

Heidi Partti

LEARNING FROM COSMOPOLITAN DIGITAL MUSICIANS



Identity,
musicianship,
and changing values
in (in)formal music communities



SIBELIUS ACADEMY

Studia Musica 50

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Abstract

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This compilation dissertation comprising the summary and four blind peer-reviewed articles examines the culture of music making and musical learning, and the construction of musical identity in the world of digital and virtual media. The main research goal is to increase the knowledge and understanding about where and in what ways do participants in digital technology enabled communities of musical practice learn and use music in the processes of their identity construction, and to reflect upon what implications the answers to these questions can be expected to have in terms of the values and practices within formal music education. The examination proceeds by advancing heuristically a social theory of learning in general, and of so-called communities of practice, in particular, as this theory provides a lens to understand the intertwined relationship between learning, identity construction and participation in communities. The research project was designed as a qualitative study of multiple cases containing strong features of narrative research, and was conducted with the participation of digital musicians who represent different age groups, nationalities and levels of expertise. Two of the cases are online communities: *mikseri.net* and *operabyyou.com*. A third case study is a face-to-face group of students and teacher of a Music Performance and Production course at a London-based music college. The research material includes observation field notes, online discussions, video recorded observations and individual interviews. Each article provides a viewpoint into the main problem concerning musical learning and identity work within digital technologies enabled music-related communities. The findings of the research project illustrate how digital music and information technology has opened up new and wider opportunities for musical learning. Concurrently, the findings question the sharp division between highly specialised musical expertise and amateur music making, as well as the divisions between different musical styles and genres, and the various roles of music makers. Digital musicianship appears to be closely related to values both favouring communication and an exchange of musical ideas, and celebrating simultaneous participation in various global and local communities for pursuing individual and social musical identities in more flexible and open ways. In the study, these extensive cultural changes are suggested to manifest a democratic revolution that provides individuals with the access needed to use their intelligence more freely for musical growth and expression, and to share in the values of

musical cultures more democratically. However, based on the study's findings, it is also argued that while informal music practices represent essential aspects of our society's community life, they do not necessarily represent ideal models for the music classroom. As such, in order to realise and comprehend the multidimensionality of students' music learning, the study suggests that it is essential for music educators to pay heed to music making inside and outside school, as well as in the whole continuum between the formal and informal poles, and to promote learning that facilitates the construction of identity and ownership of meaning by placing matters of democracy at the centre of attention.

Keywords: digital musicians; community of practice; musicianship; new media; musical identity; informal music education

Tiivistelmä

Partti, Heidi. 2012. Kosmopoliitit digitaalimuusikot oppimisen suunnannäyttäjinä: identiteetti, muusikkous sekä muuttuvat arvot musiikin (epä)muodollisissa yhteisöissä. Sibelius-Akatemia. Musiikkikasvatuksen, jazzin ja kansanmusiikin osasto. Studia Musica 50. Väitöskirja. 200 sivua.

Tämä yhteenveto-osasta sekä neljästä vertaisarvioidusta artikkelista muodostuva artikkeliväitöskirja tarkastelee musiikin tekemistä ja oppimista sekä musiikillisen identiteetin rakentumista digitaali- ja virtuaalimedian maailmassa. Tutkimuksen pää tavoitteena on lisätä tietoa ja ymmärrystä siitä, missä ja millä tavoin digitaalisten ja musiikillisten käytäntöyhteisöjen (*communities of practice*) osallistujat oppivat musiikkia ja käyttävät sitä identiteettityössään. Tutkimuksessa myös pohditaan, millaisia seuraamuksia tutkimuksen esiintuomilla kysymyksillä voidaan odottaa olevan muodollisen musiikkikasvatuksen arvoihin ja käytäntöihin. Oppimisen, identiteetin rakentumisen sekä yhteisöihin osallistumisen välistä suhdetta tarkastellaan oppimisen sosiaalisen teorian näkökulmasta. Tutkimushanke on laadullinen tapaustutkimus, johon sisältyy narratiivisen tutkimuksen piirteitä. Tutkimus tehtiin eri ikäryhmiä, kansallisuuksia ja asiantuntijuuden tasoja edustavien digitaalimuusikoiden keskuudessa. Tutkimus koostuu kolmesta tapauksesta, joista kaksi – *mikseri.net* ja *operabyyou.com* – ovat verkkoyhteisöjä. Kolmas tutkittava tapaus on Lontoossa sijaitsevan musiikkioppilaitoksen Music Performance and Production -linjan opiskelijoista ja opettajasta muodostuva ryhmä. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu kenttäjakson aikana kertyneistä muistiinpanoista, tutkittavien verkkoyhteisöjen keskustelualueilta valituista viesteistä, videotallennetuista havainnoista sekä haastatteluista. Kukin artikkeli tarkastelee päätutkimusongelmaa eri näkökulmista pyrkien kuvaamaan ja ymmärtämään digitaalitekniologioiden mahdollistamissa musiikillisissa yhteisöissä tapahtuvaa oppimista ja identiteettityötä. Tutkimushankkeen tulokset osoittavat, että digitaalinen musiikki- ja informaatioteknologia on avannut uusia ja yhä laajenevia mahdollisuuksia musiikilliselle oppimiselle. Tulosten pohjalta voidaan myös kyseenalaistaa tiukka rajanveto pitkälle erikoistuneen musiikillisen asiantuntijuuden sekä harrastuspohjaisen musiikin tekemisen välillä, kuten myös musiikin lajien ja tyylien sekä musiikintekijöiden roolien välillä. Tutkimus osoittaa, että digitaalimuusikkous liittyy arvoihin, jotka edustavat kommunikaatiota ja musiikillisten ideoiden keskinäistä jakamista. Myös samanaikainen osallistuminen erilaisiin globaaleihin ja paikallisiin yhteisöihin on tärkeä osa digitaalimuusikkoutta. Tämä osallistuminen tarjoaa entistä joustavampia ja avoimempia mahdollisuuksia yksilöllisten ja yhteisöllisten musiikillisten identiteettien rakentamiseen. Tässä tutkimuksessa edellä kuvattujen kulttuuristen muutosten ymmärretään heijastelevan

'demokraattista vallankumousta', joka mahdollistaa entistä vapaamman tiedon tuottamisen musiikillisen kasvun ja ilmaisun välineenä sekä musiikkikulttuurien arvojen entistä tasa-arvoisemman jakamisen. Tutkimustulosten pohjalta voidaan kuitenkin väittää, että musiikin oppimisen epämuodolliset käytännöt eivät välttämättä tarjoa malleja musiikin koulussa tapahtuvaan oppimiseen. Musiikkikasvattajien tärkeä tehtävä onkin huomioida sekä koulussa että sen ulkopuolella tapahtuva musiikin tekeminen sekä edistää oppimista, joka tukee identiteetin ja musiikillisen omistajuuden rakentumista.

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I dedicate this work to the loving memory of my dad who taught me to listen to the sound of stories.

London, June 2012

Heidi Partti

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Published works by the author incorporated into the thesis

In the book, the following articles will be referred to by the Roman numbers I-IV.

I Partti, H., & Karlsen, S. (2010). Reconceptualising musical learning: New media, identity and community in music education. *Music Education Research* 12(4), 369–382.

- Incorporated in Appendix 1

II Partti, H. (2012). Cosmopolitan musicianship under construction. Digital musicians illuminating emerging values in music education. *International Journal of Music Education*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/0255761411433727.

- Incorporated in Appendix 2

III Partti, H., & Westerlund, H. (n.d.). Envisioning collaborative composing in music education: Learning and negotiation of meaning in operabyyou.com. *British Journal of Music Education*, accepted to be published.

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IV Partti, H., & Westerlund, H. (in press). Democratic musical learning: How the participatory revolution in new media challenges the culture of music education. In: A. R. Brown (Ed.), *Sound musicianship: Understanding the crafts of music* (pp. 280–291). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

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Statement of contributions to jointly authored works contained in the thesis

In Article I, my co-author was Prof. Sidsel Karlsen, and in Articles III and IV Prof. Heidi Westerlund. The said co-authors also acted as supervisors in the writing of the articles. My contribution and responsibility in each of the articles was prevalent, as I designed and conducted the empirical studies, gathered all the data and analysed it. Designing the theoretical framework in each article was mainly my responsibility. I was also in charge of the manuscripts as the corresponding (submitting) author. As the corresponding author, I was solely responsible for communicating with the

journals, in addition to the accuracy of the manuscripts' content. The writing, as well as the revisions made to each article, proceeded in close cooperation at all stages, with both authors being involved in the entire process. As such, it would be impossible to point out individual ownership to specific ideas or parts of the texts. However, my responsibility increased towards the end of the research process, with a trend of approximately 50% in Article I, to 60% in Article III and finally to 70% in Article IV.

Additional published works by the author relevant to the thesis but not forming part of it

Partti, H. (2009). Musiikin verkkoyhteisöissä opitaan tekemällä: kokemisen, jakamisen, yhteisön ja oman musiikinteen merkitykset osallistumisen kulttuurissa [Learning by doing in online music communities: The meanings of experience, sharing, music making and community in participatory culture]. *The Finnish Journal of Music Education* 12(2), 39–47.

Karlsen, S., Westerlund, H., Partti, H., & Solbu, E. (n.d.). Community music in the Nordic countries: Politics, research, programmes and educational significance. In: D. Elliott & K. Veblen (Eds.), *Handbook of community music*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., accepted to be published.

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Partti, H. (2012, January). Constructing glocal musical identities in the changing cultural landscapes: Operabyyou.com as an arena for collaborating in “kaleidoscopic music”. Paper presented at the Cultural Diversity in Music Education Conference, Singapore.

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1 Introduction

Hannah, the 9-year-old old daughter of a friend of mine, recently came home from her first electric guitar lesson. Hannah could have not been more excited: after merely one lesson she was not only totally in love with the instrument, but could also successfully (although only in half tempo) play a real rock riff of “Should I Stay Or Should I Go”. Hannah’s parents were pleased, and wanted to hear her perform the riff first thing after supper. To their surprise, however, the girl was not going to settle for a private gig at home, but insisted that the performance be video recorded for YouTube distribution.

In most parts of the globe, the world is now open to public self-expression in a way we have never experienced before. Hannah’s story above is a true account of an eager young musician’s first experience. It is a fitting place to commence, not because it is an exceptional story, but because it is so *ordinary*. Judging by the myriad of home-made live recordings on YouTube, something similar to the incident that took place in Hannah’s family has happened in countless households across many parts of the world.

Indeed, the radical impact that today’s technological developments have had on our lives does not always seem to be regarded as at all radical by those who can effortlessly access and utilise this wide range of new technologies in their learning and other activities. In recent writings, this new generation of learners – those who were born into the world of digital technologies – has been called, for instance, “the net generation, generation y, the gamer generation or the yuk/wow generation” (Lebler 2008, p. 207), “Google generation or the millenials” (Helsper & Eynon 2010, p. 503), and probably most widely, *digital natives* (e.g. Prensky 2001; 2010; Bennett, Maton & Kervin 2008; Crappell 2011). Although the person’s age is not necessarily the defining actor for being a tech savvy, a digital native is usually a youngster, who “comes from a media-rich household, who uses the Internet as a first port of call for information, multi-tasks using ICTs [i.e. Information and Communications Technologies] and uses the Internet to carry out a range of activities particularly those with a focus on learning” (Helsper & Eynon 2010, p. 515). Whether one wants to become skilled at playing traditional Irish tunes (Waldron & Veblen 2008), or needs to get information on music software and hardware (Salavuo 2006), or

wants to share one's own musical compositions or even participate in the creation of an opera like some participants in this study, for a digital native the first choice of a forum is the one that is accessible 24/7; a forum independent of whether she is sitting at home, driving on a bus, or – as discovered by me while writing this very chapter in November 2011 – travelling over Europe on an air plane.

1.1 Context of the study

For many of us, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, MySpace and the like have made the public sharing of what once was considered more-or-less “personal life” (or a territory for paid experts only) an everyday routine. Statistics (OSF 2011) show that, for instance, in Finland – a top-10 country in Europe in prevalence of Internet use – 86% of 16 to 24 years old Finns follow some web-based social network service(s), while in an extensive survey carried out recently by the Pew Research Center (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr 2010), over 70% of American teen Internet users – that is 93% of all American teens – reported using an online social networking site, and nearly 40% stated that they use the Internet for sharing online media content they had created *themselves*, such as their own artwork, stories and videos. These statistics refer to an emerging cultural phenomenon, in which participants are, at least to some extent, creating the contents of their culture by themselves, blurring the boundaries between consuming and producing music, literature and other cultural artefacts, as well as making a flexible use of technology in self-expression, socialising and learning (e.g. Salavuo 2006; Gallant, Boone & Heap 2007; Lomborg 2009; Waldron 2009). Following the terminology used by, among others, Henry Jenkins and his colleagues (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison & Weigel 2006; see also, for instance, Kann, Berry, Gant & Zager 2007; Schäfer 2011), this phenomenon is referred to as *participatory culture* in this study.

Digital habitats of the emerging participatory culture

The concept of participatory culture is used in this study as a tool to aid in the understanding of the social-cultural context for music making and learning. Discussing participatory culture is hence not done simply to illustrate a fixed state of being, or to suggest how things should be. Furthermore, although modern technologies are an important part of this culture, it can only be partially understood if one focuses exclusively on technological platforms, features and tools. Rather, to employ a metaphor by Etienne Wenger and colleagues (Wenger, White & Smith 2009), participatory culture should probably be best understood as a collection of

ever changing and shifting *digital habitats*:

Just as a natural habitat reflects the learning of the species, a digital habitat is not just a configuration of technologies, but a dynamic, mutually-defining relationship that depends on the learning of the community. It reflects the practices that members have developed to take advantage of the technology available and thus experience this technology as a “place” for a community. A digital habitat is first and foremost an experience of place enabled by technology. (Wenger et al. 2009, p. 38).

The members of participatory culture are species of various digital habitats, who by producing, publishing and distributing media content contribute to shaping their habitats, and as “new elements are introduced...[need] to adapt to environmental changes” (Wenger et al. 2009, p. 37). An intrinsic feature of the digital habitats of participatory culture is the rapid and incessant pace of change caused by everyman’s right and ability “for cultural production that were previously inaccessible to consumers of industrially produced goods and mass media” (Schäfer 2011, p. 11).

Forms of participatory culture are innumerable, with new types emerging daily while old ones disappear into oblivion. Various forms listed by Jenkins and colleagues (2006, p. 3) have since become a part of everyday routine for many of us. These modes of participatory culture are composed of four elements (ibid.): 1) *affiliations*, referring to formal and informal memberships in online communities revolving around different forms of media, such as Facebook, message boards, game clans, or MySpace; 2) *expressions*, referring to the production of new creative forms, such as digital sampling, fan video making, and mash-ups; 3) the *collaborative problem-solving* of formal and informal teams of people working together to complete tasks and generate new knowledge through, for instance, Wikipedia and alternative reality gaming; and 4) *circulations*, referring to activities such as podcasting and blogging that shape the flow of media.

Importantly, however, whether one chooses to “maintain weblogs, publish photos, edit videos, engage in online communities, exchange music files on a global scale” or “cooperate in editing encyclopedic knowledge and software programming”, (Schäfer 2011, p. 11), members of participatory culture believe that “their contributions *matter*” (Jenkins et al. 2006, p. 3, emphasis added). They know that there is a countless number of others just like them, participating in the same way. As far as Hannah in the anecdote above was concerned, she was now able to play music and hence had something to contribute to the scene. In the discussion between Hannah and her parents that followed her request for a video camera, Hannah could not see any reason why she could not add her “gig” to the existing variety of some 6 000

versions of the *Should I Stay Or Should I Go* song on YouTube¹.

Hannah's straightforward attitude towards the Internet as a forum for her artistic efforts exemplifies the differences between the digital natives of participatory culture and those who, following Marc Prensky's (2001) metaphor, are referred to as digital immigrants². Digital natives, who "have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age" (p. 1) spontaneously turn to the Internet to look for music-related information, purchase musical pieces of any genre, style and tradition, network with other musicians and, like Hannah, search for a platform to perform, compose and/or share music – often multitasking all these things simultaneously. In contrast, Prensky goes as far as arguing that while digital immigrants may have adopted various features of the new technology, they will "always retain, to some degree...their foot in the past" (p. 2). Digital immigrants, such as Hannah's parents, might, for instance, purchase a CD from a web shop and look up Wikipedia to check a piece of information every now and then, but will ultimately choose a book store or a library for their source of information, prefer a face-to-face meeting over a virtual chat room, and are likely to be found "reading the manual for a program rather than assuming that the program itself will teach [them] to use it" (p. 2). Perhaps most significantly for our purposes, digital immigrants would never consider an online community to be a compelling forum for their musical self-expression. In fact, like Andrew Keen (2008, p. 11) warning about "the great seduction" of amateurism, they would probably be inclined to regard the Internet as more or less bottomless sea of unfiltered information and mediocre art.

1 The number of hits for "Should I Stay or Should I Go The Clash" on YouTube in September 20, 2011 (http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=should+i+stay+or+should+i+go&aq=0&oq=should+i+stay).

2 The concept of digital natives/immigrants, while used in this study, is acknowledged to have limitations. It is a widespread concept that works as a useful tool to the extent that it provides a rather familiar scenario in a world of increasing movement across state borders. It draws an analogy to a country's indigenous residents for whom local language and customs are "inborn" compared to immigrants, who are expected to learn the region's ways of doing things (but who will probably always be recognised by their accent). Digital immigrants' "thick accent" refers to their noticeably pre-digital ways to operate, such as printing documents rather than commenting on screen, or discussing a Facebook status in person instead of online. However, the analogy is somewhat misleading and possibly even offensive because it implies, for instance, that there is no variation within a specific generation, and it assumes every young person to be a digital native while a person born before a certain year is hopelessly tied into her old ways of talking and acting in the "new country". Moreover, it has also been pointed out that the whole distinction between natives and immigrants with its imperialistic undercurrent could be considered as othering and polarising, thus making the concept rigid and deterministic. For more about the discussion revolving around the concept, see, for instance, Bennett et al. 2008; Bennett & Maton 2010; Brown & Czerniewicz 2010; Helspner & Eynon 2010.

Digital musicians

Digital natives of the music culture are broadly referred to in this study as *digital musicians*. Following Andrew Hugill's (2008) definition, digital musicians either make music by creating predominantly original material on a computer, or produce new pieces of music by applying, for instance, recycling and remixing procedures, or record and/or mix music that is originally created either by themselves or other people (often called music producers or studio producers). Andrew Brown and Steve Dillon (2007) point out that digital musicians' musicianship takes place "in a networked environment [and] acknowledges the computer as an instrument, a networked group as a form of ensemble, and cyberspace as the venue for their music making" (p. 97). Digital musicians' music-related work emphasises the utilisation of digital technologies, but, as the following list by Lauri Väkevä (2009) exemplifies, may be manifested in various forms, such as

(m)aking music in a home studio in an computer environment with virtual instruments, distributing one's music freely to others in online communities, remixing music of one's peers and one's idols online, taking part in conjoint web-based musical projects, DJ'ng, even downloading music to listen to and to process further in one's personal computer or mobile device (Väkevä 2009, p. 30).

Along with the Internet, digital musicians "embrace a new world of musical performance and composition, empowered by new instruments" (Savage 2007, p. 74), such as computers, software, samplers, sequencers, drum machines and moderately priced recording equipment that enable composing, arranging, recording and mixing music regardless of the musician's instrumental training or formal and explicit knowledge of music theory (e.g. Stålhammar 2006; Bolton 2008; Ward 2009). Musical instruments have naturally always been under development, and their development has always had an impact on the course of the history of music³. The progression of digital instruments, however, seems to have practically *revolutionised* the music culture, not least due to the wide accessibility that enables "new creative ways of reworking and transforming music" (Väkevä 2009, p. 24) for both professional and amateur musicians, thus blurring the boundaries between different musical styles, genres, practices and levels of expertise.

3 For instance, radical improvements made in the flute in the 19th century were followed by a rapid spread in the use of the instrument, and inspired composers to write new music for it. Also, the evolution of the guitar into the electric guitar, reaching its breakthrough point in 1936 when Gibson introduced the ES150 model, heralded significant changes in the ways and places of music making.

Musical learning within digital habitats

Music-related digital habitats, including a variety of tools, platforms, features and configurations of technologies (Wenger et al. 2009), provide a multitude of new ways to become an expert in music. Learning is not restricted to a specific time or place, but can occur almost wherever and whenever, making it a project that takes place throughout an entire lifespan, often in global learning environments (Gee 2001; North, Hargreaves & Tarrant 2002). Learning music in the digital habitats of participatory culture happens through the participants' active creation and production of media artefacts, rather than by the utilisation of ready-made content by so-called experts. In Mirko Schäfer's (2011, p. 10) words, "[p]articipation has become a key concept used to frame the emerging media practice. It considers the transformation of former audiences into active participants and agents of cultural production on the Internet."

For many digital natives, the ordinariness of utilising and contributing to web-based material has obscured the fact that none of this was possible only a short while ago. However, digital and virtual technologies have not only facilitated convenient ways of carrying out music-related tasks, but "have brought forth new, even radically new, ways of conceiving, manipulating, mediating, consuming, and recycling music, and these new ways suggest new ideas which might help us to reconsider music as art form, industry, and mode of communication" (Väkevä 2009, p. 9). Furthermore, the possibility of distributing one's own artistic contributions to an audience potentially numbering in the multiple millions to enjoy, discuss and critique without the influence of the controlling gatekeepers of the music industry, for instance, *is* at any rate revolutionary.

1.2 Rationale and focus of the study

The school can now be accessed from home, home accessed from school, and the rest of the world from both. There are indications that the nine-to-five factory day is being replaced by a more flexible arrangement and that learning may take place in multiple, diverse environments. (Burnard & Finney 2007, p. 1)

This study is based on a social and educational vision according to which society and its challenges should give education purpose and direction – for the primary aim of education is to prepare students to act as moral agents in communities and thereby contribute to the common good of democratic society. This view follows John

Dewey's pragmatist philosophy that "emphasizes the dynamism of the experience of the students within a cultural context" (Väkevä & Westerlund 2007, p. 99). Learning is understood as an intersubjective experience in which "the social environment with its equalities and inequalities is taken as its actual feature" (ibid.). The value of music education is hence not considered to be prescribed by the subject matter, such as particular cultural traditions and norms, but to be related to the learner her/himself. This viewpoint sets the focus on the learner's "life in its qualitative richness and variety as the channel along which the learning experience flows" (ibid.). The question of "under what conditions is the learner likely to experience the personal positive value of his or her music education" (Westerlund 2008, p. 80) thus becomes pivotal. In order for the educators to be able to even begin to answer this question, the student's earlier and outside-school (informal) learning experiences, as well as the whole social environment *through* which learning takes place, must be taken into account (Dewey MW 9, p. 20; Westerlund 2008, p. 88; Karlsen 2011, p. 108). Dewey (MW 2) states,

If we isolate the child's present inclinations, purposes, and experiences from the place they occupy and the part they have to perform in a developing experience, all stand upon the same level; all alike are equally good and equally bad. But in the movement of life different elements stand upon different planes of value. (Dewey MW 2, p. 280)

Dewey's standpoint emphasises education as being "essentially a social process" (Dewey 1938/1998, p. 65). According to this "holistic approach" (Westerlund 2008, p. 88) to education, the social aspects of learning, such as relationships with peers inside and outside the school, are considered to "form the bedrock of any experience", rather than "treated as extra-musical consequences of musical experience" (ibid.).

