier performance of 'television thumb' by creative recovery participant 1.
Exhibition opening	File 5.4	MP3	Full audio recording of the live performance.

Table 5.3 Submission list

5.7 First recording and workshops

The recording of *I will kiss you forever* took place in DC studios in Barnsley. Prior to the session the musicians had not seen the artwork and had only been told that they were going to help recreate what I was hearing when I looked at a piece of art (via a guided improvisation). The musicians were provided with a short amount of time to study the artwork on their own. I refrained from asking them for their interpretive ideas in order to avoid influencing my own perception. I talked with the musicians about the auditory aspects I heard in the painting, and the movement of my gaze as I examined the print. As I processed the image, my attention flowed from the top to the bottom, creating a mental structure of textures, an overarching sound, and a particular ambiance. I had pre-recorded a backing track to be played very quietly behind the live improvisation - this represented the silver / grey wash which was constant in the top part of the picture. The musicians were given a set of pitches to use should they wish to create fragments of melody. They were instructed to watch me for visual instruction as we experimented with the scale, texture and dynamics. The percussionist was asked to use light bell-like percussion instruments to begin, and progress onto heavier sounds as the piece built, including tubular bells in the red area of the painting. I was not too prescriptive at this stage and an initial

improvisation of around 18 minutes provided an opportunity to explore techniques related to direction, tempo, dynamics, texture, and extended techniques. The improvisation was recorded, enabling the identification of segments that resonated with the envisioned auditory landscape, with time then spent on the development of these sounds. Subsequently, five recordings were produced, with the final rendition encapsulating much of the immersive atmosphere and evolving textures that corresponded with my auditory interpretation. (File: Madden_201043241_Seeing_Music_Project.mov).

5.7.1 Penistone Heart space.

Chiomah and I attended the first two sessions. The class contained varying levels of additional needs and neurodiversity. There were several students on the Autisitic Spectrum, and some needed additional time and support to establish communication with new adults in their safe space (the Heart space classroom in a quiet area of the school). After a conversational period where we chatted about what the weekend had entailed for the students (and sharing our own weekend with them) we began to ask about favourite foods and animals. This was a valuable half hour in creating rapport, where we established ourselves as safe adults who could communicate on a commensurate level and were interested in what the students had to say. This progressed onto a conversation about favourite colours and the reasons behind the choices, which segued succinctly to the activity of listening to *I will kiss you forever* and discussing the colours which the students may have heard in the pieces. The piece held their attention for the full duration of seven and a half minutes, inducing a calming effect where afterwards the students were able to identify feelings and thoughts associated with the piece. Figure 5.2 displays the notes made on a whiteboard after the listening exercise, serving as a launchpad for the students to create their own artwork. The remainder of the workshop then centred around creating a piece of art or sculpture which would represent the colours perceived in the music. Some students chose to build something from either cardboard or Lego, while others preferred paint, glitter or pencil. The group remained consistently engaged and expressed enjoyment while discussing the music and sharing their favourite musical preferences. The piece was played twice more during the session and each time I observed a slight shift in the students' demeanour, as they became quieter and more focussed. At the end of the session, the students were informed about the contents of the workshop scheduled for the following day (this was an important piece of preparatory information for some). They were encouraged to ponder overnight about the type of artwork they wished to create for the musicians, who would be joining the class on Friday.

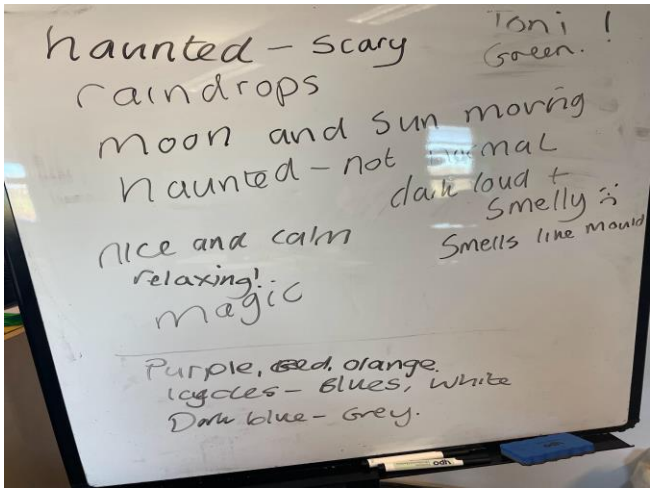

Figure 5.4 class notes from the composition listening exercise.

Scheduling workshop two for the following day proved to be highly effective, as the students retained their enthusiasm from the previous day and the theme remained embedded in their minds. During this second workshop, the students crafted their own artwork intended for collaboration with the musicians. It became evident that there was a slight transition from exploring colour to emphasising narrative. Some students displayed a greater capacity for developing pieces that communicated a story rather than eliciting emotions solely based on colour prompts.

Workshop three with the musicians was met with great excitement. The students were keen to meet the musicians and hear the ensemble. They were very curious about their instruments. The musicians took time to introduce their instruments and the sounds they produced (including extended techniques) and take questions from the students. Once more, this stage in the timetable was pivotal, allowing for the development of rapport and empowering students to request the sounds based on their imaginative requests. This flowed naturally into the musicians helping to create pieces of music representing the art of the students, with some highly unencumbered and imaginative requests!

Case study: Student 1

Figure 5.3 below shows the art of student 1, a Year 9 male who was obsessed with formula one and in particular Belgian-Dutch driver Max Verstappen. He named his piece *formula 1* and spent the whole of the second workshop dipping a toy train into paint and wheeling it around the paper whilst

wearing noise reducing headphones and verbalising an imaginary commentary where Verstappen was the victor.