This study agrees with the standpoint that views formal music education⁴ as "a potential supporter in the creation of a personal, life-long interest in any music" (Westerlund 2008, p. 91), and therefore regards the current phenomena of a rapidly changing culture as being of the utmost importance to the music classroom. Following this line of thought, the school is required to engage with and even reflect social reality (Dewey 1900), and to consider the connection (or disconnection) "between ideals which are found outside of educational contexts and education's

4 In this study, the concept of formal music education refers to music-related situations and practices that most often involve a teacher and some sort of curriculum, and take place inside institutional settings, such as schools and conservatoires, with more or less defined and organised structures. It should be noted, that situations within formal music education might include both formal and informal ways of learning, referring to "the *type and nature* of the learning process" (Folkestad 2006, p. 142, emphasis in original) rather than "the physical context in which learning takes place" (p. 141).

concrete ways of action and culture” (Westerlund 2008, p. 91).

Despite the far-reaching and thorough changes that digital and virtual technologies have brought about in the ways, places and spaces we experience and “learn music, about music and via music” (Karlsen 2007, p. 1), music education research on these issues is still scarce. Certainly, a fair amount has been written about digital instruments and tools and how to make use of them in the music classroom (see, for instance Dyndahl 2002; Nilsson 2002; Nilsson & Folkestad 2005; Seddon 2006; Ruthmann 2007; Bolton 2008; King 2008; Mellor 2008; Hewitt 2009; Brown 2010; Savage 2010). However, as noted by Adrian North and David Hargreaves (2008), explorations into musicians’ development and identity – as well as, I should add, into their values and experiences – “continue to focus on people playing traditional instruments” (p. 48) in more or less established settings. Even the somewhat recent zeal for studying music making and learning within so-called informal environments, such as garage rock bands (e.g. Berkaak & Ruud 1994; Fornäs, Lindberg & Sernhede 1995; Green 2001; Johansson 2004; Karlsen 2010), music festivals (e.g. Snell 2005; Karlsen 2007; Karlsen & Brändström 2008), and other forms of community music (e.g. Veblen & Olsson 2002; Langston & Barrett 2008; Silverman 2009), has not engendered a wide-scale curiosity in the natural territories of digital natives. As pointed out by Väkevä (2009), even Lucy Green’s (2001; 2008) famous investigations of popular musicians’ informal learning strategies do not cover digital music culture: “approaches that involve computers, social networks, and other assets of digital music and information technology are not really examined in her [Green’s] study, apart from an occasional hint of the use of digital instruments in conventional music making” (Väkevä 2009, p. 9).

This qualitative, multiple-case study project was thus designed to answer the need for up-to-date knowledge and understanding about the culture of music making, musical learning and the construction of musical identity in the world of digital and virtual media. The thesis is by no means an exhaustive portrayal of this constantly changing culture. Rather, the aim is to view “a larger social and cultural change driven by the arrival of digital technologies” (Savage 2007, p. 65), and to critically reflect possible ways in which this social-cultural change might have an impact on the institutions of formal music education.

1.3 Research task

This study aims to increase the knowledge and understanding of the culture of

music making and musical learning, and the construction of musical identity in the world of digital and virtual media; it also aims to envision its impact on the values and practices within formal music education. The central themes of the study focus on various kinds of music-related communities, specifically those enabled by digital and/or virtual technologies, as well as the challenges and opportunities that participation in those local and global communities might represent in terms of individual and communal musical identities. By examining current phenomena related to this rapidly changing musical culture, the study intends to provide new insight to guide music educators and decision makers in revising their assumptions and understandings concerning *where and in what ways do participants in digital technology enabled communities of musical practice learn and use music in the processes of their identity construction*, and to reflect upon *what implications the answers to these questions can be expected to have in terms of the meaningfulness of music education curricula and practices*.

The research project aims to accomplish this goal through the following research questions:

1. How does an online music community facilitate the construction of its members' musical identities?
2. In what ways do digital musicians narrate the meanings and values of music making, learning and participation in their musical communities?
3. How is the learning and ownership of musical meaning enhanced or constrained in an online community of collaborative musical composing?

The research project was designed as a study of multiple cases (Stake 2006), and was conducted with the participation of digital musicians who represent different age groups, nationalities and levels of expertise. Two of the cases are online communities; one is a face-to-face group of students, along with their teacher, of a Music Performance and Production course. The examination proceeded by advancing heuristically a social theory of learning in general, and of so-called communities of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; 2006; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder 2002; Lea 2005; Wenger, et al. 2009), in particular, as this theory provides a lens to understand the intertwined relationship between learning, identity construction and participation in communities.

1.4 Researcher's position

Within the framework of qualitative research, the researcher's own background and position are customarily believed to impact the whole research process from the researcher's preconceptions through the different stages of analysis and the conclusions drawn based upon that analysis. Accordingly, before delving deeper into the research at hand, I consider it essential to provide a short description about my position as a researcher, and my personal interest and relationship with the phenomenon under examination.

In terms of a research paradigm, I position myself in the field of social constructivism with leanings towards critical theory. This reflects on the study, for instance, in the manner in which the interview and observation data is viewed. Rather than considering it as an absolute or neutral "truth" about the cases, it is seen as a culturally specific construction of subjective meanings and values that are negotiated socially and historically. Also, the results of the study are my interpretations of these meanings. These interpretations are shaped by my own experiences and background as a professional musician and music teacher, among other things. By employing a metaphor by Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann (2009, p. 48), I consider myself as a traveller engaged in a process of *knowledge construction* rather than a miner on a quest of *knowledge collection*. According to this view, the researcher is not a "neutral" or "objective" observer who, on mission to find answers to questions or test theories, would consequently treat people as objects. Rather, as Martin Packer (2011) suggests in reminding of "political and ethical dimensions of understanding" and the "transformative power" of research, we as researchers ought to be "challenged by our encounter with [the people we study]" by being ready to learn, change and mature (p. 5).

Researchers, as Pertti Alasuutari (1998) points out, "should always analyse their own personal and institutional status in conducting research so that they are aware at least of what sort of forces of change they may promote or prevent with their research results" (p. 94). This requirement would seem to take on additional weight when the context of the study is an inherent part of the researcher's own day-to-day life. Digital habitats are for me not a phenomenon *out there*. Rather, I acknowledge being myself an indigenous species of many of them, both in my personal life and professional life – and thanks to such technology, both aspects of my life are most often so interconnected than it would be impossible (and pointless) to separate one from the other. This book is thus written by someone who is on a journey of exploration to gain understanding about a cultural phenomenon with which she is personally intertwined. However, unlike the 19th and 20th century anthropologists

undertaking journeys to faraway lands, there is no way back home from this exploration. Although I mostly make music by using traditional electro(acoustic) instruments, cherish playing in a rock band, and cannot think of anything nicer than meeting a friend at my favourite café, digital habitats have also become an integral part of my reality, no matter how unpleasant that fact may sometimes feel. Alasuutari's (ibid.) insistence on the realisation that "studies on a given phenomenon are in themselves part of that phenomenon", is not only a theoretical principle, but a fact daily reminding me of itself. I, too, am a species of digital habitats, and as such am both shaping my habitats as well as learning how to survive in the flux of them. Hence, as much as this research is written *by* me, it is also a research *about* me.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This study is presented as a compilation dissertation in two parts.

The first part of the thesis loosely follows the traditional structure of monographs in music education, and comprises five chapters. This introductory chapter presents the context, rationale and focus of the study, the research task along with specific research questions, as well as the researcher's own position toward carrying out the study. Chapter Two follows, offering a theoretical lens for understanding the study's relationship to the wider framework of social theories of learning. By addressing relevant literature, the chapter aims to contextualise the goal of the research and theoretical points of departure for the critical reading of the case studies. In Chapter Three I provide an account of the methodological choices made while collecting and analysing the research data. As the research project includes three case studies, each case is individually introduced in this chapter, together with a discussion about the methods of data generation and analysis. Chapter Four is comprised of a summary of the main findings of the study, and thus answers the research questions as formulated in the first chapter. Finally, in Chapter Five, the study's findings are discussed in relation to earlier literature on the subject. The chapter considers, in particular, the relationship between informal and formal musical learning practices in the light of the study's findings, and suggests the resulting implications for the field of formal music education in the areas of theory and practice.

The first part of the thesis is followed by four blind peer-reviewed articles. Each article provides a viewpoint into the main problem concerning musical learning and identity work within digital technologies enabled music-related communities. Article I (Partti & Karlsen 2010) explores the underpinning societal forces that have

enabled the expansion of web-based music making and learning environments. The significance of this expansion is discussed with particular reference to the development and maintenance of musical identities and knowledge. Article II (Partti 2012) investigates meanings and values in the culture of digital music making, as well as the characteristics and development of musicianship within the culture. The parameters of the culture of digital music making are reflected in relation to wider conceptualisations of musicianship in the field of music education. Article III (Partti & Westerlund forthcoming) examines collaborative composing in an online music community from the perspective of learning, and reflects on the conditions for collaborative composing in an educational setting that aims to support the students' construction of identity and ownership of musical meaning. Article IV (Partti & Westerlund in press) weaves together the threads laid out in previous articles by focusing on the new media's emerging participatory culture and its impact on music-related social participation, musical learning, and artistic expression, and reflects on the possible impact of the lessons learnt for formal music education. Each article has been designed to contribute a perspective to the main research task by focusing on the subjects of identity, learning, musicianship, and values within the case studies and within the wider context of music education. Taken together, the partial contributions of each article are believed to comprise a more intricate picture, presented as the results of this study.

2 Situating the study within the framework of a social theory of learning

I pore over Beatles albums with the same obsessive and forensic scrutiny that I'd applied to Rodgers and Hammerstein, only now I have a guitar. I have an instrument that can reproduce the practical magic of the chord structures and the network of riffs that their songs are built on. And what songs, one after the other, album after album. I learn to play them all, confident that if I persevere, what I can't play immediately will yield its secret eventually. I will reapply the needle of the record player again and again to the bars of music that seem beyond my analysis, like a safecracker picking a lock, until the prize is mine. (Sting "Broken Music: A Memoir")

What if we assumed that learning is as much a part of our human nature as eating or sleeping, that it is both life-sustaining and inevitable, and that – given a chance – we are quite good at it? And what if, in addition, we assumed that learning is, in its essence, a fundamentally social phenomenon, reflecting our own deeply social nature as human beings capable of knowing? (Wenger 1998, p. 3)

The first of the above excerpts describes an early musical learning experience of the young Gordon Sumner – years before he becomes the world-renowned artist known as Sting – sitting alone in his bedroom with a heap of Beatles albums. This description from his autobiography is about a musical “safecracking moment”, and is probably familiar to the majority of musicians. We have all been there: trying to get the right sounds, chords and melodies out of our instruments, copying our favourite artists, breaking down the mystery one note at a time. Often these private moments of instrument learning go hand-in-hand with musical moments shared with friends: Lucy shows Ben how to play a song she learnt yesterday, a choir director exits the room for a moment and the soprano singers continue together to figure out Händel’s demanding melismas. Indeed, our lives are so utterly penetrated by these kinds of experiences that we most often take them for granted, and rarely come to think of them as significant moments of learning. Young Gordon sitting in his bedroom in Wallsend, trying to figure out “the G major chord with an added sixth” (Sting 2003,

p. 106) that colours the end of the coda in *She Loves You*, does what he does not because a music teacher asked him to but because he is fascinated by something he hears and cannot yet reproduce it with the instrument he loves.

In this chapter, I will examine the intertwined relationship between learning, identity construction, and participation in communities. This exploration provides a depiction of the theoretical underpinnings that form the foundation for this study. I will first describe how learning is understood in terms of social participation in this study. This conception of learning turns the focus of the study towards questions of identity and meaning, as well as on the ways they are constructed through narratives. Finally, I will discuss these matters specifically with regard to music.

2.1 Learning as social participation within communities of practice

Digital habitats are dwelling places for communities – or for the interactions between communities and the technology they use, to be more specific (Wenger et al. 2009). From the point of view of music education, the aspect of digital habitats that is the most interesting, and yet probably least examined, is this ongoing interplay of communities and technology, or the question of “how technology enables community” (p. 3). In this study, this interplay is examined by advancing a social theory of learning in which the concept of learning is not confined to traditional definitions or settings, such as learning as an individual cognitive process with a beginning and an end, acquired as the result of teaching in a classroom or other situation set apart from the rest of one’s activities (see, in particular, Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Instead, learning is here understood as *social participation*; a definition according to which participation refers to a “process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities” (Wenger 1998, p. 4, emphasis in original). Within this framework, learning has been compared to, for example, a *trajectory* (Wenger 1998; 2006; Barab, MaKinster, Scheckler 2004), *social construction* (Riel & Polin 2004, p. 17) and a *social journey* (Trayner 2011, April 17) during which the participants construct their practices, meanings and identities with respect to a community of practice.

I employ the concept of a *community of practice* (CoP) heuristically, to refer to such communities where the learning element is fundamental regardless of whether the community is set up explicitly for learning purposes or not. This could be illustrated by expanding the example of Hannah introduced in the beginning, and imagining

her joining an online community formed by other guitar players who regularly share video clips of their own playing and chat about music with each other. Although the community is presumably not set up primarily for learning purposes – should we ask Hannah why she is a member of the community, she would probably answer “for the *fun* of it” – it is more likely than not that the members’ interactions and activities result in a great deal of (incidental) learning (see Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; Wenger et al. 2002; Wenger et al. 2009; Wenger, Trayner & de Laat 2011).

A community of practice as a learning partnership

Communities of practice are built on the mutual engagement of the participants, who pursue the joint enterprise by ongoing interaction and by developing a shared repertoire including routines, tools and ways of doing things (Wenger 1998). Whether online or face-to-face⁵, a CoP is a *learning partnership* (Wenger et al. 2011, p. 9) between people who are willing to utilise each other’s expertise and experience as their learning resource, and learn together about a specific field of interest.

In order for the members of a CoP to learn together, they must be able to develop a mutual engagement with each other, including a trust of one another and a sense of being included in something that matters (see Wenger 1998, pp. 73-74; Wenger et al. 2009, p. 8). In a learning partnership this mutual engagement does not necessarily have to manifest as harmonious or peaceful, but it must be a result of “a collective process of negotiation” over a joint enterprise (Wenger 1998, p. 77). This is to say that merely forming a group of people around a stated goal (e.g. to learn a new song together) does not inevitably make that group a community of practice. Instead, in a learning partnership, the participants define the joint enterprise *during* the process of being engaged in it. This process of negotiating the joint enterprise results in “relations of mutual accountability” (p. 78) between the participants, and is thus essential in terms of the participants’ sense of responsibility for and discernment of the enterprise. Moreover, the negotiation of the enterprise gives rise to a shared repertoire specific to that community. In Wenger’s terminology, this kind of repertoire refers to

routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course

5 It is important to note that although a social theory of learning is in this study mainly discussed in terms of digital habitats, it is not a result of social media. People have learnt with and through each other since the dawn of the world. Rather, as Bev Trayner (2011, March 9) reminds us in her blog post, the change concerns first and foremost our perceptions and the ways we talk about knowledge: “Social media has broadened the conversation, made it public, and helped create different understandings of what social learning means to people in different shared enterprises.”

of its existence, and which have become part of its practice (Wenger 1998, p. 83).

The members of a community of practice thereby negotiate their experiences, interpretations and understandings *while* partaking in the community activities and interacting with its members.

The question of *how technology enables community*, addressed in the beginning of this chapter, has now expanded to become: *how technology enables learning*? Furthermore, as this social view of learning shifts the focus from an individual's cognitive processes to the "relational network" (Fuller 2007, p. 19) of people co-participating in the shared practices of social communities, it is possible to understand learning as an experience of identity. Understood as a trajectory, learning always entails questions concerning "who we are, what we do, who we seek to connect with, and what we aspire to become" (Wenger et al. 2009, p. 4, see also Wenger 1998; 2006). As such, the original question can be expanded even more, becoming ultimately a question of *how technologies enable the identity work of the members of learning communities*.

This shift in paradigm brings the questions of identity construction and the meaning of surrounding communities in this process to the centre of our concern. As a thoroughly social process, learning is here considered to entail building different kinds of connections, as specified by Sasha Barab and colleagues (2004):

connections between what is being learned and what is important to the learner, connections between what is being learned and those situations in which it is applied, and connections between the learner and other learners with similar goals (Barab et al. 2004, p. 55).

The outlook outlined above prompts us to focus more and more on the questions already brought up by Dewey long before the advent of the Internet; namely, questions regarding meaningfulness and participation, and the learner's experience in the context of learning. In other words, the very question of what musical knowledge *means* to the learner and the way it connects to her or his life and musical goals.

2.2 Identity as a negotiated experience of self

Our day-to-day life consists of a continuous stream of events and actions that vary from mundane routines to ones that stand out in their intensity or peculiarity. This study is based on an assumption that those events and actions in themselves do

not carry any inherent meanings, which could then for instance be discovered by means of scientific inquiry. In the words of Wenger (1998), they “do not achieve their meanings in and of themselves” (p. 286). Rather, reality is viewed as being *constructed* by human beings who are actively producing and giving meanings to their experiences. Wenger refers to this ongoing process as *negotiation of meaning*. Regardless of how many times one has logged on to Facebook or arrived at a band rehearsal to play with the same group of musicians, each instance of this routine activity is new, yet interconnected with similar previous occasions. As such, by producing afresh “a new situation, an impression, an experience”, one constructs “meanings that extend, redirect, dismiss, reinterpret, modify or confirm – in a word, *negotiate anew* – the histories of meanings of which they are part” (pp. 52-53, emphasis added).

Although this line of thinking rejects the notion of objective truth by defining truth and knowledge as a constructed reality, it does not assume that this construction takes place in a vacuum. On the contrary, as pointed out by Charles Taylor (1991), meanings are understood to be constructed *in dialogue* with others, not as something we bring about on our own. Regardless of whether the negotiation of meaning involves language or not, a dialogue between persons is always influenced by the “baggage” of their own life experiences (Webster & Mertova 2007). As such, the ensuing negotiated meaning is shaped by a variety of elements and is, as Wenger (1998) points out, at the same time “both historical and dynamic, contextual and unique” (p. 54). The meanings that we produce for happenings are results of complicated processes of negotiation, shaped by our present and previous experiences as well as our interactions and negotiations of meaning in a variety of social communities. The meanings of my experiences as a member of a specific music ensemble, for instance, are hence not pre-existing and imposed on me, nor are they simply made up from a thin air. Moreover, as the experiences of the situations under negotiation are continually transformed by the negotiation of meaning, the process of negotiation also creates new conditions for further new experiences and new meanings. As such, rather than viewing the negotiation of meaning as a one-time episode, ending with an agreement between the participants – as in market place bargaining – negotiation refers here to something much more open-ended and organic, consisting of elements of “continuous interaction, of gradual achievement, and of give-and-take” (p. 53).

In the same way that meaning does not come into being in itself, but is constructed and reconstructed through negotiation, identity is in this study understood to exist “not as an object in and of itself – but in the constant work of negotiating the self” (Wenger 1998, p. 151). Identity cannot be reduced to a personality trait, but should be understood in terms of its interconnectedness: identity appears as a multi-layered

and contextual continuum constituted by personal, social and cultural dimensions (e.g. Hall 1999), constructed mostly through interaction. According to Taylor (1991), we define our identities in the course of interaction with our significant others. Identity work is hence a dialogue, sometimes a struggle against the identities that those who matter to us are willing to acknowledge in us – even when those significant others have disappeared from our immediate lives, as is often the case with our parents, for instance.

The notion of identity as a “negotiated experience of self” (Wenger 1998, p. 150) is neither denying individuality nor glorifying community. It simply refers to a focus on the interplay of these elements and the process of mutual constitution of the community and the person. Even when we are engaged in a most solitary looking activity – such as playing a Beatles song alone in a bedroom – we utilise perceptions, ideas, notions and images that we have come to understand “through our participation in social communities” (p. 146)⁶. In the following, I will further examine matters of identity by turning the focus towards the interconnectedness of narratives and our experience of being in the world.

2.3 Constructing identities through narratives

This study is based on the perspective that individuals and groups of people strive to make sense of, interpret and give meanings to events around them through narratives. People organise the events that they perceive as important happenings in their lives into stories⁷ (e.g. Kelchtermans 1994; Coffey & Atkinson 1996; Craib 2004; Webster & Mertova 2007). Throughout our lives, we continuously add new material to our narratives by binding together and arranging our experiences through storytelling. New events, including interaction with both personal and community

⁶ This interconnectedness of the individual and the social is also the reason why the social view of learning does not necessitate that learning takes place in a group. Equally, learning in social interactions is not assumed to be somehow automatically more efficient. The social theory of learning, as utilised in this study, recognises learning to be always fundamentally social whether one is playing a guitar alone in a bedroom, participating in an online community of guitar players around the world, or singing in a local church choir. For the distinction between the social theory of learning and a theory of social learning, see Wenger 2006, p.12.

⁷ The difference between the concepts of “story” and “narrative” is a much discussed issue within narrative research. Margaret Barrett and Sandra Stauffer (2009) point out that narrative as distinct to any form of discourse is traditionally considered to be “sequential”, including aspects such as plot lines, characters, settings, and actions. However, as is evident particularly within visual arts and music, there is a variety of narratives that can be considered to be “neither language based nor inherently sequential” (p. 8). In this study, narrative, although often used as a synonym for a story or an account, is understood in wider terms than merely “story presented” (p. 10), instead referring to the continuum of narrative as a “mode of knowing” with its connections to meaning making a “method of inquiry” (see *ibid.*).

narratives, shape this constant process of storying. Our narratives are combinations of our own voices and the voices drawn from the surrounding sociocultural world, and they manifest our “cultural membership” both by means of the ways we create the stories as well as the content of our stories (Webster & Mertova 2007). Jerome Bruner (1990) considers this way of negotiating and renegotiating meanings through narrative interpretation to be “one of the crowning achievements of human development” (p. 67). Our very experience of being in the world seems to be intertwined into narratives which, as part of the processes of our negotiation of meaning, are simultaneously both personal and inherently social matters (Atkinson, Delamont & Housley 2008, p. 102).

On one hand, narratives serve as “technologies of the self” by providing ways to express our personal experiences (Foucault 1988; Atkinson et al. 2008, p. 102; see also DeNora 2000 on “music as a technology of self”). A person narrating her music-related life story in an interview, for instance, is on a quest to create an interpretation out of an abundance of meanings related to historical and personal happenings (Josselson & Lieblich 2002, p. 259). She generates a storied answer as a reminiscence of how and why something took place, and what the reasons were for specific actions undertaken and choices made (Polkinghorne 1995, p. 13). We do not merely report occurrences, but recount our experiences and the meanings associated to those events (Kelchtermans 1994). Narratives hence provide an abundant source of depictions about our experiences of the world; in other words, a supply of “subjective realities, ideas, feelings” (Kelchtermans 1994, p. 102) and “truths unique in their particularity” (Josselson & Lieblich 2002, p. 259).

On the other hand, narratives cannot be detached from social conventions (Atkinson et al. 2008, p. 102). Over the time spent in writing this thesis, for instance, my fellow doctoral students have heard stories about my journey with the research that were rather different than the stories I shared with my mother or friends, who have no experience of or interest in academic writing. The availability or lack of shared understanding about the demands, joys, challenges and creative possibilities inherent to carrying out a research project prompts me to formulate my story according to a given context. In this sense, a narrative is always a *performative act* that can be used to construct specific versions of experiences and to justify or evaluate events (e.g. Atkinson & Coffey 2002; Atkinson & Delamont 2006). Furthermore, my personal narrative always utilises shared resources of narrating. At this final stage of my graduate career, I have been so long exposed to the conventions of talking about the life of a doctoral student to the extent that, while my experience as a doctoral student working on my thesis is in one sense private, it is “*translated* through the structuring principles of narrative conventions” (Atkinson et al. 2008, p. 102, emphasis added).

Even the very act of formulating a story of my personal experience employs certain commonly shared standards within the community of doctoral students of music education. Paul Atkinson and Sara Delamont (2006) state,

Narratives are produced and performed in accordance with socially shared conventions; they are embedded in social encounters; they are part and parcel of everyday work; they are amongst the ways in which social organizations and institutions are constituted; they are productive of individual and collective identities; they are constituent features of rituals and ceremonies; they express authority and expertise; they display rhetorical and other aesthetic skills (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, p. xxi).

Accordingly, narratives are not “self-justifying and self-explicating” (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, p. xxxiii)⁸. They do not present an obvious way to access “the truth”; rather, they make available a means for us to construct realities and experiences. Using the terminology provided by the social theory of learning, narratives can be understood as reifications, hence referring to *both a product and a process*. A narrative does not carry its own meaning, but is “open to reinterpretation and to multiple interpretations” (Wenger 1998, p. 88).

Reification as a constituent of meaning is always incomplete, ongoing, potentially enriching, and potentially misleading. The notion of assigning the status of object to something that really is not an object conveys a sense of mistaken solidity, of projected concreteness. It conveys a sense of useful illusion. The use of the term reification stands both as a tribute to the generative power of the process and as a gentle reminder of its delusory perils. (Wenger 1998, p. 62)

The very act of narrating one’s music-related life, for instance, changes the narrator’s experience of her life. As the narrator interprets and reinterprets her understandings, the new interpretations may refocus her attention in new ways, surprise her, and force her “into new relations with the world” (Wenger 1998, p. 88). This, in turn, also shapes how the narrative as an “end product” eventually takes on its final form.

8 Various writers (see, for instance, Atkinson & Silverman 1997; Gubrium & Holstein 2001; Atkinson & Delamont 2006) have expressed their concern regarding the mixed blessing of the so-called “narrative turn” in social studies, and claimed that too often the enthusiasm toward collecting and analysing narratives have resulted in “the unreflective and uncritical use of narratives” (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, p. xxxiii), resembling an all-too-familiar “interview society”, in which celebrity is created through the mass distribution of ‘confessions’, and through which ordinary people can have their personal problems and experiences transformed into public (albeit ephemeral) goods. The interview and the personal revelation are among the devices that produce Warhol’s proverbial fifteen minutes of fame. There is a clear danger that the narrative turn in the cultural and social sciences merely mirrors this phenomenon, rather than scrutinises its workings” (p. xxxiii).

Narratives as a source of biographical coherence in the rapidly changing world

In this study, our capacity to “render experience in terms of narrative” (Bruner 1990, p. 97) is examined particularly within the context defined by a (digital) world undergoing change. The fast flow of information and the pace with which new ideas, attitudes and fashions are introduced, challenged and rejected constantly change our social-cultural surrounding and consequently require us to negotiate and renegotiate the meanings we give to the events around us. In the words of Anthony Giddens (1991), “the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change” (p. 33). We tell and retell our lives in the ever-changing cultural landscape of new media in order to construct an understanding of the world. Narratives present, in other words, *constructed truths*. Bruner (1987) argues that

life as led is inseparable from a life as told...a life is not ‘how it was’ but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold (Bruner 1987, p. 33).

Following Bruner’s analysis, this “sensitivity to narrative” (Bruner 1986, p. 69), starting at a very early stage in our childhood (see Bruner 1990), is in this study understood to have a crucial importance in terms of our ability to face our social life, with all the conflicts and contradictions it entails (p. 97), as well as to construct “our own sense of self and our sense of others in the social world around us” (Bruner 1986, p. 69).

People have of course always been engaged in reflexive processes, especially during phases of transition such as that from adolescence into adulthood. However, as Giddens (1991) remarks, “on the level of the collectivity” (p. 33) these transitions have historically occurred more gradually, and most often those milestones of change have been clearly addressed “in the shape of *rites de passage*” (ibid.). Taylor (1991) points out that in a world in which one’s life and future were determined by one’s gender, the place of birth, the social status of one’s family and other factors defined by only slowly changing and seldom contested hierarchies, there was no need for individuals to negotiate the meanings of the world on a daily basis. This is in sharp contrast to our current world, where “[t]he things that surround us were not just potential raw materials or instruments for our projects, but they had the significance given them by their place in the chain of being” (p. 3).

Ronald Barnett (2009) claims that the world of change – change that is often driven by or interlinked with technologies – “is not merely complex; it is *supercomplex*” (p. 439, emphasis added). This world not only presents overwhelming amounts of

information, options and messages, but is bursting with multiple interpretations. In other words, digital habitats have not necessarily created more worldviews, but they have enabled us to become more *aware* of the variety of different outlooks, opinions and understandings (see, for instance, Wenger 2006; Webster & Mertova 2007).

As such, the importance of narration in identity work is acutely emphasised in this age of supercomplexity. As Giddens (1991) remarks, in order for a person in the midst of a changing world to maintain a sense of “biographical continuity which she is able to grasp reflexively and...communicate to other people” (p. 54), she needs to be able to supply a biography about her life. Identity thus becomes a reflexive project, taking a form of keeping “*a particular narrative going*” (ibid., emphasis in original), and revising that narrative on a regular basis. We work out who we are, and construct coherence in the midst of contradictions and discrepancies, through a narrative that helps us to maintain and communicate our life as a trajectory, with a sense of coming from somewhere and going to somewhere. This “narrative understanding” of our lives as unfolding stories (Taylor 1989, p. 47) emphasises the construction of identity, including music-related identity, as a lifelong process that provides one with an understanding of life being a *quest*, to use Alasdair MacIntyre’s (1984) concept; a “sense of my life as having a direction towards what I am not yet” (Taylor 1989, p. 48).

2.4 Learning and identity construction in and through music

So far, I have discussed the questions of learning, meaning, and identity in terms of one’s participation in communities of practice, as the concept of CoP captures the significance of practices “in fusing individuals to communities, and of communities in legitimizing individual practices” (Barab et al. 2004, p. 54). However, it is important to note that membership in a community does not simply impart us with a tailored identity. To adapt an example provided by Wenger (1998, p. 146) to the world of music, let us go back to the story of Hannah and suppose that activities such as video sharing and chatting in an online community of young guitar players have now become an important part of her daily routines. There is a complex set of interactions involved in this process: how Hannah, or any other member, experiences the community; how she interprets her position within the community; what she understands about guitar playing, music, video sharing, or other activities of the community; what she knows, does not know, and does not try to know. These aspects of her community life could not be attributed simply to her individual choices, nor are they merely the results of her belonging to a specific social category, such as

guitar players. Instead, Hannah's experiences, interpretations, and understandings are all negotiated while partaking in these activities and interacting with others in the community.

As such, the notion of identity can be considered as a meeting point for the social and the individual, as our individual identity construction always consists of negotiations of the meanings of experiences, which are products of memberships in social communities. As discussed earlier, communities of practice are places of "the mutual engagement of participants" (Wenger 1998, p. 73), the joint enterprise resulting from their "collective process of negotiation" (p. 77), and "the development of a shared repertoire" (p. 82), such as tools, stories and ways of doing things. To further understand the negotiation of meaning in communities of (musical) practice, let us examine a mutually complementary pair of concepts inherently connected to our practices, namely that of *participation* and *reification*.

The interplay of participation and reification

As argued above, our experience of meaning calls for participation in "community-recognized practices" (Barab et al. 2004, p. 66). In this study, I use the concept of *participation* to refer to an active process of being involved in the social activities of a community, thus understanding participation as something that far surpasses the mere acts of paying a fee, signing up for a course, or typing a password to become "a member" of an online community⁹ (see Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth 2001). In fact, as Wenger (1998, p. 57) argues, participation is much more extensive than simply engaging in practice. Sharing music and opinions with other members of the guitar player's online community might have a crucial importance in Hannah's daily life, but she does not cease to be a member of the community when she logs off the site and shuts down her computer, as her participation is not something she simply turns on and off. Instead, Hannah's participation in the community exceeds her direct engagement in particular activities with particular members of the community. In a word, participation is an ongoing *source of her identity*: it shapes not only what she does, but also who she is and how she interprets what she does.

Hannah's participation in the community's practices regularly results in a wide

9 The old joke of a woman demanding her money back from a gym illustrates this distinction: the woman accuses the pricey membership in the gym of being a scheme, as after six months of being a member she still cannot see any results in her figure. As the person at the customer service desk asks how often the woman has come to do her workout at the gym during those six months, the woman looks at her in bewilderment. It turns out that she had not understood that to become fit she would have to actually work for it! A membership card does not automatically entail participation.

range of outcomes, such as video clips of her playing, insights on rehearsing scales, or ideas for new riffs. This process of transforming our local experiences into things with portable character and possibly global significance is another aspect of negotiation of meaning and, following Wenger's (1998) terminology, is here referred to as *reification*. While participation provides us opportunities for mutual recognition, reification enables us to "project ourselves onto the world, and not having to recognize ourselves in those projections, we attribute to our meanings an independent existence" (p. 58). Over time, the guitar player's online community, for instance, will produce a plethora of "abstractions, tools, symbols, stories, terms, and concepts" (ibid.) that all capture something of the practice of the community and enable the sharing of that practice with newcomers or outsiders. Moreover, reification *shapes* Hannah's (and other members') experiences in the online community. The effect of reification would be clearly seen, for example, in the launching a new feature on the site that would then change, for better or worse, the nature of activities in the community. However, reification can also have a less concrete impact. Hannah's increased understanding of music theory, for instance, does not change how sound waves behave in space and time, but her reification does change her experience of music making by directing her attention in a specific way and facilitating her "new kinds of understanding" of music (p. 60).

Understanding learning as an act of identity and the aptitude to "negotiate new meanings" (Wenger 1998, p. 226), engaging the whole person in the interplay of participation and reification, changes the focus from the *form* of an activity to the *character of learning*. It is possible to sit in a classroom or read a textbook without actually learning anything. Conversely, Hannah's participation in the online community, just as with Sting's moments of strumming his guitar – activities that to an outsider may appear nothing but casual "playing around" – can result in a great deal of musical learning. The essential element that defines learning as learning, as seen throughout this chapter, is not a question of the form or situation of learning, but of the power of learning to *transform our identities* "by changing our ability to participate, to belong, to negotiate meaning" (ibid.).

As the examples of Hannah and Sting show, the activities of music making, and the learning that takes place alongside it, are part of a process where the musicians create a personal relationship to music. Hence, their music making serves their identity construction. Göran Folkestad (2005) even suggests that music making and musical identity are to be regarded as "two sides of the same coin, in that the former provides an arena on which the latter can be explored and expressed" (p. 285). Indeed, beside spoken language, music provides one of the potentially most important means to the process of constructing and expressing our identities.

Musical experiences as a means to construct and express musical identities

When discussing musical identities, David Hargreaves and colleagues (Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald 2002) make a conceptual distinction between *identities in music* (IIM) and *music in identities* (MII). The former (IIM) concentrates on the features of musical identities that have to do with definitions of social and cultural roles *in* music and within musical categories, while the latter (MII) focuses on the ways we use music as a resource when developing aspects of identities other than our actually musical ones (e.g. gender or nationality). A familiar example of the latter would be a teenager listening to her music through the speakerphone on a crowded afternoon bus. Much to the annoyance of most of her co-travellers, the girl makes sure that everyone else has the chance to be introduced to her favourite songs, using the music as a “badge” that provides her a means for group differentiation and thus for identity negotiation (see, for instance, Tarrant, North & Hargreaves 2002 on music and adolescent identity). Furthermore, the act of creating a public soundtrack for the afternoon bus could also be understood as a form of a “collective musical action” in which the girl uses music to regulate and structure a social encounter (see Karlsen 2011, p. 115; DeNora 2000, p. 17).

Naturally, this conceptual distinction between IIM and MII is to be considered as an analytic tool rather than defining strict boundaries between these social manifestations, as overlapping between them is most often inevitable. In terms of this study, however, the most essential aspect of the above categorization is the intimate link made between music, an individual, and social situations. Whether focusing on the development of identities through music or the process of the development of musical identity, one’s identity construction is likely to take place in “a lived experience of participation in specific communities” (Wenger 1998, p. 151). Hannah’s desire to post her performance of *Should I Stay or Should I Go* on YouTube could be interpreted as part of her music-related identity work: reflexive in the sense that she is literally seeing herself in a new self-constructed context, and an act of presenting herself to others in the way she prefers. Hargreaves and his colleagues (2002) suggest that musicians use their music in stating their individual beliefs and notions of the world to others. Even a solitary composer sitting alone by the piano addresses the work to a future audience, as “[t]he very form of a work of art shows its character as addressed” (Taylor 1991, p. 35). Music affords a means for expressing one’s self-narrative to others, so to speak. Importantly, however, a musician is not tied to one musical identity; as illustrated in the anthology by Hargreaves and colleagues (2002) and in a study by Karlsen (2007), one may sustain multiple, parallel, sometimes even contradictory identities that cross over the boundaries between different genres, styles or instruments.

Music may also play an important part in our lives by providing us a means to construct and reconstruct our identities as ongoing stories. Tia DeNora (2000) draws attention to music's role as "a technology of identity, emotion and memory" (p. xi), a resource we can harness "in and for imagination, awareness, consciousness, action, for all manners of social formation" (p. 24). Music provides almost endless resources that we can utilise to regulate moods, stimulate our feelings, heighten our concentration or shift our energy level (e.g. DeNora 2000; Saarikallio & Erkkilä 2007; Sloboda, Lamont & Greasley, 2009; Saarikallio 2011; Karlsen 2011). Music can help us in our self-narrating by enabling us to get in touch with and reflect on our feelings, and by allowing us to remember and recognise "who-I-am and how-I-came-to-be-this-way" (Karlsen 2007, p. 43). Music, in other words, "provides affordances" (p. 44) for constituting, shaping and experiencing the self-identity. As Even Ruud (1997) points out, this project of constituting our human agency begins very early in our lives, and utilises music to facilitate in us a sense of time (e.g. Christmas carols), to indicate life cycles, or to lead to peak experiences, just to mention a few.

Music-related identities, as with any other kinds of identities, are constructed *in relation* to other people in social contexts, in a continuing process of negotiating the self (Wenger 1998, p. 151). Moreover, as the nature of music is inherently something that people *do* together with other people (Small 1998), musical actions also provide opportunities for constituting, shaping and experiencing *collective* musical identities. Karlsen (2011) illustrates this process of constructing a shared sense of life as an unfolding story by drawing attention to the ways an event of performing and creating music facilitates the regulating and structuring of a social encounter:

We coordinate our bodies in order to produce a meaningful musical output. Playing, singing and creating in any ensemble or group will most likely involve affirming and exploring some kind of collective identity, whilst being an occasion through which ideas are lived, and through which ways of knowing the world are explored. (Karlsen 2011, p. 117)

Karlsen's illustration is in line with Christopher Small's (1998) understanding of "music's primary meanings" as social rather than individual (p. 8). In his writings on the meanings of *musicking*¹⁰, Small discusses musical participation in terms of "patterns of gesture" or rituals that provide us ways to articulate our ideas of how the relationships of our world are structured (p. 95). The significance of

10 According to Small (1998), musicking refers to a variety of activities in which one takes part, "in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing", or by contributing to the musical performance in any other role, e.g. as a ticket seller, roadie, or cleaner (p. 9).

collective dimensions of music is clearly seen in any music-related ritual, whether we conceptualise it as one (e.g. a wedding) or not (e.g. a rock concert). Small suggests that rituals

are used both as an act of *affirmation* of community (“This is who we are”), as an act of *exploration* (to try on identities to see who we think we are), and as an act of *celebration* (to rejoice in the knowledge of an identity not only possessed but also shared with others) (Small 1998, p. 95, emphasis added).

Also, Simon Frith (1996) discusses music making in terms of providing people “a way of living [ideas]” (p. 111): cultural activities are not merely platforms for social groups to express their values, but also to “get to know themselves *as groups* (ibid.). Musical activities thus facilitate for us “a technology of identity” (DeNora 2000) on two levels: on the individual level through the means of telling and re-telling one’s autobiographical narratives, and on the collective level through the “telling and re-telling of existing and potential community narratives” (Karlsen 2011, p. 116).

In this study, music is hence viewed as granting multiple ways and resources for constructing, exploring, and expressing community and self-narratives, going beyond even the possibilities supplied by spoken language. Ruud (2008) points out how composing, in particular, provides opportunities to transform experiences and “the raw material” of one’s life into “symbolic expressions” (p. 57) that can be shared with others and used as a way to look upon oneself from some distance. Hargreaves with his colleagues (2002) even go as far as arguing that music has power not only as an art form by adding beauty to our world, but also specifically as a means in our lifelong identity work, as “one of the primary social functions of music” (p. 5) is to enable us to formulate, shift, and express our identities by utilising musical communication as a medium in expressing our narratives. Our experiences with music, be they related to listening, composing, or performing, are at their core processes of creating narratives (Ruud 1997; Karlsen 2007; Karlsen & Brändström 2008), and as such afford powerful tools for the lifelong construction of identity as a negotiated experience of self.

3 Implementation of the study

“And now, Tarkbeena, tell us your story. And don’t hurry it – I’m feeling comfortable now.” Aravis immediately began, sitting quite still and using a rather different tone and style from her usual one. For in Calormen, story-telling (whether the stories are true or made up) is a thing you’re taught, just as English boys and girls are taught essay-writing. The difference is that people want to hear the stories, whereas I never heard of anyone who wanted to read the essays. (C.S. Lewis “The Horse and his Boy”)

Regardless of whether we are recounting the exciting events of the day to our family over supper, writing a piece of news for a local paper, or penning a movie script aimed at an international audience, whenever we are aggregating, integrating and temporally organising a succession of incidents into a sound episode we are involved in what Donald Polkinghorne (1995) refers to as *narrative configuration*. We are, in other words, constructing *stories* by giving narrative meaning to the happenings around us. Rather than merely listing “facts” in the manner of essay writing – as so deeply despised by C.S. Lewis in the extract above – the aim of telling stories is to understand happenings “from the perspective of their contribution and influence on a specific outcome” (Polkinghorne 1995, p. 5).

This chapter, describing the methodological decisions and procedures of the study, is also a story of a sort (see Karlsen 2007, p. 55). It is constructed by me to give as consistent and clear a picture as possible of choices and events that, in real life, seldom took place in a linear or consistent manner. This does not imply, however, that this “story” has been constructed in a haphazard or casual way. As I intend to illustrate in this chapter, all methodological decisions were made within frameworks of loosely standardised procedures. The reason for emphasising the importance of the process of narrative configuration is rather to highlight the nature of qualitative research in which the researcher is considered as “an active participant” (Anderson & Jack 1991, p. 19) one who engages in crafting a scientific inquiry in order to compose and provide a coherent depiction of scattered events, yet “with a deep understanding that reality, or what we may perceive as reality, is not [coherent]” (Karlsen 2007, p. 55).

In this chapter I will introduce the individual case studies of the multicase research project (Stake 2006), and provide an overview of the courses of action during which I collected and analysed the research material associated with them. As is typical for qualitative research, the phases of collecting and analysing the data often overlapped, and are here presented separately only for the sake of clarity. In practice, the process of analysis had already begun during the “field periods” of observing the communities under study. As the research project aims to expand perspectives on a scarcely studied culture by providing as rich an understanding of the cases as possible (see Punch 1998), multiple sources of research material were utilised in the data collection.

The introduction of the three cases follows the publishing order of Articles I, II and III. Accordingly, as illustrated in Table 1, the first case (mikseri.net) presented here refers to Article I, the second case (music producers) to Article II, and the third one (operabyyou.com) to Article III. Articles I, II and III each address a specific research question, while Article IV is built around a theoretical reflection on the practical implications of the results gained through the analysis of the empirical data of the three cases.

3.1 Case study as a methodological framework

In order to answer the research questions, the research project uses the case study approach, as it provides a means to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context within which the researcher has little control over events (Yin 1994). The case study method provides a means to study a naturally occurring social situation in great depth (Hammersley & Gomm 2000), and to enable a vicarious experience of it (Stake 2000). This allows the case study to be used when expanding and enriching “the repertoire of social constructions” and forming questions (Donmoyer 2000, p. 52). Robert Donmoyer addresses three advantages in the vicarious character of the case study method, namely *accessibility*, *seeing through the researcher’s eyes* and *decreased defensiveness*. Accessibility refers to the method’s ability to provide access to places, situations and lives of individuals which the reader would otherwise not have the opportunity to enter, and its ability to help the reader “to see different things and to see differently things [the reader] has seen before” (p. 62). The case study approach also affords opportunities for the reader to perceive and view phenomena through the eyes of another person, and often from a fresh theoretical viewpoint as well. Finally, the vicarious experience provided by case studies may cater to a more comfortable and less threatening way to accommodate

Table 1. Research questions, data and methods used in the study.

ARTICLE	RESEARCH QUESTION	CASE	RESEARCH DATA	METHODS
I Partti & Karlsen 2010. Reconceptualising musical learning: new media, identity and community in music education.	1. How does an online music community facilitate the construction of its members' musical identities?	Mikseri.net online community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation field notes • Selected online message threads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual ethnography • Creative and logical deduction and argumentation • Narrative analysis
II Partti 2012. Cosmopolitan musicianship under construction: digital musicians illuminating emerging values in music education.	2. In what ways do digital musicians narrate the meanings and values of music making, learning and participation in their musical communities?	A group of music producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured, individual interviews • Video recorded observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing/verification • Vertical and horizontal narrative analysis
III Partti & Westerlund forthcoming. Envisioning collaborative composing in music education: learning and negotiation of meaning in operabyyou.com.	3. How is the learning and ownership of musical meaning enhanced or constrained in an online community of collaborative musical composing?	Operabyyou.com online community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected online discussions • Individual email interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical reading analysis • Narrative analysis
IV Partti & Westerlund in press. Democratic musical learning: how the participatory revolution in new media challenges the culture of music education.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical synthesis • Cross-case analysis

novelty than a direct experience would.