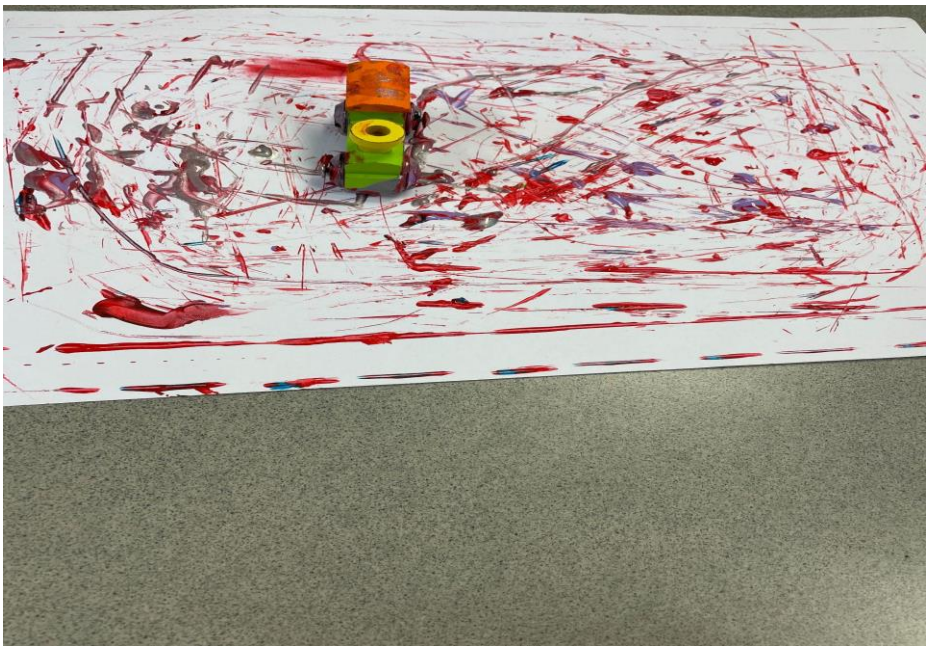

Figure 5.3 Formula 1

He was fascinated by any sounds the musicians could make which would represent the Grand Prix racetrack, particularly the percussion. The idea of the student commentating against a Grand Prix soundscape was perfect and I asked him if he would be willing to record some of his vocal commentary into the microphone so we could listen back and choose what instrumental sounds could accompany his race. He directed us to create a crash where another driver left the track and wanted to use the strings and percussion to 'make tyre and racing noises'. He was fully engaged for 30 minutes whilst directing the musicians, and his support worker reported that it was highly unusual for him to engage so intently for that amount of time. He made up commentary on the spot, and directed where the crash should happen and where the race ended. I ensured that his voice recording of the race was used in the final recording session with the musicians (as mentioned in the process above). See Appendix file *formula 1* to watch the accompanying video / soundtrack.

File Madden_201043241_Seeing_Music_Penistone.mov recorded the thoughts and experiences of the pupils the Monday after the Friday music workshop (ensuring the memory was still fresh). The feedback about the project from teachers was overwhelmingly positive. At the final concert, four students and two teachers attended. It was reported that the children continued to talk about the project in the days that followed, focusing primarily on the musicians and the music they had created together. They took great pride in sharing the videos showcasing their art and music with any visitors to the classroom.

From a composer's standpoint, this series of workshops encapsulated many elements that I aimed to capture in the project: exploration of colour as a central theme and collaboration with musicians to craft a final composition that evoked a sense of pride and achievement in a new creative field.

5.7.2 Creative Recovery workshops

The same process as described above was implemented with the Creative Recovery group; however, this group was assigned shorter sessions compared to the school pupils. The sessions were spaced out over an extended period to align with the group's existing schedule and this was particularly beneficial as it allowed participants time to absorb and progress through the process gradually. I was apprehensive about the initial playing of the soundtrack to the group, wondering how they would perceive it, but the reaction was largely positive. Only one participant expressed dislike and discomfort, remarking that the piece felt "too dark and sinister." In contrast, some participants found it calming, mysterious, and meditative. Another individual, who later became deeply immersed in the project, and even participated in the final performance with the musicians, described the piece as highly evocative and inspirational. His journey and contribution to the project is discussed in the case study below.

Case study: participant one.

This participant was already experienced in creating art, primarily working with oil on canvas, and favouring vibrant and intricate non-traditional art, he had begun selling his work. He requested a recording of the composition to listen to throughout the week and discussed his admiration for artists like John Cage who explored sound as a form of expression and didn't adhere to musical rules. Anticipating the musical aspect of the project, he eagerly awaited the collaboration with the musicians. While working on a large art piece *Television Thumb* (Figure 5.4) he started to imagine sounds in his mind that he envisioned the musicians bringing to life. This piece was required to demonstrate the different directions his life had taken, encompassing his mental health challenges and the question 'what if?'. He also requested that if time permitted, we interpret a second piece

named *5 finger count*, which explored his time in the forces and placement in Iraq (figure 5.5). The workshop with the musicians was limited in attendance due an outbreak of Covid-19 amongst the group, therefore only two participants were able to attend the recording session. Given the extra time available we were able to dedicate a substantial portion of time to discuss the artwork and the sounds he wanted the musicians to produce. As we sat in a circle a natural and fluent 50 minute conversation and discussion ensued about his life, coping mechanisms, current situation and hopes and ambitions for the future. The resulting compositions were an organically created representation of his art and how he heard this in musical terms.

Figure 5.4 large scale work *Television Thumb*

Figure 5.5 5 finger count

Although the participant did not play a musical instrument in the traditional sense, he wanted to be physically involved in the music and used the piano to express sounds he felt represented his emotions and artwork. Beginning with *5 finger count* he provided the musicians with a detailed description, and suggested incorporating strains of jazz from the saxophone, he requested fragmentation, with brief phrases lacking melodic precedence. Imagine 'snippets heard in a jazz bar' and intermittent fanfares suggestive of conflict.