This research project aims to serve as a starting point for further discussions, negotiations of meaning, and ideas for pragmatic applications (see Stake 1994). In other words, rather than aiming to search for greater generalisations or to make predictions concerning future human behaviour, the study attempts to obtain a deep and rich description of human social behaviour and meanings derived from the subjective experiences of the participants in the study, and invites the reader to construct a personal interpretation of the subject (see, for instance, Silverman 1993; Denzin & Lincoln 1998).

Following Robert Stake's (1994; 1995; 2006) characterisation of different types of case studies, this research project represents a *multicase* study with an *instrumental* interest, as it contains three separate cases that each provide a different angle into music making, learning, and matters of identity in the world of digital technologies. Rather than focusing on learning about a particular individual, event, or activity (*intrinsic* case study), the purpose of this instrumental multicase study is "to understand an issue or problem using the case as a specific illustration" (Creswell 1998, p. 73). In order to obtain insight into the phenomenon under study, I chose to pursue multiple cases. This was not done to maximise the generalisability by "sampling of attributes", but to maximise "opportunities to learn" (Stake 1995, p. 6). The "unique life" of each case was thus considered to be interesting for what it could exhibit about the phenomenon (Stake 2006, p. vi).

It is important to note that even in this investigation with multiple cases it would be difficult to defend the typicality of the cases. The cases were not selected because they were expected to represent the totality of the digital musical culture. The case study approach does not provide the basis to draw "conclusions about some general type of phenomenon or about members of a wider population of cases" (Hammersley & Gomm 2000, p. 5). However, generalisability was in this study understood in relation to qualitative research in which it is possible to make *analytical* generalisations (e.g. Stake 2000), grounded in theory (e.g. Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 263). According to Stake (1995), the role of the case study researcher is twofold: she takes notes on happenings around her and at the same time scrutinises the meanings of those happenings and redirects the observations to "refine or substantiate those meanings" (pp. 8-9). In this sense case studies are emergent in nature. By making her own interpretations based on the research material, the researcher is applying what could be referred to as "a form a generalization" (ibid.). Furthermore, case studies provide the opportunity for others to make of the findings and fashion their own interpretations (Stake 1994, p. 236). In the following, I aim to present a rich

and detailed account of the phenomena as experienced by me, as the researcher (Flinders & Richardson 2002, p. 1169), in order for the reader to “judge soundness of the generalization claim” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 263).

3.2 The case of a Finnish online music community mikseri.net

Established in 2001, mikseri.net¹¹ (hereafter referred to as *Mikseri*) is an online community for music lovers of any age, ranging from enthusiasts to professionals¹². Although it is an open and free music-sharing service wherein one is welcome to listen to the music or read the material on the site without having to register, the increased opportunities offered to registered community members have resulted in Mikseri becoming primarily a community of independent music *makers*, and distinguishes it from various other Internet services that focus merely on music *consumers*. The Mikseri members may create their own profile page, which in turn allows them to upload their musical works onto the site, to share information about themselves and their music projects, and to communicate with fellow members in several ways. They may also post comments on the written work, pictures or pieces of music of other Mikseri members. At the time of the data analysis (April 2009), Mikseri had approximately 140,000 registered Finnish-speaking members¹³. This made it the largest Finnish online music community at the time.

Most of the community members participate in the site by using nicknames. They engage in social interaction with each other by partaking in mostly music-related discussions and in-depth conversations, as well as sharing and distributing information on a message board. Despite the importance of the discussions on the message board, the heart of the Mikseri community's activities and the main interest of its members is in the musical artefacts it hosts – the over 80,000 copyright free pieces of music on the site. According to Mikseri's own statement, these tracks are listened to several million times per month. As an earlier study by Miikka Salavuo (2006) has revealed, Mikseri members are on average fairly active musicians, both as performers and as composers, although only a minority of them state that they have had any formal musical training.

11 Mikseri, <http://www.mikseri.net>

12 The information about Mikseri provided in this study is based on the situation at the time of the data analysis in April 2009. The rules, contents and activities of Mikseri may have changed since that date.

13 At the time of writing this chapter (April 2012), Mikseri had over 178,000 members.

Data collection from mikseri.net

The case study of the Mikseri online community followed the guidelines for a virtual ethnographic approach, as described particularly by Hine (2000). In the study, ethnography was above all considered as a way through which to look at the phenomenon and a style by which to conduct the research, rather than a mere method (e.g. Hammersley & Atkinson 2007). I chose an ethnographic focus in order to view Mikseri from an angle that had not been introduced in earlier studies on the community (Salavuo & Häkkinen 2005; Salavuo 2006), as ethnography provides an overall approach through which to explore the cultural system from many different points of view. The anticipated outcome of an ethnographic study is not to look for and present “the truth”, nor to produce operational laws, but to construct an *interpretation* which can lead to discussions or new ideas (e.g. Syrjäläinen 1994). As such, the ethnographic research on Mikseri was a creative process that aimed to understand the members’ activities, and their related social meanings, in the context of the online music community (e.g. Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p. 3). In this sense, the study did not differ from the early anthropological research of the 19th century, in which the objective of studying a community was to view it as a *collectivity*, to examine what the members share in common, and to lay bare “from within, the logic that informs and organizes the collectivity’s life and way of thinking” (Alasuutari 1998, p. 61; see also, for instance, Eskola & Suoranta 1998).

In order to view a community from within and to get as authentic a picture as possible of the people’s activities, observation must take place in the “natural’ settings” of the community’s social reality (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p. 4). This objective defines the first challenge for the researcher of an online community: how to be present and participate in something that does not exist in physical reality, and is inhabited by effectively disembodied persons, including myself? Or, as Jason Rutter and Gregory Smith (2002; 2005, p. 88) ask: “How to be seen as a person or a researcher when you cannot be seen at all?” Given that the virtual ethnographer – the ethnographer of the Internet or of cyberspace – enters into an emerging arena of social studies with its methods and conceptions being varied and still under negotiation rather than well established and clearly defined, I struggled with both the practical and ethical issues of conducting the study. I wondered whether to make my presence known in the community, which is largely based on the freedom of “lurking” – that is, observing something as an outsider without being an active participant; whether it would be wise to meet some “natives” face-to-face in addition to observing them online; and whether I could consider interaction between the Mikseri members as public and consequently feel free to use the written conversations in my research in any way I wished to. When negotiating this lack of an established

canon of methodological guidelines for virtual ethnography, the traditional criteria for ethnographic conduct, as applied to a new setting, did prove to be somewhat helpful. Indeed, virtual or not, “the desire to *understand by engaging*” (Domínguez, Beaulieu, Estalella, Gómez, Schnettler & Read 2007, emphasis in original) lies at the heart of any ethnographical research. Issues of mediation, however, bring forth a set of challenges and opportunities distinct to online settings. For instance, I disagree with research policies which claim that if something is easily and publicly accessible it could self-evidently be regarded as public, and I concur with Rutter and Smith (2002; 2005) in their observation that although most of the discussions taking place between the members of online communities are viewable by others they are not necessarily public discourse and hence ethically available to be used for research purposes.

I collected data from Mikseri during a period of seven months, from November 2006 to May 2007. During this time I experienced the inherent tension of ethnography, caused by the requirement for the researcher on one hand to avoid a situation in which she has too much impact on the life of the community to be studied, and on the other hand to remember that the power of the ethnographic study lies in intersubjectivity – in an interaction between the researcher and the subject of the research (see Syrjäläinen 1994). Consequently, I first researched the activities of the community as an invisible observer, and only later by making my presence and research intentions public and by participating in discussions on the message board. I first assumed the stance of the invisible observer in order to gain access to the everyday life of Mikseri and to the negotiations that took place among its members, without causing my presence to have an impact on the community. However, as Christine Hine (2000) emphasises, by eventually taking on the role of an active participant – by engaging in the life and interaction of the community – I pursued “a deeper sense of understanding of meaning creation” as well as “a reflexive understanding of what it is to be a user of CMC [i.e. computer-mediated communication]” (p. 23). Furthermore, according to John Creswell (1998), it is compatible with ethical standards that the researcher makes her presence known, and thus avoids practising “deception about the purpose or intent of the study” (p. 60).

Following the advice to take “into account every particular context when making any ethical decision during research” (Estalella & Ardèvol 2007), I considered it meaningful to examine the Mikseri online community on its own terms and in the way most natural to it, in other words through computer-mediated communication, without meeting any member of the community face to face. The research material thus consists of field notes from the observation period as well as selected message

“threads” from the message board. A thread refers to a set of messages that have been both posted as replies to each other and visually grouped together by a topic. Any member may start a thread by posting a message that is not a reply to an earlier message. At the time of the data collection, the message board of Mikseri contained a great many threads, consisting of some 600,000 messages. Based on the aim of the study, I limited selection of threads for the study to three areas of the message board: *Musiikki* [Music], *Musiikin tekeminen* [Music Making], and *Yleistä keskustelua* [General Discussion]. By utilising the search engine provided by Mikseri, and by setting specific requirements in terms of thread length (minimum 50 messages to ensure the richness of the data) and life (maximum 1,5 years old to ensure the relevance of the data), I chose ten message threads of which the majority were naturally occurring data produced by the community alone, while one was initiated by myself. The selected threads totalled 1,329 messages. As stated earlier, I do not consider the material in online communities as unequivocally public, and as such strove to secure the confidentiality of the Mikseri members. Consequently, all online names, aliases and pseudonyms (where used) have been removed or changed in the research report.

Analysis of the mikseri.net research material

In the analysis of the Mikseri data, my goal was to move from description into a deeper level of interpretation by utilising “sociological imagination” (Alasuutari 1998) and a two-phase approach, typical for qualitative research. In this approach, the analysis of the research material is based on creative and logical deduction and argumentation. The process is similar to methods familiar from detective stories, as Alasuutari puts it:

The research process, whether it concerns society or crimes, proceeds alternately in two different directions, from the specific to the generic and from generic to the specific, until eventually a final solution is reached (Alasuutari 1998, p. 35).

Consequently, I took on the role of a “detective” or storyteller in creating and organising a new story from the original one, that is the research material. The result of this interpretation, conceptualisation and writing was a new ordering of the material (Salo 1999). In this way, the analysis as an act of writing and finding is also a representation; things are re-represented and social phenomena are reconstructed (ibid.).

Accordingly, I considered the observations and messages as *clues*, examining them “in

order to see how they might be connected to some wider context” as well as collecting and weighing new observations to consider “whether they could corroborate the solution proposed” (Alasuutari 1998, p. 32). The observations were, in other words, not regarded as “discoveries”, but rather as “indications of features or dimensions of reality that may not be immediately apparent” (p. 27). The observations were therefore “actively produced” by the analysis (ibid.).

During the process of alteration, when proceeding “from the specific to the generic and vice versa” (Alasuutari 1998, p. 27), I aimed to create a coherent whole from the fragmented collection of research material built from messages and field notes. I first reduced the amount of observations by organising them into categories of “rough observations”. This phase was followed by combining the reduced observations through a search for shared common features. I thus combined the rough observations into fewer groups, raising the level of abstraction of the concepts. At this point I also reformulated the theoretical framework to obtain an understanding of the phenomena from the actors’ points of view. This kind of phenomenological interest in “describing the world as experienced by the subjects” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 26) was enabled by an analytical approach that was based on the research material itself rather than a theory or categories developed in advance. Consequently, during the phase of reducing, new aspects emerged from the material and prompted me to revise the explanations I had given so far. During the stage of “solving the mystery” I aimed to “create a logical model of explanation” (Alasuutari 1998, p. 34) by interpreting the selected clues: the groups of produced observations, my accumulated understanding gained from literature and earlier studies, and the new questions that had arisen from the material. The goal of this phase of the analysis was to uncover “the inner logic” of the community and to “gain a broad, comprehensive picture of all aspects of the culture” of Mikseri (p. 63). An important tool at this stage was the theoretical framework, as it helped to broaden my horizon (p. 66) by providing explanations, drawing my “attention to things that would pass unnoticed to anyone with a neutral, normal attitude”, and pointing at “interpretations of the material that one might otherwise never think of” (p. 65). By further raising the level of abstraction of the key concepts, like a detective re-examining data, I pursued the core of “the solution”: the interpretation of the Mikseri culture.

To obtain a deeper understanding of the identity work that takes place in Mikseri, the primary research material was subjected to a secondary stage of narrative analysis. In this phase I, along with my co-writer Sidsel Karlsen, acted as narrative-finders (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009) in order to identify the musical life stories of the members of Mikseri. The messages from the Mikseri message board were therefore analysed

according to William Labov's (1972; 1982) definition of what characterises a fully formed narrative. As noted by Atkinson and Delamont (2006, p. xxxii), Labov's approach of analysing narratives in terms of their formal properties enables the researcher to "capture the essential elements of any narrative telling from the simplest of jokes and anecdotes to the most complex of narratives, through the recursive application of simple, sequentially organized units" (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, p. xxxii). According to Labov's "elementary grammar of narrative forms and functions" (ibid.) a narrative of this type is formed by six interconnected components: (1) the *abstract* in which the narrator summarises the whole narrative with a few clauses; (2) the *orientation* that provides the context of the story; (3) the *complicating action* including the "temporal organization" (Labov 2001, p. 3) of the most important details of the story; (4) the *evaluation* of those details "by a juxtaposition of real and potential events" (ibid.); (5) the *result* or resolution indicating what finally happened; and (6) the *coda* containing clauses that signal that the narrative is finished, often by the use of a simple phrase¹⁴.

We identified the different parts of the members' stories in the research material¹⁵, according to their forms and functions as proposed by Labov. Some stories were fully formed narratives, encompassing all six elements, while others were incomplete. After this, an external reader who speaks both Finnish and English cross-checked the translations of the chosen narratives. The narratives were used in answering the research question and hence as part of the study's results.

3.3 The case of a group of music producers in London

The second case of the study consists of four students, along with their teacher, of an independent and specialist music school (hereafter referred to as *The College*) in London, UK. My criterion in selecting the participants for the case study was to find musicians with at least a few years of experience in making music by utilising digital technology in order to better obtain information about their personal processes of development and growth as digital musicians. I also expected a group based in a formal education context to be more likely to be heterogeneous in terms of the participants' backgrounds and musical preferences than, for instance, a band formed by a group of friends. Furthermore, I assumed the participants' experiences in studying at a music school would provide insights into their learning processes. I

14 This technique was memorably utilised in the *Forrest Gump* film by the main character repeatedly finishing his stories with the statement "That's all I have to say about that".

15 The stories were translated from Finnish into English by me.

was previously unacquainted with the participants.

The College is one of various music schools that provide undergraduate musical training in the UK, with its education revolving around a wide variety of (mostly) popular music genres. At the time of the data collection (April-May 2009), the students were in their last year of a three-year-long Course of Music Performance and Production. The course is one of many options provided by The College, and is designed to equip the students with the knowledge and skills required to work professionally in the music industry, mainly as music producers. Teaching in the course is based chiefly on “hands-on” music making practices at the school’s studio facilities. The facilities, instruments and equipment at The College are similar to those used in the commercial music industry, including, for instance, a 24 track analogue recording studio and backline equipment ranging from amplifiers to drum kits to keyboards. According to the description on the website of The College, the educational aim of the school is to equip the students with a variety of relevant tools required for working as professional musicians in the music industry of today and tomorrow. The College believes that these tools include an understanding of various styles of popular music; skills in music performing, writing, arranging and producing, as well as business-related abilities.

Table 2 provides a short introduction to each participant of this case study¹⁶. The names have been changed to protect their privacy. At the time of the data collection the student participants were between 21 and 27 years old. None of them stated that they had received any formal training in music technology prior to coming to study at The College. There were altogether five students in the course. Four of them, along with their teacher “Eric”, volunteered to participate in the study.

Data collection within the music producers

Due to their alternation between independent and group work, the teacher and students considered the last four weeks of the semester as the most convenient time for my data collection. As such, I collected data over a period of four weeks in April and May 2009, during the normal school routine at The College. After receiving permission to conduct the study, I began the collection of the research material by observing and video recording four separate sessions of the participants working with their production projects in a control room and studio at The College. Each session was approximately 60-180 minutes in length. The sessions were part of the normal curriculum that the students were enrolled in.

¹⁶ The introductions are based on the interview material of the participants.

Table 2. The participants in the second case.

ANA	Has some formal training in both classical and jazz/pop singing as well as in composing/songwriting. She has also taught music for children in her home country in South America. Ana initially came to The College to primarily study singing, but decided to switch to the production course as she realised she enjoyed the production side of music more than being on stage. Ana was mostly self-taught in music technology before coming to study at The College. She is planning on staying in London, and trying to build her career as a songwriter and music producer.
BRIAN	A self-taught guitarist who auditioned at The College to pursue a professional career in music. For Brian, it was clear from the beginning that he would like to concentrate on the production side of music making, as he could not see any chance for him to become a professional performer. He had some experience, although no formal training, in digital music making prior to coming to study at The College. He hopes to continue working with music after The College, although he does not have any particular expectations in relation to a professional career.
COLIN	No prior formal training in music or music technology. Before beginning to study at The College, he had played bass guitar a little bit. He feels that the instrumental training provided at The College has helped him to develop as a bass player. Colin currently plays bass in several bands. In terms of future plans, he admits to be torn between music performing and music production. His dreams for life after The College include, for instance, playing bass in West End musical productions or setting up his own recording studio.
DAVID	Began playing trumpet in school but did not take any classes on it. David has played, for instance, in a big band, as well as in a funk band. He has also recently started to do small session work. Before concentrating more on the studies in music production, David was studying trumpet playing at The College. Although he has no prior schooling in music technology, David has been interested in it for years. David's plans for the future are music-related. At the moment, he sees his options as working as a session trumpet player and/or as a music producer.
ERIC	The teacher of the course. He has worked as a teacher in The College for five years. Eric is an accomplished session musician and studio producer with work experience spanning over three decades. He started to work as a session musician at an early age, and got into the production side of the business in the 1980's, all the while continuing his career as a performing musician. He has not received formal training in music, music technology or music education.

According to Patricia Adler and Peter Adler (1998), qualitative observers gather impressions of the surrounding world in a natural context and in a non-interventional way. In other words, the observation takes place in “the flow of events” (p. 378). My aim was to study the social situation as it naturally occurred (see Hammersley & Gomm 2000), and I therefore tried to avoid influencing courses of action. Accordingly, the participants were asked to work and behave as normally as possible, and I aimed to impact their behaviour as little as possible, taking the role of a non-interactive observer (Adler & Adler 1998). At the time of the research the students were working with their final assignments for the course. The students brought their works-in-progress one at a time into the sessions for the teacher to comment on. All the other students were allowed to be present and provide their suggestions and comments about the production work. After the session the students had a chance to make revisions to their production work. The main software application used in the observed sessions was Logic Pro. Due to the informal nature of the sessions, the students (and I) would enter and leave the sessions without separate permission. Apart from greetings or small talk when coming or going and during tea or lunch breaks, I normally did not communicate with the participants during the sessions. I was situated in the back of the control room, with a video camera and two external microphones.

I gathered the observation material for the study in order to generate questions for the interviews, and to generate data. Although the full analysis of the data arising from the observation was carried out later, a number of pertinent points were initially identified in order to provide focus for the interview questions. As is typical for a “naturalistic observation” within qualitative study, the observation focused on looking for large trends, patterns and styles of behaviour (Adler & Adler 1998). The observation material provided me background and additional information on the music-making context of the digital musicians (see Kelchtermans 1994), and opened up a window into their everyday life as well as into some specific situations and/or practices they were referring to in the interviews later on. As is suggested by Adler and Adler (1998), an understanding gained through direct observations can be regarded as especially valuable in terms of enhancing “consistence and validity” (p. 90), especially when combined with other methods such as interviews. The time spent in the studio and control room helped me to build closer relationships with the participants than what I would have achieved by meeting them only once during the interviews. The interviewees would, for instance, occasionally refer to some specific situations I had been observing, as if saying “you know how it is here, you’ve seen us doing these things”.

In order to attain music-related life stories from the participants, I conducted individual

interviews about their music and music technology related experiences. The semi-structured interviews (see, for instance, Fontana & Frey 1998) were made in order to receive “storied answers” (Polkinghorne 1995), i.e. narratives, as the participants were encouraged to reminisce about their music and technology related life and to freely reflect on “how and why something occurred or what led to an action being undertaken” (p. 13). Kelchtermans (1994, p. 94) calls a research procedure that aims at making an interviewee look back reflectively “and to stimulate them to ‘thematize’ their experiences” a *stimulated autobiographical self-thematisation*. As discussed in Chapter 2, an autobiographical account as “a performative act” (Atkinson & Delamont 2006), narrated in an interview situation, also provides a platform for identity work for the participants, as they construct their life experiences “through the forms of narrative” (p. xxxiv). The interviewees retell and organise, and in doing so make sense of their life and experiences by making choices regarding the inclusion of people and events they consider important in terms of their experiences (Coffey & Atkinson 1996). By analysing this process of “chronicling of a life” (p. 68), or a specific part of it, such as an interviewee’s music-related life, it is possible to gain insight “into the characters, events, and happenings central to those experiences” (ibid.). Narratives are generated in a social setting in which the interviewee is telling “their story to the researcher, or more generally to the implicit audience they assume behind the researcher” (Kelchtermans 1994, p. 101).

Consequently, I acknowledged my own role in the interviews as being crucial. I considered myself as an active participant, and pursued an interested and non-evaluative role during the study (Anderson & Jack 1991; Kelchtermans 1994). In practice, the interviews took place before or after the sessions, or at breaks during the sessions. I video-recorded the interviews, and aimed to address the questions to the interviewees with careful thought and attention to wording in order to avoid asking leading questions. By following Yin’s (1994) suggestion to appear “genuinely naïve about the topic and [allowing] the respondent to provide a fresh commentary about it” (p. 85), I decided not to reveal my prior knowledge and experience in relation to music or music technology to the participants before the interviews were conducted.

As in every case of this research project, general ethical guidelines and advice regarding research conducted within the area of human and social studies were followed. I contacted all participants directly, informing them about the aims of the study and asking for their permission (for the documents sent to the participants, see Appendices 5A and 5C). I also contacted the school to acquire permission for conducting the study (for the documents sent to the faculty at The College, see Appendices 5B & 5D). Participation in the study was voluntary. All participants

had the right to withhold permission, as well as have any recording stopped or amended at any time. The participants were debriefed after the last session (see Appendix 5F). The aim of the debriefing was to discuss with the participants their experiences of the research in order to ensure there would be no negative effects or misconceptions, and to answer to any questions the participants may have with regard to the study. Also, the participants were encouraged to contact the researcher afterwards in case any questions concerning the study arose.

Analysis of the research material on the music producers

As stated before, the role of the video observations in this study was to generate questions for the interviews, and to provide a deeper understanding of the educational contexts of the lives of digital musicians. Prior to analysing the interview material for the purposes of Article II, I analysed the video footage of the observations. The procedures and results of this analysis are fully reported in an unpublished pilot study on musical learning among digital musicians (Partti 2009). This analysis was made by following definitions and suggestions typical for data analysis in qualitative inquiry (see, for instance, Huberman & Miles 1994; Stake 1994; Yin 1994), and included three interconnected sub-processes, namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification.

As it would have been impossible to tell “the whole story” of the case (Stake 1994, p. 240), I chose a selection of four observation clips (each approximately 5-10 minutes in length) to be analysed. This procedure of selecting and condensing the research material was not done to control the data, but was considered to be part of the data reduction process (Huberman & Miles 1994, p. 429). The choices were based on the raw field notes (journal) of the events and the initial perceptions I had written while recording the sessions. The process of data reduction was followed by data display, a phase during which I created an observation schedule (see Table 3) to be used as a tool in the further examination and meaning making of the reduced set of data (Huberman & Miles 1994, p. 429). The categories of the observation schedule were generated by utilising the theoretical framework (see Yin 1994) and the preliminary viewings of the observation videos in the data reduction phase. Finally, I conducted conclusion drawing and verification by triangulation procedures. In this phase the researcher conducts interpretation, or draws “meaning from displayed data” (Huberman & Miles 1994, p. 429). By this stage the raw data had been “condensed, clustered, sorted, and linked over time” (ibid.) and there was a variety of possible interpretation tactics that could have been used. In order to bring forth “different ways” of seeing the phenomenon, I asked for an independent third party (a professional digital musician with years of experience both as a musician and a

teacher of recording engineering) to cross-check the data using the observation schedule.

Table 3. The observation schedule.

	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES
TECHNOLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factual: Software• Factual: Hardware• Factual: Musical instruments• Historical: Recording processes• Historical: Post-production processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of software• Use of hardware	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affecting an audience• Quality of sound• Abstract ideals• Attitudes
MUSICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factual: Musical element• Factual: Music/style relation• Factual: Music styles/genres• Historical: Band practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Auditory discrimination• Singing/playing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affecting an audience• Quality of sound• Abstract ideals• Attitudes

In contrast to the analysis of the musical life stories of the Mikseri members, I chose a slightly different approach when analysing the interview material of the music producers. Instead of focusing on the structures of the narratives, I aimed to treat the interviews as “accounts” and as “performances” (see, for instance, Atkinson & Coffey 2002), “through which identities are enacted, actions are justified and recounted events are retrospectively constructed” (Atkinson & Delamont 2006, p. xxxv). Shifting the focus to the performative nature of narratives highlights the influence that “conventions of genre” (p. xxxiv) have on our experiences. Although the stories the interviewees told and the events the stories referred to are profoundly personal, they do not exist in a vacuum, but are constructed through interaction with the surrounding cultural conventions. Instead of revealing “a consistent and coherent representation of a reality that is independent of the accounts themselves”, the narratives “create the realities they purport to describe” (ibid.). In other words, the musicians organise their music-related life, social relations and interpretations through narrative discourse; being who they are partly as a result of what is told about them and what they tell about themselves (see O’Neill 2002; Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2009). Furthermore, as a narrative researcher, I am aware

of the impact of my own background and perspectives on the process of the study, from the interviews to the final interpretations. In addition to the interviewees' life experiences, my own reflections and interpretations as well as my "personal and institutional status in conducting research" (Alasuutari 1998, p. 94) all play a role in the final report. Hence, as discussed earlier, the analysed research material presented as the results of this study is a re-created narrative not only of the participants, but also to some extent of myself.

My aim in the analysis was to construct a portrait of digital musicianship by looking for the digital musicians' socially constructed stories about their musical lives, as well as to construct new narratives by synthesising "many different happenings into coherent stories" (Kvale 1996, p. 201) in order to expand our perspective on musicianship. Consequently, I utilised a two-fold narrative approach that has different names among different writers. Following Kelchtermans' (1994) terminology, I refer to it as *narrative-biographical* approach. The analysis proceeds "horizontally" with an intention to find more general themes in the material, as well as "vertically" by examining the participants individually. This distinction between horizontal and vertical analysis is similar to Polkinghorne's (1995) "analysis of narratives" and "narrative analysis". The first process separates the data into its constituent parts by identifying and describing general themes or conceptual manifestations across a collection of stories, whereas the latter synthesises the data into a new story, "an emplotted narrative" (p. 15).

After transcribing all the interviews word by word, I carefully read the transcriptions and watched or listened to the interview videos several times to familiarise myself with the interviewees. After this, I began to thematise the material. By this time, I had read rather widely on musicianship and the other main themes of the study, and was well aware that my examination of the material would unavoidably be impacted by that literature. However, I attempted to let the material take the lead in the process of thematisation by sustaining an attitude towards the interviews, which was as open as possible under the circumstances. This turned out to be crucial in terms of my understanding of the data, as I soon noticed that some of my preconceptions based on the literature turned out to be inaccurate or even entirely wrong. I had, for instance, expected the digital musicians, like the popular musicians studied by Green (2001), to be highly sceptical toward institutions of formal music education, and to find studying at The College very challenging. My initial reviews of the interviews proved this assumption to be blatantly wrong: every student seemed to greatly appreciate and even enjoy their time at The College, and provided analytical accounts of their learning and its positive impact on their musical thinking and creativity. However, the initial categories were to some extent in line with the research literature in other

respects, for instance in terms of the influence of peers. The first categories I made, after several readings of the material, were: 1) Home and family, 2) Friends and peers, 3) School, 4) Other hobbies and workplaces, 5) Music teachers, 6) (Electro) acoustic and digital musical instruments, 7) Learning experiences, 8) Music making related experiences, 9) Music community related experiences, 10) Musical influences (other artists), 11) Music making practices, 12) Cultural knowledge, 13) Decisions regarding direction, turning points and coincidences, 14) Values and preferences, 15) Challenges, 16) Hopes and expectations, 17) Things learnt at The College.

After the first categorisation, I continued to read the interview transcripts and watch the videos. While becoming increasingly familiar with the research material, some themes seemed to gain more emphasis than others. This prompted me to revise the initial thematisation. Consequently, some initial categories were merged, and I ended up with two main themes. The first theme referred to the meanings that the interviewees gave in relation to music making, including practices, values, and music making related communities and identity negotiations. The second main theme had to do with meanings given to musical learning. This included both formal and informal learning experiences, as well as the impact of significant others, such as friends and family. This theme also included references to the construction of professional identity, such as significant turning points, coincidences and The College. In Article II (Partti 2012), I reflect on my conclusions based on this horizontal analysis in relation to the research literature. The constructed interpretation is presented as a thematised depiction of digital musicianship.

In analysing the material vertically (narrative analysis), I approached each interview as an individual entity, and re-created a new narrative by merging happenings described in an interview “into a temporally organized whole” (Polkinghorne 1995, p. 5). Polkinghorne refers to this stage as a configurative process. The configurative process employs a thematic thread to lay out happenings as parts of an unfolding movement that culminates in an outcome. The thematic thread is called the plot, and the plot’s integrating operation is called emplotment. When happenings are configured or emplotted, they take on narrative meaning. The outcomes of this configurative process are the emplotted narratives of each participant’s music-related life story. Because of space limitations, only one of the narratives, namely that constructed from Brian’s interview, is presented in Article II (Partti 2012). Brian’s narrative is similar to that of the other participants, however it was particularly rich in nuances. Consequently, I used “Brian’s story” to present my attained understanding of the phenomenon under exploration (Kelchtermans 1994), and to unite and give meaning to the data (Polkinghorne, 1995).

3.4 The case of an international online opera community operabyyou.com

Opera by You is an online community opera project initiated by the Finnish Savonlinna Opera Festival in Finland. The aim of the project is to enable people from all over the world to create an opera collaboratively, from the plot to the music and visualisation. The collaboration takes place within a related online music community, operabyyou.com¹⁷ (hereafter abbreviated as *OBY*) that was launched in May 2010 (see Figure 1). The online community operates on the Wreckamovie web platform¹⁸, owned by film studio Star Wreck Studios Oy Ltd in Finland. Launched initially to facilitate online collaborative film making, Wreckamovie has hosted Internet communities dedicated to productions of, amongst other things, short films and full-length features, documentaries, music videos and mobile films. Opera by You is the first opera production utilising the platform.

OBY provides access for anyone, independent of their educational background or stylistic preferences, to contribute to the creation of an opera by writing the libretto, composing the music, or designing the sets and costumes. At the time of the data analysis (July 2011), there were 400 registered members from 43 countries contributing in various capacities to the creation of the opera. As the map illustrates (see Figure 2), the majority of the participants are from Finland (193), followed by fairly large groups of participants from Italy (35), the US (31), the UK (16) and Spain (11). The colours used in the map indicate the amounts of participants as follows: Striped: members>100; Medium Grey: members: 30-100; Checkered: members: 10-30; Dark Grey: members<10.

The creation of the opera proceeds gradually, and is guided by six professionals within the field of dramatic art, referred to as ‘operatives’ by the Festival Organisation. These operatives were chosen by the Savonlinna Opera Festival before the launch of the project, and include the Savonlinna Opera Festival’s head of productions as well as a production manager, librettist, producer, opera director, and composer. The role of the operatives is to ensure that the work proceeds on schedule, by designing and allocating tasks for the community members to tackle. The operatives also make the final decisions regarding the project. The musical operative of OBY is a professional Finnish composer. The intention is that the finished opera production, with the title *Free Will*, will have its premiere at the Savonlinna Opera Festival in July 2012. The opera festival will provide professional soloists, a chorus of 80, a

17 Opera by You, <http://www.operabyyou.com>

18 Wreckamovie, <http://www.wreckamovie.com>

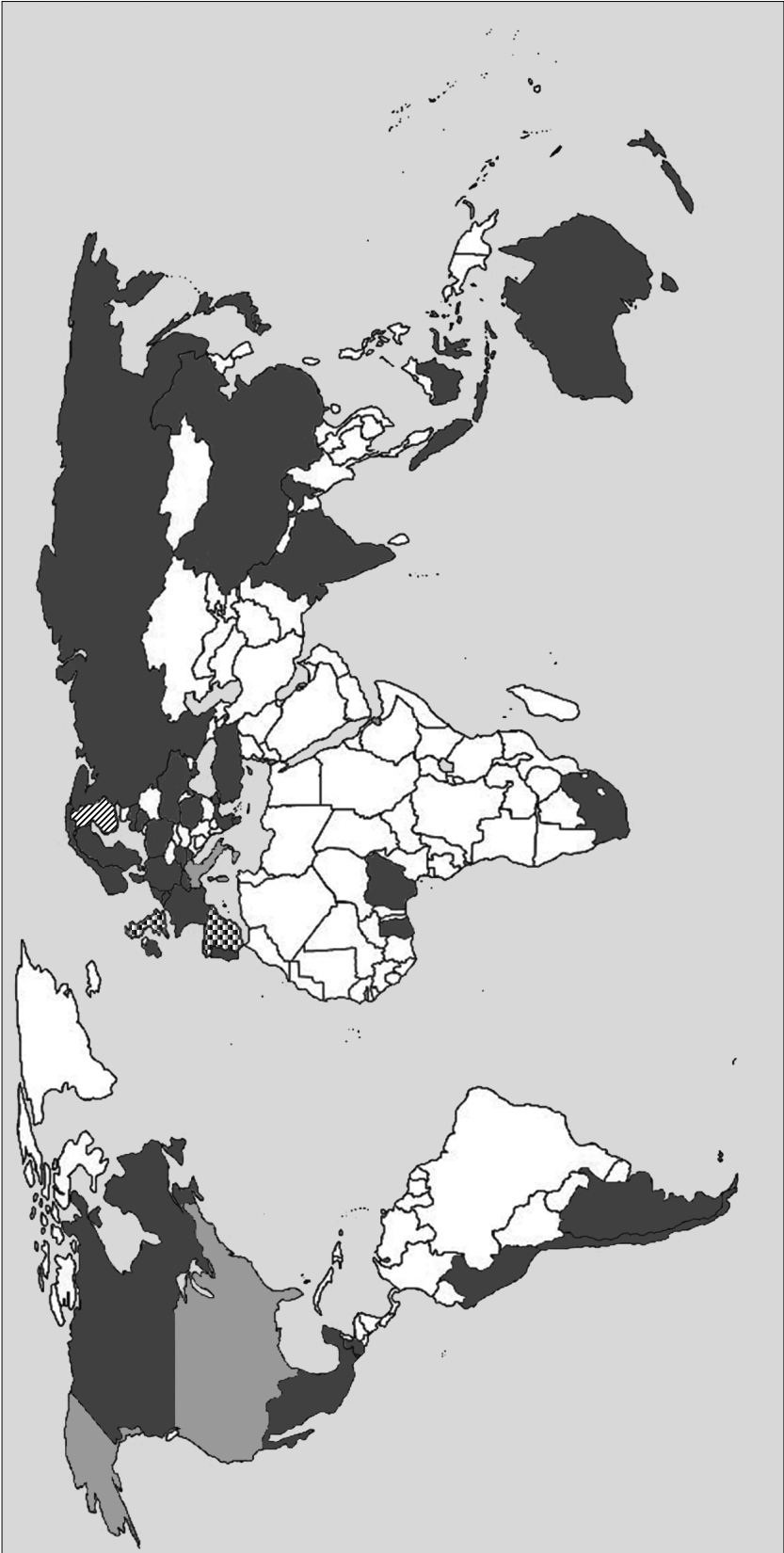


Figure 2. The map of OBY members in April 2011.

symphony orchestra, and the festival's production machinery to perform the opera at the medieval stone fortress Olavinlinna, the main venue of the festival.

Data collection from operabyyou.com

I was authorized to conduct the study on OBY by the Festival organisation in October 2010, and immediately began collecting data from the website. I collected the online discussions related to the composing task which had taken place since the launch of the community (May 2010) until June 2011. The Festival organisation also provided some demographic statistics on the members (e.g. the amount, female/male ratio, the number joined monthly, the number per country). Compared to Mikseri, OBY is a considerably smaller online community and it was therefore possible to collect and analyse every discussion about the composing of the music. Following the structure of OBY, illustrated in Table 4, I collected altogether 259 online messages about musical composing from three separate areas: TASKS, BLOG and FAQ.

Due to the fact that case studies relate to human affairs, Yin (1994) considers interviews as a highly important source of case study information. According to him, an interview following structured questions (often referred to as a survey) may act jointly with other forms of information gathering to provide one perspective on the topic. As such, to obtain a fuller explanation of the reasons and attitudes for the OBY members' participation in the composing project, and to attain a deeper understanding of their processes of learning, we decided to carry out structured, computer-assisted interviews with voluntary OBY composers. The choice of which members to interview was based on a list, provided by the Festival organisation, of "the most active" composers in OBY (email communication in March 21, 2011). According to an email from the project manager, the list contained seven names of "the active composers in the community"¹⁹. She explained that there were also other members who had participated in composing, "but the below mentioned are the most active ones." According to our own calculation, there were altogether approximately 10 to 15 composers in the OBY community during the period of the data gathering. We approached the seven composers through their OBY profile in March 2011 by sending them a message in which I explained the purpose of the study and provided a list of four questions (see Appendix 5E). I asked them to answer to my questions either through my OBY profile or by emailing me if they wished to participate in the study. Five of them answered the questions. While a computer-assisted interview may fall short in providing "rich and detailed descriptions"

¹⁹ The level of activity in OBY is measured by the number of Shots contributed by the members.

(Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 149) due to the lack of non-linguistic information and the possibility of the interviewees having only little or no experience in written communication, as a complementary source of information these e-mail interviews proved to be a practical and non-threatening way to address targeted aspects of the lives of geographically distant people (see, *ibid.*).

Table 4. The structure of operabyyou.com.

	OBJECTIVE	FUNCTION	FIRST COMPOSING RELATED NOTE	NUMBER OF COMPOSING RELATED NOTES
TASKS	A notice board for announcing new Tasks for the members to tackle with.	1) The musical operative (or the production leader on behalf of the musical operative) publishes a Description ¹⁹ . 2) The members and operatives post Shots ²⁰ to the Task, comment on each other's Shots, and/or give Thumb-ups ²¹ for the ones they like. 3) After the Task is completed the operative closes the Task.	Sept 14, 2010	8 Tasks with 7 Shots (with comments)
BLOG	A forum for discussing about the tools and practices and other more general themes related to composing the opera.	The operatives post any news, comments, suggestions or questions <i>not</i> related to any specific composing task. The members comment or give Thumb-ups to the posts.	Sept 20, 2010	9 threads with altogether 12 comments
FAQ	A discussion board for questions and/or comments about the production.	Members initiate threads by posting a Shot, or give Thumb-ups to other people's Shots. The musical operative posts the final versions of the composing Tasks.	May 20, 2010	10 Shots with 89 comments

Analysis of the operabyyou.com research material

The verbal negotiation, descriptions, interviews and other accounts appearing in the research material were analysed using the *theoretical reading analysis* method, as proposed by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009; see also Miles & Huberman 1994, pp. 245-

246). Rather than applying categorisation or other specific analytical techniques, the reading of the texts focused on the “theoretically informed interpretations” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 233) of the researchers. By carefully reading and re-reading the research material from certain theoretical viewpoints, my co-writer Heidi Westerlund and I reflected “theoretically on specific themes of interest” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 236) in order to make interpretations based on the theories. In this type of analytical approach, the researcher is considered as a type of a “craftsman” (p. 234), whose creativity (p. 239) and “extensive and theoretical knowledge of the subject matter” (p. 236) is crucial “in putting forth new interpretations and rigorousness in testing the interpretations” (p. 239). Ultimately, as Kvale and Brinkmann state (*ibid.*), the validation of the theoretical interpretations of the texts is not linked to a specific methodical procedure, but

the burden of proof remains with the researcher, on his or her ability to present the premises for, and to rigorously check, the interpretations put forth, and ability to argue convincingly for the credibility of the interpretations made (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 239).

To ensure that the theory-led reading would not “block seeing new, previously not recognized, aspects of the phenomena being investigated” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 239), the research material was also examined through narrative analysis, during which we constructed “coherent stories” (Kvale 1996, p. 201) of a series of happenings on OBY by synthesising and temporally organising them into new episodes. In particular, two emplotted stories (Polkinghorne 1995) were constructed from discussions that appeared on the site during the initial stages of the composing work. Both discussion threads concerned the terms and tools to be used and the participants’ hopes in terms of collaborative composing in the OBY community, and exemplified the negotiation of meaning occurring in the community. The aim of the process of narrative configuration was to obtain an understanding of the happenings “from the perspective of their contribution and influence on a specific outcome” (p. 5).

3.5 Cross-case analysis through theoretical synthesis

The three individual cases of this multicase study each provide a different viewpoint from which to examine music making, musical learning and the construction of music-related identity in the world of digital and virtual media, and thus each focus on different aspects of this broader spectrum. As this research project seeks to explain – rather than merely describe – these phenomena, the last stage of the analysis aimed

to draw these different perspectives closer together and cross-examine them by developing a theoretical synthesis that could act as an analytical tool used to present a more complete picture of a rapidly changing musical culture, as well as to suggest theoretical and practical implications for formal music education arising from this study. As the individual cases of this research project are noticeably different from each other, cross-case analysis was utilized to enable me to move beyond the initial findings and impressions specific to each case, and to draw theoretical conclusions with respect to the overall research task (see, for instance, Eisenhardt 2002, p. 19; Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton & Oakes 2002, p. 334; Stake 2006). The analysis proceeded through a *critical reading* (see, for instance, Kvale & Brinkmann 2009) of the case study material by interrogating the data from specific theoretical postulations (see Chapter 2) and reporting the findings “in a continuous interpretative text” (p. 237).

This theoretical cross-case analysis is presented in Article IV (Partti & Westerlund in press), with some qualification (see also Chapter 4.4). As the article was written as a chapter for a forthcoming collaborative book, the editor set some specific preconditions in terms of the title, structure, style and focus of the article. Additionally, due to limitations on the length of the work, the editor asked that the first case study (Mikseri) to be left out of the final version of the article. However, the analysis provided in the article is based on all three case studies, even though Mikseri is not introduced or mentioned in the final text.

3.6 Methodological reflections of the study

Within the qualitative and constructivist paradigm of this study, with its pervasive narrative features, validation of the quality of the inquiry is understood in terms of the *trustworthiness* that is fundamental to every stage of the research process. As such, my aim throughout the study has been to provide as detailed and transparent descriptions as possible concerning the theoretical premises, and the design and methods used in the data generation and analysis, along with my reflections about my own position as the researcher. This openness is considered to relate to an understanding of the validity and reliability of the study in terms of the “quality of craftsmanship” of the researcher (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 247). In other words, the validity and reliability of the inquiry is connected to the soundness, consistency, strength and convincingness of the arguments made, resulting from the researcher’s ability to constantly check, question and theoretically interpret the findings and communicate that “continual process [of] validation” (p. 248) to the reader.

Closely related to the conception of establishing validity through good craftsmanship is the notion of *objectivity*. Some researchers working within qualitative paradigms consider this term to carry too much of an inkling of positivist measures, and have therefore abandoned the concept altogether in discussing the evaluation criteria of an inquiry (see, for instance, Guba & Lincoln 2005). However, I consider employing the notion of objectivity as a helpful tool, particularly in examining ethical aspects of the research. As remarked by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), objectivity, especially in its everyday use, refers to a sense of reflexivity about one's subjectivity and openness towards discourse and criticism. As was stated in Chapter 1, I am well aware of my subjectivity in terms of this research, and have not tried to conceal this partisanship. On the contrary, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the researcher's active participation is, in the tradition of qualitative research, viewed as an inherent and essential part of the research process. Stake (2006) points out that a researcher pursuing a multicase study ought to "seek an accurate understanding" of the phenomenon under study, "although this understanding is necessarily incomplete" and "interpretive" (p. vii). In order to obtain a qualitative understanding of the cases being studied, the researcher is expected to experience "the activity of the case as it occurs in its contexts and in its particular situation" (p. 2), and to rely partly on this personal experience of the case during the course of the research. As such, a qualitative study is never value-free, and any attempt to pursue the research under such terms – whether in terms of data generation, analysis or reporting – would expose us to simplification and trivialisation of the phenomenon under study. Instead, as reminded by Stake, it is an ethical responsibility for a case researcher "to identify affiliations and ideological commitments that might influence" the interpretations made (p. 87). In addition to including myself in the inquiry by, for instance, writing about my personal starting points, the collegial discussions and feedback involved in the research process have proved an indispensable asset in my striving for the construction of "systematically cross-checked and verified" knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 243). This *dialogical intersubjectivity* (ibid.) has been enabled particularly by my participation in international research conferences and the Sibelius Academy's doctoral seminar,²⁰ and by the blind peer-review practice of the journals in which the articles of this research have been published.

20 The weekly research seminar is an inherent part of the Sibelius Academy's music education doctoral studies. The students are expected to regularly participate in the seminar, and contribute to it by sharing, discussing and commenting on each other's doctoral dissertations and other research texts (e.g. conference papers and articles) at their different stages.

Some critical reflections on the implementation of the study

In hindsight, the combination of these three separate cases can be viewed as somewhat problematic. Although the use of multiple cases contributed richness and variability in terms of empirical evidence, thus allowing the examination of the research task and the phenomena of music making, musical learning and the construction of musical identity in the world of digital and virtual media from various angles, designing and conducting three case studies while maintaining the coherence of the inquiry and the balance between attending to individual cases and the whole (see Stake 2006, pp. 7-8 on the “case-quintain dilemma”) turned out to be challenging. One of the biggest tensions pertained to the combination of “deskwork and fieldwork” (see Rutter & Smith 2005), the virtual and face-to-face methods of the data collection. As was discussed earlier in this chapter, online communities enable invisible observing, which brings up several questions regarding the ethics of conducting the study. While I am satisfied with the level of integrity shown in conducting the case studies on both online communities, in the future I would probably put even more emphasis on the design of how and on which terms to step into “the field”. I would specifically try to find more ways to communicate with the members of the online communities by participating more actively in the activities of the communities and/or interviewing some of the members either by email or face-to-face.