He also explored the extended techniques of the viola and cello and incorporated these into the piece. We conducted a field recording of the *fivefinger count* (Appendix file) choosing to preserve this particular recording for use on the website (accessed via QR code). It encapsulated the session's essence so effectively that re-recording it in the studio could risk losing the authenticity of that moment. Additionally, we composed and rehearsed a piece representing *Television Thumb,* which the participant opted not to record in the workshop because the piano segment was unfinished (he intended to revisit this separately). However, he gave an assurance that it would be ready for the opening performance. Paul Robertson writes of the 'great gifts' of music and that 'is that it allows us a complete experience of ourselves, often without words. Sometimes words are too painful or too clumsy to carry the completeness of who and what we are'.[111] For this participant there was truth in this statement. He did not want to use words but 'let the music tell the story in a way that words never could'. It is not possible to state here the joy and release he found from the workshop

and being welcomed as an ensemble member, but the experience was immensely impactful for all present that day.

Although only two Creative Recovery participants recorded their pieces, this workshop allowed them to work in unhurried detail with the musicians and discuss their emotions and life experiences in a safe and supportive atmosphere.

[111] Paul Robertson, "Why does music affect people as it does?" *RSA Journal*, 148, no 5494 (2020): 70

5.7.3 Project 14 workshops.

This section necessitates a slightly longer description, in part due to the shift away from colour being the central theme, spontaneously replaced with the exploration of identity, and in part due to the stronger than expected participant-led evolution of the workshops and final three-movement piece.

The workshops took place in the Dearne Valley area, with participants from Project 14's network of service users. All participants were female and although the creation of art was appealing to them, all but one were uncertain about taking part in musical activity. Although this was the smallest group (6 in total), the deepest exploration of civic identity took place here.

Project 14 was set up by the founder after the loss of her best friend to suicide and all workshop participants had been affected by suicide in some way. However, I was keen not to make this a reference point unless conversation naturally gravitated towards it. The sensitive and (to us as practitioners) unpredictable nature of this group was one of the main reasons for asking the musicians to participate in Mental Health First Aid training, allowing them to gain insights and skills in navigating the wide-ranging effects of grief, as well as preparation and confidence in providing emotional assistance to participants in any times of distress.

The workshops were planned using the same framework as the previous two groups, initiated by listening to the music composition to prompt the creation of artwork that visually interpreted the music. While in the previous groups there were some immediate instances of colour connections, this group encountered challenges from the outset in establishing colour linkages from the music. They immediately delved into exploring narratives and personal stories prompted by the composition, disregarding colour connections almost immediately. Keen to preserve the relational flow and development of the discussion, participants were encouraged to explore the stories which were brought to mind by the music. The group engaged in conversations about community, resilience, belonging, and the frequent natural and instinctive support provided by women to their children and male relatives. The group talked of pride and belonging, the tremendous strength and resilience they had had to develop during the miners' strike of 1984, and the continuing attitudes and economic and aspirational challenges they felt were still currently prevalent in the community. I strongly resonated with this experience. Growing up as a ten-year-old in a mining family in the Dearne Valley, where my father was a striking miner, the emotional effects of the strike on mining families and the local community remain vivid in my own memory 40 years later. The River Dearne and how this flowed through and connected neighbouring villages which were all affected by the miners' strike was also a

prominent feature in conversation. Charles H Vogl's concept of 'community origin stories' and 'sharing valued stories' and the retelling of struggle and triumph were obviously of high importance to this group.[112]

During that first session I made the decision to be completely flexible with my intended pursuit of exploring colour association. The connections and conversation happening while creating art were unique, personal and challenging for some individuals. They discussed in detail how societal expectations for men to uphold a façade of strength, and suppress emotional vulnerability, had tragically led some male family members or friends to make the devastating choice to end their lives. It would have been incongruent to risk disrupting this organic outpouring just to achieve my own artistic colour/synaesthesia related goals. It was clear to me that person-centredness and relational development was a greater driving force, and I was very curious and excited to see what this group could create given the freedom to find their voices.

The founder of Project 14 agreed for the group to participate in the project due, in part, to the limited art and music provision for adults in the Dearne. Initially, she had planned to facilitate the project from a distance and refrain from active involvement in the music component. However, she unexpectedly emerged as one of the two crucial figures in propelling the project forward (the other key participant is presented as a case study below). In the relaxed and open atmosphere of the sessions, she intuitively reached for the art materials, engaged in conversation, and started creating, discovering that the act of making art allowed her to tap into her emotions without the need for verbal expression. The art became a medium through which she could access her feelings with greater ease.

By the second workshop, after reflecting on the conversations of the first session and through writing a short poem and contemplating her profound connection with the geographical area, she found further therapeutic release by examining and starting to journal the stories of herself and other women affected by the loss of a loved one and how her community played a vital role in facilitating the healing journey. She began leading open dialogue about what it meant to be female in an ex-mining community, how women had been (and still were) perceived and the enormous inner resilience some community members had had to develop during challenging times of strikes,

[112] Charles H Vogl, *The art of community, seven principles for belonging* (Oakland: Berrett-Koehler, 2016), 78.

unemployment, times of hardship and limited aspiration. Much of the discussion focussed towards how to support males who felt they needed to be 'men' and not address any distress or emotional hardships inevitably caused. Hence the term 'Women of Steel' was harnessed as a theme for our collective composition (The context for using this term relates directly to a group of women who, during the 1984-1985 miners' strike, organised and became highly active, playing a crucial role in supporting the miners and community across the Dearne, which not only sustained the strike but had a profound impact on community solidarity. The Women of Steel became a symbol of collective action and the power of grassroots organising especially, at that time, in labour disputes. The group were closely associated with the Women Against Pit Closures group (WAPC), which ultimately led to the formation of a national organisation representing the efforts of women from various mining communities across the country)[113]