Having to deal with three separate cases also resulted in limitations with respect to the time spent in the field to gather the data. Especially in terms of the second case (music producers), it could be assumed that a longer period of observing and possibly conducting a second interview would provide an even deeper and more multilayered understanding of the case. Due to the constraints of working during a very busy period of the students schedule as they focused on their final assignments, I was afforded only a restricted access to the field and had to collect the research material within a shorter time and in busier settings (e.g. in the corner of a studio or the control room) than may have been optimal. It could be assumed that a longer period of data collection, preferably during different phases of the students’ studies and not exclusively while the students were working with the final assignments, could have provided even more diversified research data.

Despite these critical reflections, the use of multiple and different cases enabled a multidimensionality that I consider as crucially important to the effort of examining the digital musical culture. As pointed out by Amy Stuart Wells with her colleagues (Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton & Oakes 2002, p. 346), limited time resources seem to always be an issue for researchers aiming to collect as rich research material as

possible. As such, I felt that the cross-case analysis enabled me to assemble the essential findings of the study as a unified whole. Furthermore, “through the use of structured and diverse lenses on the data” (Eisenhardt 2002, p. 19), I was able to create analytical conclusions and apprehend new findings which had hitherto been either ignored or obscured.

4 Results of the research articles

As was discussed in Chapter 1, this study was designed to approach the main research task from various directions. As such, each article views the phenomena of musical learning and identity work from a particular perspective. Articles I, II and III specifically address one research question each, and examine the questions through empirical data (see Table 5), while the focus of Article IV is on the implications of the findings drawn from the previous articles. In the following chapter I will provide a summary of the main findings of the study, and address the research task by discussing each of the four articles.

Table 5. Research questions as addressed in Articles I-III.

RESEARCH QUESTION	ARTICLE	CASE
1. How does an online music community facilitate the construction of its members' musical identities?	I Partti & Karlsen 2010. Reconceptualising musical learning: new media, identity and community in music education.	Mikseri.net online community
2. In what ways do digital musicians narrate the meanings and values of music making, learning and participation in their musical communities?	II Partti 2012. Cosmopolitan musicianship under construction: digital musicians illuminating emerging values in music education.	A group of music producers
3. How is learning and ownership of musical meaning enhanced or constrained in an online community of collaborative musical composing?	III Partti & Westerlund forthcoming. Envisioning collaborative composing in music education: learning and negotiation of meaning in operabyyou.com.	Operabyyou.com online community

4.1 Constructing musical identities in an online community of practice

One of the most evident technology-enabled cultural changes of the present day is the multiplicity of online music communities. These communities manifest the values of participatory culture not only with their strong emphasis on practices based on sharing and communication between members, but also through the very nature of their being openly public. Online music communities, generally occurring

completely outside of institutions of formal music education, allow music lovers, makers, venues and even retailers to connect and interact independent of the traditional gatekeepers of the music industry.

The case of the Mikseri online music community (see Chapter 3.2) is an example of the types of open online music communities that offer forums for their members' own musical expression. As such, Mikseri presents pertinent examples for the exploration of matters of identity as formulated in the first research question: *How does an online music community facilitate the construction of its members' musical identities?*

Participation in an online music community opens up various possibilities for the construction and maintenance of musical identities within a web-based reality. As is suggested in Article I (Partti & Karlsen 2010), Mikseri enables the development of collective identities connected to the members' participation in the community by providing a platform – or, by using Gee's (2001) terminology, *affinity group* – within which its members may participate and share music and information as an affiliation. Consequently, these identities are referred to as *affinity identities*²¹.

The identity work of the members of the Mikseri community takes place through three different processes related to the community. These processes are referred to in the article as “modes”, as each of them contributes to the Mikseri members' identity work in specific yet interconnected ways, as explained below.

Firstly, the Mikseri online music community facilitates the ability to create and maintain a musical identity of one's own choice, with or without correspondence to one's non-virtual appearance. Due to the technology-enabled ability to appear anonymously, this can take place without having to risk becoming exposed or ridiculed in one's daily life outside of the online setting. One can, for instance, create a profile page that represents the strong identity of a composer without a direct link to one's musical identity outside the Mikseri community; it may even be that friends and family members outside the online community would be surprised to find out about one's endeavours as a composer. The Mikseri community hence provides a space through which the outward display of the musical self is possible. As such, the virtual community fundamentally increases the possibilities for one to experiment with many aspects of musicianship and simultaneously possess multi-layered and even contradictory musical identities beyond what would normally be possible in

21 Gee (2001) uses the concept of affinity identity to view that perspective on identity, which is developed and maintained through shared experiences or causes, or conduits of communication in the practices of so-called affinity groups, such as fans of a particular artist, or young musicians of a rock band practicing after school.

more traditional educational settings.

Secondly, the message board of Mikseri provides a forum for members to share their musical self-narratives with each other. As stated in Chapter 2, people organise and interpret events around them through narratives, and this constant process of storytelling is part of the processes of our negotiation of meaning. The stories of the Mikseri members are often very detailed and may, as seen in the example provided in the article (see Partti & Karlsen 2010, Appendix 1 pp. 129-130), consist of a chronological description of one's musical life history describing how one became the composer one is today. As with narratives in general (e.g. Atkinson, Delamont & Housley 2008), the music-related stories of Mikseri members can be understood to simultaneously serve as technologies of the self *and* follow social conventions. On one hand, the members recount their music-related life experiences and give meanings to those experiences through storytelling. On the other hand, we noticed that the Mikseri members' stories of their personal experiences could be viewed – at least to some extent – to be particular versions of their personal experiences that they had “translated through the structuring principles of narrative conventions” (Atkinson et al. 2008, p. 102) of the site, as the members seem to have a clear (albeit unwritten) understanding of how and about what one is supposed to write within any given thread²². The virtual community hence works as an important space for the reflexive *construction* of the members' musical identities.

Thirdly, the practice of mutually rating and commenting on each other's compositions and blogs enable discussions about the meanings of music and musicianship between the members of Mikseri. Through these discussions and peer-to-peer evaluations, the members negotiate the meanings of their experiences in the community and determine what matters to them: what is worth of pursuing and what is to be treated with disinterest or even contempt. In other words, the community provides a social context for the members to participate in a mutual construction of individual and collective identities through dialogues.

It is thus suggested that Mikseri, and other similar online music communities, contribute to their members' music-related identity work by providing:

- (1) a space through which the outward display of the musical self [is] possible;
- (2) a forum for sharing members' musical self-narratives; and (3) a social context for dialogues and negotiations of identity (Appendix 1 p. 129).

22 For example, it is not uncommon that other writers of a thread correct a member who has asked or commented a question already addressed in a different thread.

In addition to viewing Mikseri as an affinity group, it can also be considered as a community of practice (e.g. Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Understanding Mikseri from this point of view shifts the focus to the connection between the learning and identity work that takes place in the community. The Mikseri members build up their music-related knowledge and skills through sharing information and distributing and discussing their own musical pieces. As discussed in Chapter 2, learning and identity can be regarded as two aspects of the same phenomenon. The Mikseri community of practice, and other similar venues, provide powerful platforms for self-directed and peer-directed learning, community participation, and direct engagement with musical artefacts and music-related practices. Moreover, as learning in Mikseri is a thoroughly social process during which members are negotiating the meanings of their experiences of membership in the community, Mikseri also enables the formation of its members' identities, be they individual or collective.

4.2 Narrating meanings and values within the digital music making culture

Virtual and digital technologies have not only enabled the distribution of one's own music, but have also provided access to a variety of musical practices and musical worlds that may have previously been out of reach, for instance due to cultural and geographical impediments. Participation in various communities is crucially important for digital musicians, whose ways of working, such as sampling and blending techniques, entail an access and ability to draw from rich sources of ideas and musical materials. An analysis of the music-related narratives of a group of digital musicians at a London-based music college (see Chapter 3.3) provides a depiction of the meanings and values of musicianship within digital technology enabled practices, hence answering the study's second research question: *In what ways do digital musicians narrate the meanings and values of music making, learning and participation in their musical communities?*

The meanings and values that digital musicians give to their music-related activities emphasise the aspects of musical versatility and flexibility, as well as mobility between various musical communities of practice. In particular, two specific features of digital musicianship are highlighted through the participants' narratives: the decisive roles of digital devices and aural awareness in shaping and directing the development of digital musicianship. These roles will be further explored in the following section.

Firstly, the musical identities and professional expertise of digital musicians is partly constructed *through* technologies; computers and other digital devices enable creative explorations and discoveries by serving the musicians as an instrument of their musical thinking and acting. The participants not only use digital devices to execute their initial ideas, but also allow the technologies to *shape* their creative processes by making active use of the nearly endless possibilities provided by digital devices in exploring, storing, manipulating and processing sounds – in other words, in searching and finding *new* ideas and ways of doing things. In this sense the instruments that digital musicians employ within their music-making practices are interlinked with their musical understanding and, by following Sami Paavola and Kai Hakkarainen's (2005) terminology, work as *mediating artefacts*.

Secondly, digital musicians' musical understanding is closely related to the level of their aural awareness. According to Hugill's (2008) definition, aural awareness is "an ability to hear and listen both widely and accurately" and to understand "how sound behaves in space and time" (p. 4). In addition to knowing how to make use of digital devices, musicians need to be able to discern the differences between sounds, and to understand "*which* sound decisions are appropriate in a given context and *how* those sounds are created" (Partti 2012, Appendix 2 p. 148, emphasis in original). This sensitivity to and awareness of different sounds is naturally a basic requirement for any musician. However, while a musician playing an (electro) acoustic instrument might seek to extend the traditional techniques of this instrument in order to find new and exciting sounds, the starting point for a digital musician is a bewildering and nearly infinite range of sounds to choose from. As pointed out by Hugill (2008), the primary means of musical exchange amongst digital musicians is based on audio material – made available by digital sound manipulation techniques – which often challenges established definitions of what is considered to be music. Digital musicians thus need to develop their ear to make the most of those "potentially creative possibilities" (p. 32). Digital musicians employ a wide range of music and technology related skills and knowledge in their musical endeavours. Their musical identities and professional expertise is thus partly defined by their pursuit of obtaining as wide a musical understanding as possible.

As a consequence of digital musicians' way of working in partnership with various technologies, and utilising a multitude of skills and types of knowledge in their efforts to explore innovative paths in their creative thinking and acting, their musicianship appears as "a combination of multiple music and technology-related practices, knowledge, skills, styles, roles and communities" (Partti 2012, Appendix 2 p. 154). Instead of safeguarding "musical belonging" (Elliott 1995; 1996) by mastering one or two musical practices or aiming for musical "authenticity" by adhering to a loyalty

to traditions, digital musicians value the ability to travel through as well as *between* different musical communities, seizing and passing on ideas, styles and interests from one practice to another. For digital musicians, this practice of creating connections between multiple communities and importing/exporting musical thoughts and revelations is a signifier of their competency, and is referred to in the article as “brokering”²³, a term adopted from Wenger (1998, pp. 108-110). In the article, the practice of brokering is considered to relate to *musical cosmopolitanism*, with its strong emphasis on the values of musical breadth as well as cultural and creative fluidity.

4.3 Negotiating about collaborative composing practices in a task-based learning community

One of the most apparent changes generated by digital and virtual technologies is the vast increase in the variety of ways that an ever-widening range of music makers can experience and learn composing. Online music communities, in particular, facilitate global platforms for musical collaborations that would have not been possible some time ago. It is noteworthy that these communities are increasingly claiming space among traditional professional stages, and should therefore not be considered as a forum for amateurs only nor be associated exclusively with popular music styles. One example of this ongoing blurring of the boundaries between highly specialised musical expertise and amateur music making, and between different musical cultures, is the online community operabyyou.com (OBY, see Chapter 3.4), that serves as an exemplar of the study’s third research question, namely: *How is the learning and ownership of musical meaning enhanced or constrained in an online community of collaborative musical composing?*

The OBY community provides a different kind of online learning environment than that of Mikseri. Unlike Mikseri, OBY has a tangible and predefined objective for its existence: the production of an artistic artefact in a given time frame. The completion of this task forms the core interest of the community. Therefore, by following Margaret Riel and Linda Polin’s (2004) terminology, Article III (Partti & Westerlund forthcoming) compares OBY to *task-based learning communities*. OBY offers a platform for opera lovers around the world to be part of the creation of

23 Most people participate in multiple communities of practice at once. Sometimes this multi-membership leads to “brokering”, an activity that in this study refers to the utilisation of multi-membership “to transfer some element of one practice into another” (Wenger 1998, p. 109). Brokering is a form of re-contextualisation: e.g. a child at a school in which environmental issues are actively discussed brings her learning home and tries to make her understanding about energy saving efficiency part of family practice by introducing new ideas and questioning her parents’ views on environmental issues.

an artwork that only few of them would be able to achieve on their own. However, activities take place within strictly defined boundaries with little room for individual and self-directed artistic expression.

To reach the goal of producing a final public performance of the opera within a relatively short period of time, the Festival organisers have appointed a musical leader (“operative”) to manage the composing of the music by designing, presenting and explaining different assignments for the participants to work with. Collaborative composing thus proceeds according to a predefined marching order under the authority of the musical operative, to whom the OBY composers send the musical passages they have composed as required. The operative then chooses which snippets to use, and merges the chosen passages into the score in an attempt to create a coherent piece of music.

Although this division of labour facilitates the prompt completion of the task of the OBY community, it also bears crucial consequences for learning. The OBY composers are given the opportunity to generate but not to *evaluate* their musical ideas. As such, their development as composers is partly impeded by the lack of opportunity for deliberate and constant reflection on their own decisions in relation to others. This exclusion from sharing in reflection on the whole process of composing results in “lost opportunities for deepening connections to learning” (Chapman 2008, p. 41) among the participants, as subsequent to distributing their musical material to the operative there is no negotiation on how the material is further processed.

Another ramification of the superseding aim of finishing the task is the participants’ tendency to avoid time consuming disagreements in the community, even at the cost of their ownership of meaning. On one hand, the OBY composers appear to aim “to contribute to, take responsibility for, and shape the meanings that matter within a social configuration” (Wenger 1998, p. 197) of OBY, by having started discussions about the tools, rules and hopes for the collaborative composing project. On the other hand, rather than celebrating diversity, and treating conflicts and challenges as “forms of participation” (p. 77) and a “learning resource” (Wenger et al. 2009, p. 9), in the few online discussions appearing on OBY the participants avoid extended negotiation of meaning by maintaining a conciliatory rather than confrontational tone. Instead of negotiating and renegotiating meanings (see Bruner 1990) through discussions, the members of the OBY community seem to some extent to be hostages of the static and stated goal of the community, that effectively rules out opportunities for narrative meaning making.

The urgency of finishing the task has an impact on the OBY participants' identity work, which in the article is viewed through Wenger's (1998, pp. 188-213) metaphor of economy of meaning, highlighting an interplay between two different but interlinked elements, namely *identification* and *negotiability*. The task of producing an opera provides an important source of identification for the participants, and motivates them to devote their time and effort to composing. However, the emphasis put on the completion of the task results in very few opportunities to negotiate what it means or how to be a composer in the OBY community, thus limiting the participants' pursuit of acquiring "control over the meanings" (p. 188) in which they have invested, and consequently compromising negotiability. As such, the OBY composers seem to have "settled for conformity rather than striving towards active agency, fulfilling their need for identification while sacrificing deeper ownership" (Partti & Westerlund forthcoming, Appendix 3 p. 172).

4.4 Democratising musical learning within a participatory revolution in new media

Digital music and information technology has opened up new and wider opportunities for musical learning, at the same time questioning the sharp division between professional musicians and amateurs as well as the divisions between different musical styles and genres, and between the various roles of music makers. Furthermore, as argued in Article IV (Partti & Westerlund in press), digital musicianship appears to be closely related to values that "favour communication and an exchange of musical ideas independent of one's level of expertise" and "celebrate simultaneous participation in various global and local communities" in pursuing individual and social musical identities in more flexible and open ways (Appendix 4 p. 182). In the article, these extent cultural changes are suggested to manifest a *democratic revolution*²⁴ that "provides individuals with the access needed to use their intelligence more freely for musical growth and expression, and to share more democratically in the values of musical cultures" (ibid.). Digital technology and online communities offer tools and forums for composing one's own music, often in collaboration with others. In fact, as seen across all the cases of this study, composing is a self-evident part of digital musicians' creative expression. Most

24 In the study, democracy in music education is used to refer to any process that reconstructs structures, practices, or the use of concepts for the benefit of all people (Dewey MW 5, p. 152; LW 11, p. 182). As discussed in Article IV, identifying the needs of reconstruction in music education is political education in the sense in which pedagogy is viewed as a moral and political practice (e.g., Giroux 1999, p. 199; 2003; 2011), and learning is considered to be connected to students' growth as critical citizens and with "the imperatives of social responsibility and political agency" (Giroux 2003, p. 9).

often the composing processes are made visible and public by inviting others to comment upon, for instance, outlines of songs or ideas of production. Online music communities also open up opportunities for people around the world to participate in collaborative composing projects of their liking. These aspects of the music-related democratic revolution could be argued to offer important lessons for formal music education. As summarised below, each article of this study has contributed to a reflection on what impact the study's research questions can be expected to have in terms of the meaningfulness of music education curricula and practices.

Firstly, making one's own music – composing – could and *should* be part of music education at every step of the way from school classrooms to conservatoires and teacher education. Encouraging students to compose their own music provides opportunities to promote an experimental attitude towards music rather than merely nurturing an ability to adopt existing musical values and practices by reproducing designated repertoires or instrumental combinations. The case studies reveal that many people have an apparent need for experimenting with music, manifested in the ways in which they make public and openly share their individual and open-ended musical learning processes. In contrast to traditional educational settings, especially those within higher music education – where the construction of a musical identity through learning is often a private process shared between the master and novice (e.g. Hirvonen 2003; Huhtanen 2004), or at the most within the school only – in online music communities identity work often takes place through an open and public display of the process. By making and distributing music publicly, the members of such a community are likely to develop individual identities as “real” creators of music and musical knowledge, and thus be able to assume ownership and responsibility for their own learning and growth as musicians as well as for the advancement of collaborative effort and shared knowledge. Importantly, music technology in particular allows easy access to musical collaboration between a wide range of music makers, thus making it possible for one to rehearse how to participate in and contribute to a community by mutual sharing and negotiations.

In terms of designing music education practices, introducing this sort of openness and experimenting would require a stance that would assign a more central role to negotiations between students, rather than expecting the teacher to be the only musical expert in the classroom with the authority to make all the choices concerning the repertoire and decisions on what is worth learning. By deliberately constructing communities of musical practice in educational settings, it would be possible for a music classroom, for instance, to function as a *network* of expertise, shared practices, and distributed knowledge. This kind of “communal cultural ethos” (Partti & Westerlund in press, Appendix 4 p. 188), inherent to the participatory revolution in

new media, could for instance take the form of peer-teaching and peer-assessment practices in the music classroom. The Mikseri online community exemplifies the inclusive practices of peer-to-peer learning by welcoming comments from any of its members independent of the commentator's formal musical training. In formal music education contexts, this kind of inclusiveness and openness in the creative processes could enhance the ownership of meaning, as it would enable the students to assume alternating roles as either expert or novice; an aspect that sociocultural theorists view as particularly important in terms of meaningful learning (see, for instance, Fuller & Unwin 2004).

Secondly, values and meanings related to digital musicianship are expected to overflow also into general music education, while skills learned in the music classroom can help the students to navigate in the ever-changing “digital habitats” (Wenger et al. 2009). The depiction of digital musicianship brings forth a set of certain meanings and values that seem in many ways different from those associated with more established musical practices, such as that of Western classical music. However, while there are differences, there is also room for common growth. On one hand, rather than supporting only the pursuit of specialised musicianship closely centred around specific musical styles or instruments, music education institutions should facilitate arenas for wider conceptions of musicianship, fostering opportunities for learning that would enable students to express themselves musically, to “choose freely from different musical materials, and juggle ideas in a manner that celebrates the very freedom of experimenting rather than lauding predefined outcomes” (Partti & Westerlund in press, Appendix 4 p. 188). On the other hand, music education institutions should help students to bridge the gap between local and global learning environments, such as between online music communities and the music classroom, by actively looking for and developing practices that facilitate a natural continuum between them.

Ultimately, in order to realise and comprehend the multidimensionality of students' music learning, it is essential for music educators to take heed of music making inside *and* outside school, as well as in the whole continuum between the formal and informal poles (see, Folkestad 2005). In many countries, curricula already emphasise how important it is for the school to realise and comprehend the multidimensionality of musical learning in the current cultural landscape. Finland's *Development Plan of Education and Research*, for instance, encourages schools to establish “adequate mechanisms for recognising [a student's] prior learning [which] will help the individual to capitalise on informal learning” (Finnish Ministry of Education 2004, p. 16; see also, for instance, England's Department for Education 2011). Meeting these fundamental educational needs calls for a thorough rethinking

of current practices, specifically in terms of “the power of the new technologies to individualize learning” (Collins & Halverson 2009, p. 6). One starting point for such a rethinking could be the opening of democratic possibilities of communication (Partti & Westerlund in press) in music teaching that would enable the teacher to acknowledge and make use of the students’ earlier experience as well as their hopes and aspirations in regards to learning music. However, while informal music practices represent essential aspects of our society’s community life, they do not necessarily always represent ideal *models* for the music classroom, as seen in the case study of the OBY community. Therefore, in order for formal music education to promote learning that facilitates the construction of identity and an ownership of meaning, it is important to place matters of democracy at the centre of our attention. These matters include, for instance, the questions of how a community emerges and is created through the means of collaboration and negotiation; what kind of social rules entail creative collaboration; and how to facilitate the students’ growth towards democratic artistic sharing and the related negotiations this necessarily involves.

5 Discussion: Formal music education in a world of flux

Moving at the speed of life, we are bound to collide with each other.

(A tagline for the film “Crash”, 2004)

A colleague recently challenged me by asking whether it was rather patronising to begin every article and conference presentation – and, indeed, a doctoral thesis – by pointing out that the world around us is changing. “Was there ever a time when the world was not changing?” she asked, with a twinkle in her eye. My colleague was right, of course. The world has always changed and will probably never cease doing so. Every generation of music education researchers has and will base their studies to some extent on questions, wonderments, consternations and even downright moral outrage kindled by the changing cultural landscapes surrounding them.