Case study:

This key participant identified herself as a grandmother and singer, with the title of grandmother holding significant importance to her. It was the first label she chose when introducing herself. While she had participated in local amateur dramatic performances as a chorus member, she had never taken on a lead role. She was keen to make a musical statement and have her voice heard as she felt she had never been given the chance to do so as a solo performer. In a situation reminiscent of the creative recovery group, a surge of Covid-19 cases occurred on the day of the music workshops, preventing her from being able to attend. She was incredibly disappointed and asked if it was at all possible to rearrange the session. Due to the tight schedule and the availability of musicians this wasn't possible but, such was her enthusiasm and commitment to the project, I really wanted to find a way for her to make her contribution. I suggested that we could use Zoom and, although she'd never used this platform, felt nervous downloading and using it, I guided her through the process and she was able to contribute to the composition process remotely. The group made a joint piece entitled *Our Dearne.* The piece is comprised of three sections:

Section 1 - The river

Section 2 - Women of Steel

[113] Jean Spence, "Women and the Miners' Strike 1984/85: An Alternative Form of Politics." Contemporary British History20, no. 3 (2006): 413-431.

Section 3 - Lullaby

The participant contributed to selecting the lyrics for the first two sections and independently created the lyrics for the third section, Lullaby. Despite her remote involvement, she communicated effectively with the musicians, and collectively we developed a melody to complement the music she helped shape. She was invited to join us at the recording studio for the final recording and to perform at the opening concert. It was essential to recognise and honour her contributions to the composition, granting her ownership of her lyrics and empowering her to express her voice – an opportunity she felt had previously been unavailable to her.

Musician's process.

The pieces were composed and recorded using a structured improvisation method. The musicians collaborated closely with the participants to create the desired moods and sounds reflective of their art. Each musician created personal sketches which acted as guides to outline keys, tempos, moods, and structure. No formal score was produced, but musicians improvised from a set of notes written about each piece.

For reference, Figure 5.6 showcases an example percussionist of the percussionists 'score'.

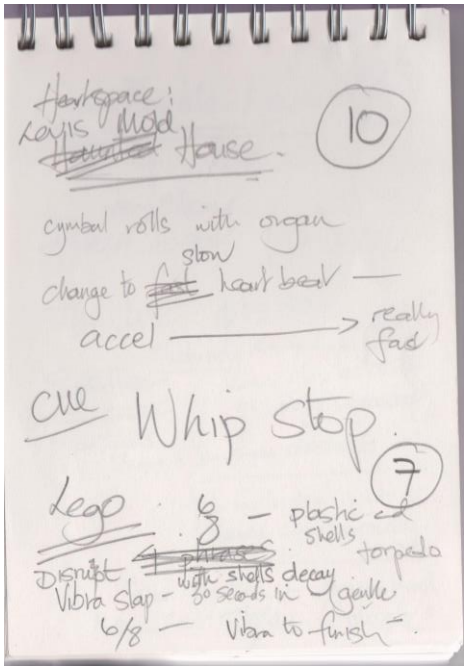

Figure 5.6 Example of percussionist notes

After the final workshops concluded, we revisited the recording studio with our written and audio sketches and recreated a similar recording of each piece (with the exception of *TV Thumb* and *Five Finger Count* as previously noted). The recordings were used as a soundtrack to videos of the corresponding artwork, then uploaded to a designated YouTube channel[114] and linked with a QR code to be showcased alongside the matching artwork in the exhibition[115]. This recording session also functioned as a rehearsal for the eventual live performance.

5.8 Final exhibition and performance.

Each piece of art or sculpture was displayed in the Barnsley Civic Gallery exhibition space. The curation of this was not without challenges (discussed below), but each artwork was displayed with a corresponding QR code for the public to scan with their phones and listen to the music through headphones.

The final performance was well-attended, with participants from Creative Recovery and Project 14 joining the musicians on stage and performing the music they had co-composed. This marked the first experience for any of them to perform with an ensemble, with the vocalists from Project 14 taking on solo roles for the first time. An additional member of Creative recovery performed with us during the first section of the concert. James was the only participant during the workshops who had synaesthesia. He found it incredibly difficult to produce something on paper to represent his thoughts but used a range of cameras and vision goggles with specialised software to reproduce colour patterns and shapes to any music presented to him. He asked to perform during our live performance of *I will kiss you forever* (11.30 timestamp in Madden_2-1-43241_seeing_music_concert_excerpt.mov), where he used vision goggles and software to perform his visual experience of the piece.

It was especially encouraging to witness the support that group members extended to one another. Despite not being able to take part in the final musician workshop, many members of the Creative Recovery group made an effort to attend the concert to show encouragement for their fellow group members. The same level of support was evident among the Project 14 members, and both groups

[114] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQWkRdtU39ZaB0rW16fk1uQ

[115] www.seeingmusichearingcolour.com

engaged with each other and encouraged the soloists who were experiencing apprehension and nerves.

An incomplete (due to technical issues at the live performance) video recording of the final performance is submitted (Madden_2-1-43241_seeing_music_concert_excerpt.mov). This was recorded by a participant from the Creative Recovery group.A full audio recording is available as file 5.4 and all recordings are submitted as appendix items. The exhibition remained in situ for one month with excellent feedback from the public (detailed below) and positive interviews conducted by Barnsley Chronicle and The Yorkshire Post.

5.9 Challenges

Here, an exploration of the challenges stemming from ongoing Covid-19-related isolation and the insights gained from exhibition planning and installation is presented.