However, as this study has aimed to show, the challenge of our time is not so much about coming to an agreement that the world of music making and learning is changing, but rather about finding pertinent angles to observe and communicate what that change *looks like*, what sort of *implications* it could be expected to have for us as music makers, learners, teachers and policy writers, and how to *address* those changes. In the opening words of his research agenda, which aims to develop “a refined learning theory for our times”, Wenger (2006, p. 1) concludes,

We cannot address today’s challenges with yesterday’s perspectives. We need new visions of what is possible. We need new models to learn how to learn at multiple levels of scale, from the personal to the global. Increasing our capacity to learn – individually and collectively – is taking on a special urgency if we see ourselves caught, as I believe we are, in a race between learning and the possibility of self-destruction. (Wenger 2006, p. 1)

Wenger’s point, as I understand it, is that while the world has always changed, it has never faced such a challenge to *learning* as it does now. Rather than being experienced as a gradual flow of events in the background of our individual lives, this change is immediate and “in your face”, so to speak. Live stream of news and information, instantly accessible inside and outside of home, school, and office, makes us aware

of change on many levels and, consequently, requires us to *respond*. The global village grows ever smaller; yet, as Wenger points out, our *awareness* of that village grows ever wider (see, also, Bauman 2002; Webster & Mertova 2007). As such, we are becoming increasingly interdependent on one another and, particularly, on our ability to learn how we as individuals, communities, nations and organisations should face the challenges, imbalances, threats and opportunities brought forth by “a runaway world” (Giddens 2002) – a world that increasingly seems to be slipping out of our control.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the “supercomplex” world of change (Barnett 2009) is fuelled by mounting socio-cultural, economic, and political challenges and opportunities related to globalisation and modern technologies. Keith Sawyer (2007) paints a picture of an “innovation economy” (p. 37) similar to Kai Hakkarainen’s (forthcoming; Paavola & Hakkarainen 2005) illustration of a society that relies on people’s ability to work together in order to create novelty, acquire new competencies, and break through the boundaries of earlier knowledge and competence in ever more competitive and unpredictable environments. Moreover, as Jenkins and his colleagues (2006) point out, the emerging participatory culture, particularly in new media, “creates new pressure” on all levels of education “to prepare students for their future roles as citizens and workers” (p. 55; see also Davidson & Goldberg 2010).

These changes, and the ensuing requirements placed upon us, bring to mind an ancient, purportedly Chinese curse – “*May you live in interesting times!*” – the fulfilment of which few wish to witness in their lives. This research project, with its multiple case studies, promotes the slightly more optimistic view that life in interesting times may become a blessing – albeit sometimes in disguise. However, *learning* is the only way to turn the curse into a blessing. In this sense, formal music education must steer itself towards self-construction led by constant learning, or plunge headlong into self-destruction trying to hold on to the *status quo*.

What, then, should we be learning?

In this final chapter, I will examine the role of formal music education in the face of “the curse of living in interesting times”. I will particularly reflect on the challenges arising from our increasing awareness of and contact with diversity, especially in new media, and discuss the educational requirements being placed on the school to support students’ growth towards increased agency in the society of today and tomorrow.

5.1 Facing (anonymous) diversity

As discussed earlier in this thesis, in order for formal music education to become meaningful in students' lives – that is, to have a connection with and even a unifying role in their various musical worlds – the student's earlier informal learning experiences, as well as the surrounding social environment through which learning takes place, must be taken into account (see Chapter 1). This study has aimed to contribute to this goal through three case studies that each illustrates an instance of the social reality of music making and learning, facilitated by digital and virtual technologies. As summarised in Chapter 4, the individual case studies of this research project reveal how the music-related “democratic revolution” (Partti & Westerlund in press) has produced opportunities for people around the world²⁵, with different musical preferences and in various age groups and levels of expertise, to learn and make music together. Also, the case studies present digital musicianship as being intimately related to values that esteem extraterritorial musical flexibility and simultaneous participation in multiple communities of musical practice along with mobility between those practices. Following Hugill's (2008) characterization, “a digital musician is a 'jack of all trades' and a master of *some*” (p. 13, emphasis in original). Rather than following the well trodden path of linear progression, musicians working in the digital musical culture are required to obtain a variety of skills and types of expertise that are not necessarily bound to a certain age group: one can simultaneously be highly skilled and experienced in one aspect of the culture (e.g. computer programming), while a mere beginner in another (e.g. playing an instrument). In this sense, musical expertise within digital musical culture seems to be remarkably widely distributed between various age groups.

This study's exploration of digital musical culture has given rise to the concept of *cosmopolitan musicianship*, which has been discussed here in terms of certain meanings, values, and practices related to music making and musical learning (see, in particular, Partti 2012). At the heart of the development of this type of widely distributed musicianship is the so-called practice of brokering: the ability to utilise one's multi-membership in different communities to transfer and combine creative ideas authored by various people (Wenger 1998; 2006). Music-related learning and communication thus becomes “multidirectional...rather than unidirectional”

25 It is acknowledged here, that although online communities provide access for people around the world, the research on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is heavily focused on developed countries, and its impact and the accessibility to it in developing countries is virtually non-existent within the field of music education. Wider access to ICT in developing countries is one of the key focuses of the current Programme and Budget of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, for instance (e.g., Semenov, 2005; UNESCO, 2010). Wider analysis about the issue would be somewhat beyond the scope of this study, but the matter certainly calls for further inquiries.

(Barrett 2005, p. 273), as musicians employ other people's expertise and make wide use of their own experiences and "observations of the learning processes of their peers" (ibid.). Feeling at home everywhere and nowhere, and having the capacity to utilise this "uprootedness" to open up "new possibilities for meaning" (Wenger 1998, p. 109) forms the basis for cosmopolitan musicianship.

Learning to travel through and between different musical communities could be considered to be a particularly important ability in a diverse cultural and social environment where the rules of musical authenticity are under constant negotiation. As argued in Article II (Partti 2012), the process of steering a student toward a deep and chosen "musical belonging" (Elliott 1995; 1996), which has traditionally been one of the fortes of music education at the tertiary stage in particular, is now challenged by the necessity to promote musical versatility and flexibility in an ever more competitive labour market. Traditional approaches to music education have concentrated on producing self-sufficient problem-solvers who skilfully apply "practice-specific knowledge" (Elliott 1995, p. 55) and aim for musical authenticity or a loyalty to established canon; in contrast, a growing number of employers are now looking for people who are able to navigate in rapidly changing settings, draw upon "different sets of expertise", collaborate in problem-solving, and break rather than maintain conventions (Jenkins et al. 2006, p. 22; see also Paavola & Hakkarainen; Wenger 2006; Collins & Halverson 2009; Davidson & Goldberg 2010; Tolvanen & Pesonen 2010).

However, cosmopolitan musicianship, with its tendency to assemble communities wherein differing views on musicianship exist simultaneously, will ultimately pose the question of *how to live and work with people who are different than I*. This question has both ethical and practical ramifications that call upon competencies that have not traditionally been at the centre of our focus within formal music education. These competencies concern, in particular, our abilities to listen and respond to each other in a supercomplex society.

The rise of tribalism: an invitation to educators?

The individual case studies of this research project have each demonstrated how digital and virtual technologies have opened up new possibilities for creative activities and interactions that reach beyond geographical, cultural, and various other frontiers. In particular, the emerging participatory culture in new media seems to be answering the call for inclusiveness, openness, and "the transformation of former audiences into active participants and agents of cultural production" (Schäfer 2011, p. 10).

However, one does not need to be particularly perceptive to notice the shadows lurking in our new paradise of global fraternity. The most optimistic views on the potential effects of the changes caused by globalisation and new media have turned out to be based on rather naïve assumptions. Merely bringing people together and exposing them to diversity has not served to bring about fruitful collaboration in a spirit of tolerance and respect. In fact, as can be witnessed in a variety of venues ranging from the mounting hate speech in online communities to the heated exchange of words in school hallways and corridors, encounters with varying perspectives always result in conflicting and competing values, norms, assumptions, and “claims about the meanings of shared artifacts and experiences” (Jenkins et al. 2006, p. 52). Moreover, unlike the popular saying maintains, travelling does not seem to automatically broaden one’s horizons. In fact, people with firsthand experiences of diversity seem to be *less* inclined towards others, and instead of building bridges over distrust and fearful stereotyping are more likely to “hibernate” (Putnam 2007) by *withdrawing* from those who are different (Sennett 2012). Tolerance of cultural diversity could thus be expected to become one of our greatest challenges in the globalised world, wherein we are frequently confronting different views and ways of life.

A recent online discussion provides an example of this challenge. During the course of this study there appeared on my university’s intranet a curious (although, regrettably, not very exceptional) debate that escalated into a verbal wrangle. The thread originated from the students’ concern about a decrease in the amount of rehearsal studios caused by new venue arrangements implemented in the Sibelius Academy. Within a short period of time, what had started as a well mannered negotiation concerning guidelines for the fair use of the studios intensified into a dispute between the students from different departments blaming, offending, and sneering at each other to a point at which the rector of the university had to intervene in the conversation and remind them about the principles of decent negotiation. At the moment of writing this, in April 2012, the debate – now a year on – still continues. What makes the thread so revealing for our purposes is its large number of references to divisions between different musical genres, styles, and instruments. Several students and members of the staff have expressed their concern and frustration toward such divisions, but old habits seem to die especially hard in music institutions, and some participants in the conversation support their arguments with direct or indirect suggestions about the inferiority of the students in other departments or groups of instruments other than their own.

This unfortunate situation could be interpreted to be an aggressive version of a tradition that has always been the most natural thing in the world of music: the

tendency of the players of the same instrument and the musicians playing within the same genre to come together and to form an association or some sort of a formal or informal professional fellowship. From medieval music guilds to the present day's online communities, perhaps formed around a specific synthesizer made by a specific manufacturer, musicians – as probably any other people within any other profession from Yucatec midwives to U.S. Navy quartermasters (Lave & Wenger 1991) – have gravitated toward their kin (Théberge 1997, pp. 131-133). The divisions between “us” and “them” have not been made only between broad categories of “classical musicians” vs. “jazz musicians”, for instance, but within highly specific areas of interest and expertise.

Naturally, there is nothing wrong with people wanting to share their interests and to learn from and with others who are interested in the same things. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is one of the starting points for communities of practice, and it would be absurd to expect everyone to identify with everyone else at the same level (see Wenger 1998, p. 165), even among musicians. However, this is also one of the ethical challenges of communities of practice, as solidarity and a sense of kinship with others like oneself becomes counterproductive *tribalism* when it takes the form of aggression or resentment against those who are different (Sennett 2012). Such tribalism is harmful not only within the confines of a music university, but more broadly within our complex society; a society that is increasingly dependent on people's ability to deal with diversity, whether it be racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, or sexual – and not only deal with it, but to make the most out of it. In his post-9/11 analysis of the impact of globalisation in reshaping our lives as individuals and communities, Giddens (2002) makes a distinction between fundamentalism and cosmopolitanism based on our capacity to cope with diversity. Fundamentalism, understood in this way, is not limited to religion, but comes across as an adherence to “only one right and proper way of life” (loc54) that is often tightly connected with traditions and a pursuit of constancy and single-mindedness. While cosmopolitanism welcomes and embraces cultural complexity, fundamentalism is the very “antithesis of tolerance” (ibid.) and, as such, the opposite of democracy.

It is not unusual to come across aggressive manifestations of tribalism and fundamentalism within different forms of social media. In fact, some critics have blamed new media *for* the phenomenon, and expressed their concern about the obvious signs of, for example, narcissism and viciousness on social networking sites (see, for instance, Aboujaoude 2011). Writers such as Keen (2008) even argue that “blogs, MySpace, YouTube, and the rest of today's user-generated media are destroying our economy, our culture, and our values” (the new subheading for the reprint edition), and state that instead of looking for news, information, and culture

from the Internet, people desire to “BE the news, the information, the culture”, which ultimately fills cyberspace with “increasingly tasteless...self-advertisements” (p. 7), undermining not only our morals as human beings but all the institutions that so far have safeguarded the high standards of knowledge and arts²⁶.

Admittedly, this is how the virtual world can appear at its worst. A life in interesting times appears as nothing better than a life in the bloat of ignorant stereotyping and revolting individualism “full of people who are full of themselves...shouting for attention”, to quote Sarah Bakewell (2011, p. 1). However, every phenomenon comes with its extreme variations, and judging a phenomenon by its most radical manifestations is hardly useful or fair-minded in itself. Considering Hannah’s aspirations to perform on YouTube (see Chapters 1 and 2) as a mere sign of tasteless self-exhibition, for instance, would provide an unfortunately narrow understanding of today’s music making and learning.

I would suggest that the unattractive by-products of new media should be treated as an invitation to focus on questions concerning our very being in the world as individuals, living and interacting with others. This is an invitation that we as educators cannot afford to turn down, as its scope is much larger than media literacy and the rules of “netiquette”. Let me clarify this with an allegory. Suppose I am holding a glass full of water when a passer-by nudges me (either deliberately or accidentally), and thus causes the water to spill out from my glass. Would I blame the person nudging me for putting the water into my glass? Did not the nudge only cause something to move, something that was *already there* before the nudge? Can we hold new media responsible for our ill manners or endless prejudice? Or is the virtual world “full of people full of themselves” (Bakewell 2011, p. 1) because the world is full of people full of themselves?

5.2 The school and new media

This thesis began with a commitment to Dewey’s vision of the school as an institution that guides students towards increasing agency and prepares them to contribute to the common good of democratic society. This challenge is of even greater importance in the twenty-first century. The current generation of youth is growing up by communicating, sharing, collaborating, and socialising in a world in

26 The title of Keen’s upcoming book (“Digital Vertigo: How Today’s Online Social Revolution Is Dividing, Diminishing, and Disorienting Us”) foreshadows a new vehement onslaught toward social media. Unfortunately, the book was not yet available during the writing of this research.

which they do not necessarily have to (or even *cannot*) directly face the consequences of their words and attitudes. Stepping outside of one's immediate social context leads one into a landscape filled with anonymous opinions, comments, and appraisals made by people without eyes to look at or body language to read.

It is difficult to imagine any other institution with a better opportunity to tackle this challenge than the school, with its particular role of reflecting “the life of the larger society” (Dewey MW 1 p. 19) on one hand, and the task of training the students for participation in society as mature moral agents on the other. We have now arrived at the point I particularly wish to highlight, namely that taking into account the student's earlier learning experiences, and the informal practices she participates in outside the school – be it a garage rock band or a social networking site – does not necessarily entail *copying* those practices in the school classroom (cf. Green 2008). In Article III (Partti & Westerlund forthcoming), this claim is based on the outlook that informal musical practices sometimes provide only limited opportunities for types of learning that strongly support the construction of identity and ownership of meaning. The argument could also be examined from an ethical point of view, as every (educational) practice is based on some idea and understanding of the world, and every idea entails moral consequences (see Dewey MW 9). As such, education should always seek “to understand [those] consequences, and therefore to grasp why some ideas are better and more worthy of support than others” (Hansen 2007, p. 5). Tribalism, bigotry, anonymous isolation from the feelings of other people, and other forms of ethical adversities evident in new media should compel the school to examine the ideas behind the informal practices generated by new media from a moral standpoint – that is, to ask *what kind of change* in individuals and communities any given understanding of the world is expected to bring about. Only by making the classroom a place of dialogue and critical discourse, through which the students and the teacher are constantly engaging the world by conceiving and evaluating ideas, are we able to facilitate education that fulfils its purpose as envisioned by Dewey: education that aims for the student's *self-transformation* instead of self-reproduction (see also Hansen 2007, p. 26).

Although we would not hold new media responsible for causing tribalism and selfishness, it is probably fair to argue that social media environments, in particular, do not always support the growth of emotional maturity or critical and social agency particularly well. One of the attractions of platforms such as Facebook is the possibility to create parallel identities in the virtual world without the “debilitating shyness” or “stultifying inhibitions” (Aboujaoude 2011, p. 20) one often needs to

live with in one's non-virtual life²⁷. As such, the importance of the school classroom as “a little community”, as envisioned by Dewey (MW 1, p. 20), is highlighted in these times of increasing (and often anonymous) diversity. In this kind of school classroom the students would be introduced to and equipped to approach local and global environments outside the school, with the ability to *think* for themselves by judging independently and discerning critically “subtle propaganda and the motives which inspire it” while being capable to “*act* with and for others” (Dewey LW 6, p. 98, emphasis in original) – even when those “others” appear in the form of an avatar or a screen name. This mission of education is also described by more recent writers – particularly those within critical pedagogy – who call attention to education's role in “creating the formative culture of beliefs, practices, and social relations that enable individuals to wield power, learn how to govern, and nurture a democratic society that takes equality, justice, shared values, and freedom seriously”, as expressed by Henry Giroux (2011, loc78), one of the most renowned writers in critical pedagogy. Echoing the voice of Dewey, Giroux states that this kind of formative culture arises from developing pedagogical practices that facilitate “conditions for producing citizens who are critical, self-reflective, knowledgeable, and willing to make moral judgments and act in a socially responsible way” (ibid.).

Pluralism and the craft of cooperation

As argued above, new media highlights “the great educational challenge of the twenty-first century”, referred to as “the problem and promise of pluralism” by Randall Allsup (2010, p. 20). According to Allsup, the promise of pluralism – that of the growth of meaning or knowing – is also its very problem, as the diversity of possible interpretations of the world “makes knowing any one thing contestable or open to revision” (ibid.). This problem/promise of pluralism could be considered as a touchstone of music education, as our attitude toward it bespeaks much about our hopes and fears as educators. Formal music education, if operating from a place of fear and defensiveness, turns inwards by advancing the development of a compartmentalised musicianship that is firmly rooted in particular genres, styles, and communities, and conforms to a reactive role in the midst of the supercomplex cultural landscape. As discussed in Articles I (Partti & Karlsen 2010) and IV (Partti & Westerlund in press), this stance seems not only unsustainable as a way forward for 21st century music education, but also utterly irresponsible. Richard Sennett

27 It is symptomatic that employers these days often request access to jobseekers' Facebook profiles before making the decision to hire them. The motivation for such requests can be understood in terms of the employer's concern about the jobseeker not showing her true colours in an interview situation, and possibly maintaining a virtual identity that is in stark contrast with her non-virtual one.

(2012) points out that imposing one cultural mould on all aspects of diversity is politically repressive and, moreover, provides an untruthful picture of ourselves. As outlined in Chapter 2, our (musical) identities are constructions of diverse and even rival elements, created within diverse contexts. Denying this diversity in the name of tribal unity would be an act of decreasing this complexity. Instead of ignoring pluralism or trying to protect ourselves from it, we can choose to adopt a predictive role in increasing students' fluency to explore and create new pathways in their musical voyages of discovery, by committing ourselves to the task of cultivating citizens who stand against destructive tribalism and repressive unity.

The more omnipresent a role that digital habitats play in our lives, the more imperative it becomes for us to learn how to live in a diverse world, working with people we have trouble understanding – or even liking – and with whom we cannot agree. Sennett (2012) refers to this kind of “everyday diplomacy” as *a craft of cooperation*²⁸. The metaphor of a craft – “the skilled practice of a practical occupation”, as defined by *The Webster's Online Dictionary* – is an apt one, implying an idea of specific *skills* that to some extent are probably inherent in human beings, but which can be developed and cultivated through learning and, conversely, weakened or lost by neglecting them. “The great educational challenge” (Allsup 2010, p. 20) of our time thus lies in finding ways to facilitate a platform for the growth of a sense of cosmopolitanism that welcomes and embraces cultural diversity (see Giddens 2002), and to support students in their learning of the craft of cooperation.

How could music education answer this challenge, and help students cultivate skills of cooperation in their (musical) lives? What kinds of skills is the craft of cooperation made of? I will conclude this thesis by examining some of the skills and abilities that I suggest are essential in planning and executing practices of music education that aim to equip students to engage in (music-related) cooperation and innovation – even with those who differ from themselves.

5.3 Skills of cooperation

The issue of “new skills” – ranging from the question of what they consist of to how they should be facilitated – has already been a hot topic for some time within

28 Some writers in the field of education (see, for instance, Rockwood 1995) have made a conceptual distinction between cooperation and collaboration. However, as differences between cooperation and collaboration are not relevant in terms of this study, the terms are here treated interchangeably, both referring to a practice of working together (to one end).

music education, especially when discussing the utilisation of digital and virtual technologies. The discussion has often been inspired by pleas from professional musicians or classroom music teachers. For example, various recent reports from northern Europe reviewing the relationship between the needs of the music industry and the training paths for musicians have insisted that students should be offered training in running their own businesses, understanding the workings of the music industry, and utilising music technology in more effective ways (see, for instance, Youth Music 2002; The Higher Education Academy 2003; Tolvanen & Pesonen 2010). Although the craft of cooperation, particularly within new media environments, undoubtedly includes specific skill sets related to the effective use of digital devices and information networks, the types of skills specified in these reports too often merely concentrate on hands-on and detailed know-how, failing to take into account the bigger picture of cultural change that requires, as Jenkins and colleagues (2006) state “not simply an individualized skill to be used for personal expression” but “social skills, as ways of interacting within a larger community” (p. 21). Also, in her analysis concerning current challenges within piano pedagogy, Inga Rikandi (2010a) argues that in an increasingly diverse society there is a clear need for a shift “from discussions about relatively focused sets of skills to a discourse including larger questions about human capacities and human flourishing” (p. 175).²⁹

As stated in Article IV (Partti & Westerlund in press), learning to navigate rapidly changing digital habitats characterized by “a free interplay between old and new elements across different musical styles and genres” (Appendix 4 p. 188) entails *primarily* social skills, such as those of collaboration, knowledge creation, and shared innovation. Jenkins and colleagues (2006) emphasise the importance of the school in devoting more attention to promoting what they call *new media literacies*: “a set of cultural competencies and social skills that young people need in the new media landscape” (p. 4). According to the writers, this requires a shift “from questions of technological access to those of opportunities to participate and to develop the cultural competencies and social skills needed for full involvement in participatory culture (ibid.). They further suggest that one of the ways to support this development could be the use of *play* in educational contexts, especially with regards to play as an ability to “experiment with one’s surroundings

29 This aspect is strongly emphasised in the education system in Finland that has been shaped partly by Dewey’s educational vision (see Sahlberg 2012, p. 144). The underlying values of basic education as listed in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (Finnish National Board of Education 2004) include “human rights, equality, democracy, natural diversity, preservation of environmental viability, and the endorsement of multiculturalism” (p. 12). In Finland, basic education is viewed as “part of fundamental educational security”, and it is required to “provide an opportunity for diversified growth, learning, and the development of a healthy sense of self-esteem, so that the pupils can obtain the knowledge and skills they need in life, become capable of further study, and as involved citizens, develop a democratic society” (ibid.).

as a form of problem-solving” (p. 22).

Musical play – understood here as “a way of creating meaning in musical activities” (Nilsson & Folkestad 2005, p. 24; see also Nilsson 2002) through, for instance, free experimenting and juggling with various musical ideas – appears to be of crucial importance in the development and practices of digital musicians, as discussed in Article IV (Partti & Westerlund in press; see also Hugill 2008). In fact, many of the techniques utilised by digital musicians (e.g. sampling, powermixing, blending) necessitate the ability and freedom to draw upon a variety of sources and create something innovative and interesting by working with old, new, and emerging ideas in a dynamic and often unexpected manner. Although the importance of playing is also acknowledged within formal education (at least within early education), the stance toward playing has often been somewhat dualistic (Rainio 2010). In her research about the development of children’s agency through playing, Anna Pauliina Rainio (2010) refers to a Finnish early education textbook in which playing is defined as “spontaneous” and “carefree” activity, differing in its “pedagogical nature” from work which, according to the authors of the textbook, “is a real activity where a child and an adult are often acting together” (Brotherus, Helimäki & Hytönen 1994, 78-79, quoted in Rainio 2010). Not surprisingly, in the textbook children’s learning is assumed to take place rather exclusively within structured and teacher-led “learning sessions” with “a clear objective, limited contents and methods that are evaluated to be appropriate” (ibid.). As noted by Rainio, the textbook’s division between play and work (including learning) is not unusual. Many of the teachers interviewed in her study seemed to be confused about “how to act in relation to children’s play” (p. 29), while for children it seemed to be “unthinkable for an adult to join and play with them”, as stated by one of the teachers interviewed by Rainio (ibid.).