The workshops held at Penistone Heartspace were minimally impacted by Covid-19 related concerns. The only notable exceptions were workshop leaders expressing apprehension and concerns about the potential transmission of Covid-19 and the inherent risk associated with working closely with young people in a confined area. String and percussion players were able to wear masks; however, woodwind musicians, including myself, faced challenges as mask-wearing was not feasible for a significant portion of the workshop sessions. The biggest challenge in this setting revolved around the restricted space available within the SEND unit and the transient nature of additional students requiring refuge from any overwhelming situations in the mainstream setting. This unrestricted access occasionally caused distractions for our core participants when newcomers accessed the room. Nevertheless, by the time the musicians commenced their workshops, Chiomah and I were ready to promptly explain the situation to any incoming students and help them observe quietly, while ensuring art materials were available for those who preferred a more active engagement than sitting still and listening.

The difficulties encountered in the Creative Recovery and Project-14 workshops were primarily associated with the ongoing prevalence of Covid-19. Some participants had underlying health conditions making them vulnerable, and many experienced anxiety regarding the persistent spread of the virus. At that time, isolation measures were mandated for individuals testing positive for Covid-19, leading to apprehension among many service users about engaging in group activities. As mentioned earlier, an outbreak of the virus coincided with our planned final recording sessions in both groups, resulting in several participants opting to stay away from the workshop due to illness or

concerns about potential exposure to the contagious virus. Most individuals were unable to participate remotely; however, two members from Project -14 managed to attend the final music workshops through Zoom.

The curation of the exhibition presented another significant challenge. As a first-time curator, I found the task both exciting and demanding. While Chiomah had more experience in this field, she was disappointed to discover that the carefully prepared instructions provided for the installation day were not fully followed by the gallery. The installation start date was delayed abruptly, and we were given smaller prints than those we had requested. Furthermore, the framing and display methods, including repainting display stands to black, were not completed as requested. Despite outlining our requirements in advance, they were not adhered to during the installation. We had initially discussed spreading the artwork throughout the entire panorama of the gallery, but found that we were limited to a much smaller area than originally promised, reducing the overall impact. We had envisaged a more impactful display of the synaesthetic art, with striking framing, but again this did not happen and left us feeling slightly disappointed for the participants and the project.

Despite these obstacles, we successfully curated a cohesive and well-received exhibition that received positive feedback throughout its month-long duration. Public attendees provided this feedback through postcards placed in a feedback box during the exhibition, and emails via the dedicated website, which coincided with the launch of the concert.[116] Feedback postcards from the concert provided numerous positive comments, with many recognising the impact of collaboration with the musicians and other group members, and praising the novelty of using the QR code to listen to music whilst looking at the art. The only negative comment was a practical suggestion of having more seating available to be able to sit down and rest when required (and which we fed back to the gallery). Perhaps the most pertinent feedback was from the participants themselves who overwhelmingly stated that the project had provided supportive development of both creative and mental health elements, and helped to ease the re-entry into group work after isolation. For many, self-belief in creating outside of their normal comfort zone enhanced self-confidence and pride.

[116] https://www.seeingmusichearingcolour.com/

5.9 Conclusion.

It is difficult to articulate a suitable and concise conclusion for the myriads of connections and personal moments of joy experienced by many of the participants and workshop leaders. This project fully integrated the principles of person-centred thinking that I had utilised in previous projects. It reinforced the importance of implementing relational approaches to gently draw out creativity in individuals who needed sensitive support. By believing in their capacity to create music, even without prior experience, and building trusting and nurturing non-hierarchical relationships, we were able to encourage and guide them effectively. After interviewing the participants and workshop leaders following the project, it became clear that the line between 'expert' and participant significantly faded within the adult groups, which created a foundation of ease and freedom. Throughout this project the person-centred approach was tested and shown to have worked. The structure of the workshops worked well but required flexibility in the adult groups. Maintaining focus on the colour/synaesthesia aspect of creating proved challenging for many of the adult participants. As leaders we therefore had to employ flexibility in our approach, rather than strictly adhering to the 'colour' theme. Storytelling took precedence, with narrative being utilised as a therapeutic tool in many cases. I can conclude that using colour as an initial stimulus was useful, but storytelling overwhelmingly became the primary focus and driver for most participants. Remaining open to letting the project evolve in a different direction than initially planned was crucial to the successful final outcome, which I was thrilled with, as were the musicians and participants.

The insights of Morag Galloway, project musician, serve as a fitting conclusion, encapsulated in a blog detailing the project and its culminating performance.

> The people who have contributed artwork and engaged in the workshops have been emboldened and nourished by the love and attention paid to them through time spent together making art. They feel included in musicking practices beforehand understood as excluding. They understand art is for them.
>
> - Morag Galloway

Conclusion.

The four projects and their respective compositional outputs included in this portfolio required diverse working methods, yet they were approached with similar underlying processes and relational strategies. These have been explored in broad terms in Chapter 1, and in more detail within each of the separate chapters that deal with each project. While each involved collaboration, the extent of this collaboration and the particular guises in which it took place varied.

The Magic Paintbrush project (Chapter 2) explored collaborative yet structured writing processes, with a focus on developing an inclusive composition that enabled and supported younger, less experienced participants who had never experienced performing in a professional environment. Consideration was given to the diverse needs of each group, whilst maintaining a skeleton score to ensure consistency between the two versions of the opera that emerged. By contrast, *Medea Maria* (Chapter 3) was fully scored, but still included important elements of collaboration with the musicians to ensure the music written for them was within their 'stretch' zone, while still fulfilling the sonic wishes of the director. From a person-centred perspective, this project placed a strong emphasis on relationships, highlighting that when accommodations and considerations were made for the technical abilities of the musicians, and participants were given scaffolding and support to experiment and learn from mistakes, growth and development was able to occur. *The Time Paradox House* (Chapter 4) explored freedom of expression, a re-emergence back into group work after Covid-19, the exploration of 'sound as music' and how to capture and manipulate environmental noises to create sound effects. There was also a strong emphasis on generating aspiration and promoting self-esteem among the participants. *Seeing Music, Hearing Colour* (Chapter 5) encouraged interdisciplinary working and experimenting with a new art form for most, which was musical composition. Working collaboratively with musicians in a supportive environment where making mistakes was accepted and even embraced, participants were able to experiment with this new artistic expression without the need for prior musical skills.

The conclusion I have drawn from these processes of working with community and education groups is that taking significant time in creating optimal conditions for participants to flourish and fostering trusting relationships, leads to the creation of higher-quality final products. I discovered that once these person centred conditions were established, participants were able to unleash their creative processes, which had perhaps been previously inhibited. This allowed me, as a composer, to access

authentic and unique material that could be included in my compositions. The conditions paved the way for the creation of distinctive compositions that both I and the participants could take pride in.

I devised the adapted 'hierarchy of needs' (see Chapter 1) in order to allow me to systematically record my observations throughout the projects and my wider research process. There are, I believe, some key points from the hierarchy and the experience of conducting the PhD projects which are important for achieving the best possible outcome for participants and workshop leaders:

Person-Centredness. Each person and their life experiences are unique. Accepting a person non-judgmentally, and demonstrating warmth and authenticity, opens up the possibility for them to effectively overcome barriers related to creative fear, and lay the foundation for a trusting and productive relationship. Adopting a person-centred approach has allowed me, on many occasions, to discover strategies that help hesitant participants overcome their initial reluctance to engage in the creative process. I find this akin to tailoring a prescription to treat a medical condition, where individual needs and symptoms must be addressed on a personal level.

Relationships and safety. These two essential elements could be addressed separately in distinct sections. However, their close interconnection means that they are more effectively discussed together. As each project progressed, relationships grew, and barriers of communication were lowered. Through opening channels of dialogue and nuanced support, participants were sometimes able to access deeply meaningful, painful or joyful emotions and aspirations. This occurred as a result of myself and the practitioners exhibiting various strategies highlighted in the modified hierarchy and Rogers' person-centred approach. I noticed that as a sense of trust developed, participants felt comfortable asking questions and exploring new creative approaches without fear of criticism. This sense of safety led to remarkable instances of spontaneity, and in some cases empowered individuals to participate in performances.

Heterogeneity. Approaching projects with a highly person-centred approach, for example where participants with additional needs required very specific support and considerations, has been of the greatest significance throughout the duration of my PhD. Sometimes this was a physical consideration (as in the instance of Greenacre School pupils, Chapter 2), while in other instances this was trying to find solutions for pupils with ADHD, where a quiet and calm environment was required (Chapter 4).

Not all needs were obvious, and careful observation was constantly required to notice any potential issues or needs which could be addressed quickly and discreetly.

Freedom to create and improvisation.

At times, letting go of aspects of creative control posed a personal challenge and remains an evolving area for me to explore further; specifically with determining the balance between granting freedom and adopting a non-directive approach to empower autonomy and creativity, while still maintaining enough oversight to deliver a final product to take pride in. As highlighted in Ditty Dokter's research on creative freedoms,[117] some individuals can find a non-directive approach empowering, allowing them the freedom to 'do their own thing,' while for others, a more directive structure provides a greater sense of security. Judging when to take directive and non-directive action has been an important consideration and was particularly salient in the *Time Paradox House* (Chapter 4). It has been enlightening to note that while my original vision for a PhD portfolio pondered exploring improvisation techniques in mainstream music theatre, the delivery and content of the projects took on a more discrete form of improvisation and creative freedom. Works such as *The Magic Paintbrush, Medea,* and *Seeing Music, Hearing Colour* incorporated improvisation either from the performers or musicians, while the creation process of *Time Paradox House* was, from the outset, conceived as a purely non-directive project in which participants were encouraged to utilise improvisation and freedom of expression to shape the final script.

Workshop leaders. As previously highlighted, the selection of the most appropriate workshop leader was crucial when undertaking a project whose participants presented with diverse needs. One of the most rewarding aspects of each project was the opportunity it provided for cultivating strong relationships thus delivering distinctive experiences with both participants and leaders. Workshop leaders found themselves engaging in a unique journey, forming connections with participants, and enhancing their own professional growth in ways that they had not previously experienced, and this proved to be a revelatory and enriching experience for them. Despite encountering obstacles throughout the project, capturing the sense of joy and well-being that we collectively experienced during both the process and the final performances or presentations is difficult to put into words.

[117] Ditty Doktor, "Helping and Hindering Processes in Creative Arts Therapy Group Practice." *Creative Art Therapy*, *no. 1* (2010): 67–83, accessed Feb 1, 2023, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41719265.

Professional Identity.

My professional identity has evolved significantly throughout the development of this portfolio. From the outset, I was committed to involving community and school participants as deeply as possible in my productions. I approached this process from the perspective of a composer, envisioning a structure where workshop leaders—referred to as "practitioners" in this commentary—would facilitate sessions under my direction. This allowed me to observe, contribute selectively, and make informed compositional decisions without taking on a leading role in the workshops.

Across the four projects, I consistently positioned myself as a composer but drew upon my prior workshop-leading experience to recognise and address barriers to creativity that some individuals faced. I viewed my role not only as a composer but also as a curator, responsible for creating a safe and inclusive environment where participants felt encouraged to engage with art forms they might not have explored before. The dual role of composer and curator became inherently linked, as designing these projects required attention to both artistic and human-centred considerations.

Furthermore, the process naturally led me to research the lived experiences of participants, particularly in relation to trauma, and to integrate principles of person-centred practice into my work. This research was central to my composition process: enabling participants—the creators of much of the additional material—to produce their best work was a necessary condition for achieving the best possible outcome in my compositions. Thus, creating optimal conditions for participant creativity became an integral part of my compositional practice also.

From Portfolio to Practice: Envisioning the Future

Regarding the compositional outputs within this folio, they represent a diverse set of works, and demonstrate that when close consideration of the individual participant, and their current position, is provided, then it is possible for these large scale community works to be composed. There is a community opera which is almost an hour long and explores inclusion, improvisation, and collaborative music making. There is another opera which explores the embedding of improvisation and extending confidence and musical skills of the participants. There is a radio play which introduced freedom of narrative, the awareness of sound as musical possibility and songwriting using widely accessible technology, and finally there is a collection of short pieces which embrace interdisciplinary approaches and composition for non-musicians.

For the future, in the short term I am maintaining my collaborative work with community groups, with a project supported by secured funding to produce a radio ballad in the Dearne Valley region, and with ongoing conversations to replicate the innovative process of *Seeing Music, Hearing Colour* in the Teesside region. These are, however, only the first steps in developing my approach further. In navigating the complexity of prioritising process over creative outcome, I have arrived at a position where I believe that by fostering the best possible conditions for my collaborators and participants, I can cultivate exceptional outcomes from their valuable contributions. In essence, the collaborative process enabled me to integrate the creative contributions of project participants with my music compositions, resulting in works that are both artistically satisfying and highly collaborative. This experience has significantly enhanced my compositional outreach and facilitated substantial growth in my artistic development, and so it is not only the participants within the projects undertaken here who have been given the opportunity to develop as musicians.

Appendix

Appendix 1 - Key points for Magic Paintbrush Scenes

Pupils identified the following points as key moments in the *Magic Paintbrush* story.

- Poor boy who only wants to paint
- Wants to go to school - asks for a paintbrush and rejected by teacher.
- Liang went home to bed - dreams about an old man giving him a magic paintbrush - warning him to be careful what he does with the brush.
- The dream is real - now he can do all the painting he liked.
- Experiments and paints a bird.
- The pictures only come to life once the painting is finished.
- He didn't need to work, and he painted for poor people.
- Emperor learns about Liang and demands he works for him.
- Liang refuses and is locked up by emperor.
- Liang paints himself a fire and food, and lives in comfort.
- Liang hears the emperor coming and paints himself a key to escape.
- Liang tries to live a normal life without finishing painting so they wouldn't come to life (to escape the attention of the emperor)
- Man bumps into Liang, knocks water onto the picture which finishes it off and the bird came to life.
- Emperor starts using the paintbrush and paints lots of gold - but he knew he needed Liang's help as his pictures were not good enough to turn into the things he wanted.
- Liang is seized and develops a plan.
- Agrees to paint for the emperor - entices him with dreams of riches.
- Paints the sea, and fish and a boat as the emperor requests. Emperor and his men go onto the boat and asked Liang to paint wind… the boat starts to sail away. Liang paints bigger waves… more and more big waves.
- The emperor demanded he stop, but Liang painted until the boat sank and the emperor was gone forever.

Appendix 2 - Structural Plan for Medea Maria.

The following table presents the structural plan of Medea Maria

Scene	**Scene description / Director's original notes**	Content / Music as initially **suggested by director**	Final decisions / notes
1.00**Prelude** Bars 1-71	Opening Musical prologue, very little action. Lights and possibly silhouette of Medea / Golden Fleece.	The prologue sets the scene and gives a hint of the kind of music that is going to be performed.	Solo clarinet, followed by introduction of ensemble. Repetition or rhythmic fragments leading to a rise in intensity (changing tempo at b.62) Based on one scale / chord / (tritones?) Piano represents a clock like sound- constant ticking (bells?)
1.1 **Nurse's Introduction** Bs. 72-279	Text from nurse, accompanied by ensemble movement. Setting in Greek and stylised atmosphere of the piece. Nurse appears and travels 'towards the light'	Slow and methodical to match the movement of the nurse (accurate and precise).. Starting sparse and growing in tempo and volume. **Current music used: Steve Reich *New York Counterpoint***	Greek scale (Dorian) with distorted notes. Pizz. strings to establish rhythm. A clear and repetitive sense of pulse including syncopation.
1.2 Medea's entrance **Bs. 280-348**	Medea in silhouette (iconic image). Travels into light - gestures - holding a dagger, scorned and distressed - cheated by her lover.	Music to reflect a dramatic entrance, sung by chorus. Grand and powerful The chorus sing in harmony. Large changes of feelings and emotions throughout - possibly in time with the music!	Chordal - Block Harmony Words: Doxa Doxa (Glory Glory behold) I doo (Behold - I see) Teleioo (to bring to an end - finished) Enopion (before - in the sight of) Ex Angelou (to announce)

1.3 Jason and his new bride (Medea changing) **Bs.349-475**	Shows Jason and the Princess of Corinth new relationship - Gestures and movement between them. Movement with masks and passion, utilising gestures.	Still repetitive - establishing a firm beat for movement. Music - passionate and possibly using strings to add the feel of romance.	Greek wedding music inspired. Build of the music to follow the choreography. Lighter in sound - major and modal elements. Moments of dissonance to indicate potential chaos (tritone).
1.4 Callas in conversation **B 475**	Callas and the interviewer are onstage in conversation, the interviewer in shadow. Discussing Callas's life.. Nurse performing a movement sequence that involves slapping.	Quiet undertone of music, layered with slapping gestures and sounds following the movement and gesture of the performers. (starts slow and gets much faster)	Sparse - disjointed . Improvised - follow conductors shaping and direction. Workshop this scene, create a scale or note sets together and experiment with sound sculpting and improvisation (including some extended techniques).
1.5 The sadness Callas is changing **Bs. 476-580**	Nurse continues gestures. Shows great control over the children When they come to her side she turns with one motion and says 'shush' She takes their hands and walks back behind the stage.	Music to represent the fate of the children (death). Growing from the last scene by adding the chorus.	Grows from the last scene by adding the chorus to the music - very sad and emotional (will repeat later). **Approx 7 min duration**
2.1 Jason and Medea Love Duet **Bs. 581-601**	Jason and Medea perform a repetitive love duet with passion. Medea explores the contradiction of hating Jason but being strongly attracted to him.	Music should be a duet between the two actors demonstrating love and passion as well as anger. Jason masked at the start then reveals charm and attractiveness.	-Minor, chromatic, contrapuntal. -Choral: Oh Phi-le-o (phileo) To love -Repetitive piano driving the passion and maintaining energy. -Cello separate melody line. -Duet (Jason and Medea).
2.2 Golden Fleece / symbols	Medea performs gestures of fertility interacting with objects in a metaphorical	-Long section - Medea leaves to change before the end.	Energetic and discordant - fast paced to begin. Music slows and

of fertility **Bs. 602-718**	manner. Dramatic: The golden fleece possibly appears in the scene.	-Music should convey discord and chaos at times. Currently Using Meredith Monk: *Basket A - High Basket.*	meanders - discordant and continuous but with less vigour. Approx **7:30** mins of music required. To slow and become less intense around **3:40** (when children are fed an apple).
2.3 conversation 2 **B 719**	The conversation continued about her love for Aristotle Onasis.	Music: The same as before.	Improvised section as 1.4
2.4 prep of the poisoned ropes **Bs. 720-801**	-Robes taken off by the children and presented to the princess of Corinth - The Princess is masked and smoke begins to appear from under her dress - removes the mask and screams	Slow - the princess is burned. Sombre - slow, slight elements of dissonance. Dramatic towards the end.	Irregular time signatures but a sense of pulse for movement. Some elements of 'ticking clock' (piano) Semitone intervals - left hand keeping much of the consistent pulse. **Approx 6 mins of music**
2.5 Medea's Aria **Bs. 802-868**	An aria of power and madness, Medea sings a powerful song of torment, between right and wrong. Gestures of the body explore the fight between good and evil. She is angry with Jason now and is plotting against him, deciding to kill the children.	**Medea's aria** **-**Slow, sparse accompaniment - mostly piano. -The **Singers Chorus** would be trying to convince her not to so it and to think about what she is doing -She has to make a choice "I will find courage when I think how great will be his sufferings"	Words (provided by Alexander) to be used as whole words, or fragmented. Ghemo Ah Oh so me oh Solemeoh Zetesis Fileteknos Femo **(Some written phonetically to aid singers)**

2.6 Death of the Princess **Bs. 869-1139**	Reminiscent of the poisoned ropes, the scene incorporates gesture and movement. The princess is killed.	-Children enter the scene to aid the death of the princess. -Long section with Jackie, Nurse, Medea and children present. -Incorporate poisoned ropes music. "I will find courage when I think how great will be his sufferings"	**Incorporate poisoned ropes music.** -Jackie enters approx 1 min - some melodic moments -Around 4 mins signify a *hint* of death toll via piano to finish the section -Chorus sing from 940 -Medea enters 957 - solo clarinet and piano to begin - almost regal. -977 - children enter . pizz cello -998 - children hand over the cloak - repeat elements of the semitone intervals used in poisoning of the ropes. -1014 children help princess into cloak -1026 Medea screams - repeated chord. -1039 - Nurse enters (reference original music)
ACT 2			
3.1 Callas and the painting **1140**	Callas enters and sits next to the phone, when it rings she answers with precision - listening intently - she is in shock and her facial expressions are fierce. Anger swells- she removes the dagger from her costume, forming the iconic pose before slashing the painting on the wall. -She storms out.	Same music as the other callas in conversations But towards the end as Maria picks up the phone it changes from the world of Maria Callas to that of Medea. -She slashes a painting on the wall as if she were Medea accompanied with powerful operatic music. **Singing chorus** -Possible drumming starts building in tempo.	Improvised section as 1.4
3.2 The death of the children	There is a scream offstage, before Maria forms the iconic position this time not in silhouette but harsh white light, blood dripping from her dagger clasped hand.	-Terror and distress needs to be incorporated into the music, without dominating the scene. -The drums continue from the previous scene	-Piano and flute introduction. -Dark and confusing music with small references and snippets from other sections.

1141-1190	She moves towards the child with force and vigour.	building in volume and speed. **-Singing chorus** -After silence a single ethereal voice repeats the sad choral sounds of the previous scene.	-Use words from previous sections - all fragments and mosaic like now. Moments of comfortable harmony, signifying an ascent to heaven maybe (particularly from chorus) fused with darker moments. -Follow visuals (import to Logic) to decide texture
3.3 Jason and Medea final duet **1191**	Medea slumped on floor crying, holding dead child. Jason enters unmasked - shocked - begins to sing a deep and sorrowful song. Medea accompanies him with a choral duet. She grows in power - once more taking centre stage. She hands the child to Jason and finishes with power as Jason is slumped on the floor with the child.	*Duet* Song to follow the changing emotions of the character. The last note possibly Laura's on her own **Singing chorus at the very end**	Instrumental while Jason enters -Jason sings solo - approx 2 mins (b 1200) **Words** from Alexander: -Loopay -Aheero -Amet amelaytos -Fonos! -Ro -Zaymeeah Medea enters - supported by Chorus Ascending scale, crescendo to end.

Table 1. Combined notes by Alexander Kaniewski and Helen Madden.

Appendix 5.1 - Seeing Music Hearing Colour, individual recordings.

The following submitted files present the individual recordings produced as a part of the Seeing Music, Hearing Colour project.

Madden_201043241_Lego.mov

Madden_201043241_Flickering.mov

Madden_201043241_ Stary_night.mov

Madden_201043241_Glitter.mov

Madden201053241_Can't_buy.mov

Madden201054351_Five_Finger.mov

Madden201054351_ Praying.mov

Madden201054351_our_Dearne.mov

Madden_201043241_mould_house.mov

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