Even in music education – in which playing (of instruments, if nothing else) is an intrinsic part of educational activities – it is not uncommon to separate, at least implicitly, the “real” teacher-led learning activities from students’ spontaneous and improvisatory playing. Instead of adults joining in children’s playing, it is more likely for teachers to tell students to “stop playing around” in order for the group be able to get on the “real playing”. The separation between playing and learning is perhaps most visibly made in regards to video gaming. In spite of the popularity of music video games (such as *Guitar Hero*, *SingStar*, and *Rock Band*) outside of school, and the benefits that playing video games has been shown to have in terms of deep learning (Gee 2007), active participation (Seel 2001), and creativity in solving challenging and complex problems (Jenkins et al. 2006), and the further possibilities that interactive music video games may provide to introduce various styles and skills in music (Missingham 2007), institutions of formal music education have

been extremely slow to warm up to the idea of including music games as part of classroom activities (Gower & McDowall 2012). I recently witnessed this reluctance at a session of an international music education conference, in which the presenter introduced the preliminary results of research examining the use of *Guitar Hero* in music classroom teaching and received a host of concerned remarks about music video games being “not *real* music making”, providing “a wrong idea” about the playing of an instrument, and, at worst, causing children to become addicted to gaming, not music.

However, the demands of today’s “innovation economy” (Sawyer 2007, p. 37) challenge these sharp divisions between playing (as a source of pleasure and recreation) and working (as a source of learning and productivity) and subsequently between “pretending” and “real” music making³⁰. As remarked by Rainio (2010), in parallel with an ever stronger emphasis put on the importance of standardised and internationally comparable formal learning measures (e.g. PISA), there is “a growing interest in ‘alternative pedagogical projects’ which celebrate creativity and playfulness in areas that cannot be measured in traditional ways” (p. 27). As illustrated in the case studies of this research, the blurring of the boundaries between playing and working is an integral aspect of the emerging participatory culture in which “learning, improvisation and creativity are seen as taking place within everyday activities, and as a basic human function” (Nilsson & Folkestad 2005, p. 24). Furthermore, playing provides manifold opportunities to rehearse and develop social skills needed for cooperation, as “[t]he ability to play imaginatively and see and experience from many different vantage points, rather than just one, provides a new set of tools for imaginative and innovative thinking” (Thomas & Brown 2007, p. 169, see also Sennett 2012).

30 Some writings exploring today’s society and the importance of play within it have put a strong emphasis on the aspects of enjoyment and fun in explaining the attraction of playing. This is not my intention here. Instead, promoting play as a mode of learning in music education is here based on the understanding of playing allowing students to tap into their “sense of *engagement* with learning” (Jenkins et al. 2006, p. 23, emphasis added) rather than merely a sense of joy and comfort. Play is viewed to be engaging and as such, highly motivating, but is not necessarily always equated with having fun: whether one is improvising a musical piece with others or trying to score a goal in football, playing may feel like anything from painfully hard work to stirringly enjoyable and easy. Similarly, the value of play as a mode of learning lies not (at least not solely) in its capacity to bring the “fun-factor” into the classroom. In fact, as argued by Eva Georgii-Hemming and Maria Westvall (2010), music education that only focuses on the practices and content that are regarded as pleasurable by the students often fails in this attempt. According to the writers, the goal of providing every student with opportunities to “experience joy and comfort” (p. 25) through music and viewing “music lessons as the students’ ‘breathing space’ in the everyday school environment” (ibid.) have resulted in music education that is “relatively limited in terms of repertoire, content and teaching methods” (p. 21), and rarely encourages students to create their own music by composing or to venture further than the boundaries of their immediate and familiar musical worlds. Consequently, such music education is perceived by many students as “old-fashioned” (p. 26), lacking of “breadth of genres” (ibid.), and not as motivating as one would hope for.

Whether we are observing athletes playing football on a sports field, children building sand castles on a beach, or a group of musicians improvising in a jazz club, a lot of play seems to be about developing cooperation and, vice versa, a lot of cooperation seems to be about play. As cooperation, play appears to be a mixture of the inbuilt and learnt; fun and arduous; informal and formal; exciting and routine; a process and a product. Play requires one to be able to be messy and rule-abiding; independent and dependent; to yield and to contribute; to be flexible and to commit. From children's games to musical improvisation, playing with others offers invaluable possibilities for learning the craft of cooperation, as it requires one to confront differences and cultivate ways to negotiate. Play, like cooperation, is based on *active* participation and cannot take place if the participants "hibernate" by withdrawing from each other (see Sennett 2012).

Cooperating at the junction of generosity and self-interest

Playing football, building sand castles, improvising at the Ronnie Scott's, or participating in any other form of playing always entails participation in a thoroughly social process³¹. The power of play as a mode of learning in a music classroom lies in its reciprocal nature: play is as much about an individual participant as it is about the group as a whole. This aspect is discussed in Articles I (Partti & Karlsen 2010) and III (Partti & Westerlund forthcoming) in the context of online music communities, in which the participants' contributions in "the joint activities of sharing music as well as music-related knowledge and skills" (Partti & Karlsen 2010, Appendix 1 p. 130) creates a positive cycle of giving and receiving by establishing a versatile stock of collective expertise that then benefits individual members in their learning and identity work, and who further contribute to the stock of the community's expertise and so on. In their blog post, Wenger and Trayner (2011, December 28) refer to this type of mutual learning based on a system of exchange as *generalized reciprocity* – a concept more familiar in sociological studies on non-market economies – as it draws attention to knowledge sharing that is "neither one-way nor merely a transaction" (ibid.). Instead, the more generously an individual contributes her expertise to improve the practice of a community, the more she herself may benefit from participating in the practice of that community. In this sense, play, like cooperation, often works best when taking place at the junction of

31 As discussed in Chapter 2, even a music practice that does not visibly involve interactions with other people, such as an individual playing an instrument alone, is "fundamentally 'social' and inherently 'communicative'" (Barrett 2005, p. 265), as we make use of the socially constructed tools of thinking (e.g. ideas and perceptions we have come to understand through participation) and possibly cultural artefacts (e.g. songs, notations and other social products) "in developing musical meaning and understanding" (p. 267; see also, for instance, Lave & Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998).

generosity and self-interest.

In a world of flux where the certainty of knowledge is constantly undermined, and social life and its organisation frequently revised and transformed in the light of new knowledge (Giddens 1990; 2002), one person cannot know everything. The renaissance ideal of an extraordinary and self-sufficient individual whose diligence will be rewarded and excellence noticed is most often doomed to collide with the realities of our times: the endless requirements of knowing more, creating newness on a wider scale, and tolerating uncertainty and instability. Instead of supporting the growth of autonomous maestros of their own lives, institutions of music education should facilitate opportunities for the students' growth into the use of collective intelligence entailing the skills of pooling knowledge and comparing notes with peers "toward a common goal" (Jenkins et al. 2006, p. 39).

The social view of learning, as discussed throughout this thesis, with its emphasis on shared knowledge and generalized reciprocity, challenges the tradition of so-called apprenticeship learning or, following Elliott's (1995) terminology, "reflective musical practicum", within which the expert musician-teacher leads the way by helping the novice to progress toward increasing challenges and expanding musicianship. Westerlund (2006) has examined the weakness of the tradition of reflective practicum – still prevalent in many institutions of formal music education – by summarising its basic idea:

According to this tradition, the master teacher knows goals and how they should be attained...the task of the adult and expert is to demonstrate how to 'do it right'. In the apprenticeship model of teaching, the teacher is the *initiator* and *verifier* of activity. (Westerlund 2006, p. 120, emphasis added)

Referring to Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia (1993), Westerlund (2006) remarks that the reflective musical practicum is not likely to lead to a creative culture of expertise where students would face and solve real-life problems. Only by inviting students to be a part of knowledge building communities where learning is communal and explorative can we hope to advance creative expertise (Bereiter & Scardamalia 1993). This kind of participation also enables expertise to take place here and now instead of "there" and "someday", as is characteristic in the apprenticeship tradition, and highlights the nature of expertise as a constant and dynamic process of development instead of a once-achieved and stable "state" of being (see, for

instance, Tynjälä 1999, p. 161)³². Importantly, in order for the school to prepare students to face a rapidly changing “knowledge society” in which individuals and organisations are required to “continuously surpass themselves, develop new competencies, advance their knowledge and understanding as well as produce innovations and create new knowledge”, the advancement of knowledge must be viewed as a *collaborative* rather than an individual effort (Paavola & Hakkarainen 2005, p. 535).

The ideal of participatory and mutual learning often seems to be somewhat problematic for traditional and conservatoire based music education, which has both a long history and a firm belief in the superiority of the teacher’s authority and knowledge as the starting point of successful educational practice (Westerlund 2009). The traditional apprenticeship model of teaching, with its cognitive constructivist undertone, might even view the development of expertise through participatory learning and the utilisation of collective intelligence as a threat. From the idealisation of independent, individual musical geni (most often dead European composers) to the prohibition of the students working together to solve problems (cheating!) the message is clear: teachers seem to be convinced that to genuinely learn something, it is essential to accomplish tasks on your own without relying on help from peers or outside resources (Collins & Halverson 2009, p. 45). Dewey (MW 1) expressed his concern about this conviction:

Indeed, almost the only measure for success is a competitive one, in the bad sense of that term – a comparison of results in the recitation or in the examination to see which child has succeeded in getting ahead of others in storing up, in accumulating, the maximum of information. So thoroughly is this the prevailing atmosphere that for one child to help another in his task has become a school crime. Where the school work consist in simply learning lessons, mutual assistance, instead of being the most natural form of cooperation and association, becomes a clandestine effort to relieve one’s neighbor of his proper duties. (Dewey MW 1, p. 11)

Resistance to classroom practices that would support the students’ ability to develop their collective expertise by sharing knowledge and supporting each other in the construction of knowledge not only inhibits the individual student’s ability to attain excellence (Hakkarainen forthcoming), but also fails to prepare the students to face the world outside school, in which the ability to work with others in problem-

32 Understanding musical expertise as a continuum is particularly relevant with regards to students whose primary context for music making is digital musical culture. As stated before, it is typical for the culture that the process of becoming a musician is only very loosely related to one’s age, and a digital musician can simultaneously be both an expert and a novice in different aspects of the culture.

solving by mobilising “resources to accomplish” tasks and “[k]nowing where to go for information or help” has become one of the key requirements (Collins & Halverson 2009, p. 46; see also Paavola & Hakkarainen 2005; Jenkins et al. 2006; Barnett 2009; Davidson & Goldberg 2010).

Moreover, resistance to participatory learning does not serve the best interests of teachers either, as the benefits of generalized reciprocity do not only effect the development of students’ expertise, but also that of teachers. As suggested by Barrett (2005), “the evolutionary nature of social and cultural practices” results in pressure on teachers to engage in a constant re-evaluation of their “theories and practices of music education” (p. 275) as well as in “on-going professional learning” (p. 278). This requirement for music teachers to constantly surpass their earlier level of acquired expertise over the course of their teaching careers seriously challenges the belief in the superiority of a self-reliant expert.

As such, I argue that instead of cultivating music education practices based on one-way relationships between the “master” and “novice” (Elliott 1995), institutions of formal music education could and *should* actively construct various kinds of inter-generational (and even international and inter-institutional) communities and networks of communities between students, between teachers, and between students and teacher(s), cooperating within systems of exchange based on generalized reciprocity at the junction of generosity and self-interest.

Cooperating at the junction of control and creative troublemaking

It is important to note that shifting emphasis from the apprenticeship tradition to participatory learning does not entail a *laissez-faire* stance to education in which the teacher is made redundant by reducing her role to that of a bystander, as implied in some recent writings on classroom pedagogies attempting to address the issues of relevancy and students’ autonomy (see, for instance, Green 2008). On the contrary, the understanding of the role of music education in terms of supporting students’ growth into moral agency and mature ways of thinking and acting highlights the teacher’s role as *a moral and intellectual leader* (Woodford 2004) of the classroom community and its activities. The teacher as “the most mature member” (Dewey 1938/1998, p. 58) of the “little community” (Dewey MW 1, p. 20) of the school classroom cannot exclude herself from membership in that community, the activities of which all should have a share in (see, also, Partti 2010).

Play, like cooperation, is a mixture of following and questioning established rules. Although play always includes features of freedom and mess, play only makes sense

if everyone involved follows the same rules. Nothing takes the fun out of a game like a participant who “only wants to have fun” by refusing to take the game seriously or play by the rules. Dewey (1938/1998) points out that disputes on the playground usually arise not because there *are* rules, but because some participant(s) in a game have *violated* the rules, resulting in a sense of unjust conduct in other participants. Controlling features in the form of rules are thus innate even to children’s games, Dewey concludes. “No rules, then no game; different rules, then a different game” (p. 56). Even the most free forms of musical play, such as free jazz improvisation, are not created *ex nihilo* but by following the “rules” of a given musical context, as we are reminded by Philip Alperson (1984), who writes that “learning to improvise is often, in large part, learning to master that tradition” (p. 22).

On the other hand, musicians who religiously follow and assimilate rules without ever taking the risk of contesting or diverting from those rules would never be able to create anything new. Keith Sawyer (2007) points out the importance of “finding just the right amount of structure to support improvisation, but not so much structure that it smothers creativity” (p. 56), as creativity, according to Sawyer (2005), “rests in introducing novelty in the form of a new musical idea, while remaining consistent with what has come before” (p. 54). Moreover, Hakkarainen (forthcoming) reminds us that without *creative troublemaking* – the ability to question and problematise existing ways of doing things – one is not likely to be able to cross the boundaries of prevailing practices, and will settle for passively following in the footsteps of previous generations instead of actively creating new objects, interpretations, and appropriations.

As is illustrated in the case study of music producers in Article II (Partti 2012), musical cosmopolites’ involvement in different communities provides them with a range of musical stimuli and material to play with. Their way of creating new meanings for musical ideas generated by other musicians has many resemblances to practices in negotiating everyday social life. Sawyer (2005) refers to this as *retrospective interpretation* (p. 49), as it implies that an individual musician can never claim total control over the way a musical idea is understood or used by other musicians. As in verbal communication between people, where meanings are constructed through negotiation (see Chapter 2), the meanings of musical ideas can only be understood retrospectively, after other musicians have responded to them through “a collaborative, emergent process” (Sawyer 2005, p. 48) of interpretation and elaboration of those ideas.

The role of the teacher in educational practices that operate at the junction of control and creative troublemaking is crucial in establishing “the right conditions

for inspiring, inculcating, and guiding the development of socialized intelligence” (Woodford 2004, p. 6). A teacher, taking on her role as both a participant and the moral leader of a community, exercises internal control on behalf of the interests of the group (Dewey 1938/1998, p. 59). Rather than telling students *what* to think, the teacher should instruct in *how* to think (Woodford 2004, p. 6). Rather than determining the “correct” ways, places, and spaces of music-related activities, the teacher should open up opportunities for critical discussions about ideas behind those activities and their possible moral consequences (Dewey MW 9; Hansen 2007). Rather than acting as “the initiator and verifier” of classroom activities (Westerlund 2006, p. 120) or simply stepping back from the activities, the teacher should strive to promote music education that is based on “a cooperative engagement between teachers and students” and learning that is “experimental, mutual, historically engaged, socially responsible, and forward-looking” (Allsup 2010, p. 10). I argue that designing classroom practices that promote musical play in which the students’ musical creativity is taken seriously (Nilsson & Folkestad 2005) provide opportunities for creating space for dialogue between the students and teacher (see Railio 2010). Such music education would facilitate a fruitful ground for the growth of skills in cooperation, including the abilities to negotiate the rules and contest them creatively, as well as to engage in artistic sharing and the related negotiations it entails.

Towards cosmopolitan musicianship: Formal music education and the art of learning how to cooperate “at the speed of life”

The tagline of the movie “Crash”, quoted in the beginning of this chapter, summarises a great challenge of our times: the tendency of people to collide instead of cooperate with each other at the speed of life. The movie notoriously depicts a variety of people from different backgrounds, each carrying around their own arrays of fears, hopes, and prejudices, bumping into each other, incapable of seeing, hearing, or understanding either other people or themselves. Most of the characters in the movie choose to withdraw from each other, while some opt for a more aggressive way to express their intolerance – and only few take the risk of reaching out.

As discussed throughout this chapter, “moving at the speed of life” is first and foremost a great *educational* challenge. The current generation of digital natives might outshine teachers in their skill at using technological devices, but, as argued in Article I (Partti & Karlsen 2010), the school and other institutions of music education nevertheless have an essential role to play in supporting the students’ growth towards an agency that allows them to interact with digital habitats in morally sustainable ways, and to contribute to the common good of those environments. This calls for

finding ways to equip the students to live their lives true to themselves – indeed, new media provides a wealth of opportunities for one’s self-expression – while still acknowledging that becoming ourselves “crucially depends on [our] dialogical relations with others” (Taylor 1991, p. 48). Cosmopolitan musicianship, as formulated in this study, could thus be understood to be primarily about one’s stance towards cultural complexity (see Giddens 2002). In his analysis of cosmopolitan citizenship, Gerard Delanty (2000) claims that it is possible to be a cosmopolitan “in spirit and intellect” (p. 55), even with limited opportunities to travel around the world. As such, cosmopolitan musicianship does not necessitate the identity of a musical jack-of-all-trades, with abilities to master various musical genres, styles, and instruments. Instead, growing into cosmopolitan musicianship means growing into an attitude that welcomes and embraces pluralism, and the cultivation of the skill to work with people who think and live differently from ourselves. Cosmopolitan musicianship thus involves respect for other people’s artistic contributions, the ability to share and critically explore various outlooks, and the courage to grasp and follow “alternative norms” (Jenkins et al. 2006, p. 52). Instead of striving for tribal unity in the form of cultural imperialism, for instance, or social harmony based on the stance of “make-everyone-the-same melting-pot-assimilation” (Allsup 2010, p. 25), a musical cosmopolitan “in spirit and intellect” (Delanty 2000, p. 55) tolerates diversity and embraces it as an opportunity for learning through generalized reciprocity and a possibility for the “growth that comes from genuinely hearing another” (Allsup 2010, p. 25). This kind of tolerance requires, as pointed out by Ruth Jorgensen (2003), a willingness to view pluralism as a source of deeper understanding of both oneself and the other, through the adoption of an attitude of humility and openness “to what the other is willing to teach me and share with me, hopeful that...in the process of sharing what we can, we will both be enriched” (p. 121). An agent who is willing to take responsibility for her own life by devoting herself to self-transformation and “effective self-direction” (Dewey MW 1, p. 20) understands that in the crossfire of conflicting opinions, viewpoints, and interpretations, “there is no acceptable substitute for a dialogue” (Bauman 2002, p. 16).

In a world of flux, the cosmopolitan attitude of “live and let live” is more than a catchy bumper sticker, and should not be to an individual personality trait that one either does or does not have. As with any skills, the cultivation of those needed for the

craft of cooperation requires deliberate work.³³ The questions that the school, and other institutions of education, might need to address include: What kind of citizens and musicians are we sending out into the world? How well have we prepared them, and with what kind of tools have we supplied them to face a supercomplex society with “the imperatives of social responsibility and political agency” (Giroux 2003, p. 9)? Importantly, only education that is based upon democratic values might hope to equip the students with democratic attitudes. This entails an understanding of pedagogy as a moral and political practice (e.g. Giroux 1999, p. 199; 2003; 2011), and the active pursuit of efforts to design learning environments and social interactions between teachers and students that aim to improve the *quality of the student's life*, “to make it meaningful” (Westerlund 2008, p. 83; Dewey MW 7; Westerlund in press).

Designing educational activities that are aimed to “involve every learner equally, on their own terms” and to “support their interest in music learning” (Westerlund 2008, p. 92) require us as educators to stop, look, and listen: to commit ourselves to theoretical reflection on our practices. As stated by Westerlund and Väkevä (2011) such “slowing down for consideration” (p. 38) has not always been welcomed with open arms by teachers, as critical reflexivity might challenge us to reconsider our goals and teaching methods and even “force us off-track from our chosen artistic and educational path” (ibid.). However, painful as it may be, only “theoretical reflection guided by a critical attitude” (ibid.) – even when resulting in questioning “the generally accepted professional ethos” (p. 48) – may lead to “truly empowering practices” (p. 38). A teacher sincerely concerned about the quality of the process of learning, and about “the learners’ ability to see the relevance of their own learning and to have a sense of ownership of it” (Westerlund 2008, p. 92), is committed to the risky business of employing her “reflective imagination to work on how and under which conditions music becomes a constitutive element of the learners’ good life” (p. 90; Westerlund in press). In this sense, education is not and should not be safe. On the contrary, an educator finding herself feeling too comfortable with the *status quo* should feel worried. Today’s challenges cannot be addressed with yesterday’s perspectives, as pointed out by Wenger (2006). As the world keeps on changing, so should educational practices.

33 This work should be at the centre of interest in music education, especially as a cosmopolitan attitude toward cultural diversity has been increasingly recognized to be interlinked with one’s social background (see, for instance, Peterson & Simkus 1992; Peterson & Kern 1996; Danielsen 2006). Richard Peterson and Roger Kern (1996), for instance, argue that an eclectic taste, or “omnivorous appropriation”, is now a marker of high social status, thus being in effect a new distinctive trait of the dominant classes and replacing the exclusive elitism of olden days. Likewise, as remarked upon by Karlsen (2007), one’s openness towards musical styles and genres is connected to one’s musical agency, which “is not evenly distributed” (p. 212), but may be limited by social class or habitat, for instance. Music education must therefore support the development of musical agency that empowers every student to democratically “explore and experience the full richness of music” (ibid.), independent of where they live and who surrounds their lives.

5.4 Concluding remarks

As I worked on this thesis over the past three years, many of the structures and practices within the Sibelius Academy's music education doctoral studies program have been undergoing fundamental changes (see Rikandi, Karlsen & Westerlund 2010; Westerlund & Karlsen forthcoming). My personal journey of conducting this research has thus taken place in parallel with a greater journey of implementing changes within the doctoral programme. These institutional changes have been driven by the need to foster and support researcher education that is in line with current and updated understandings of the development of expertise, aiming to prepare students to work in rapidly changing and highly competitive work environments in which the skills needed for cooperation and collaborative problem-solving are increasingly valued over success as an individual expert (Shacham & Od-Cohen 2009). As a result, the music education researcher education at the Sibelius Academy has been systematically developed by means of various inter-generational collaborative research projects and processes that highlight the importance of collaborative learning and entail the creation of learning partnerships among doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and professors in and beyond the Sibelius Academy (Westerlund & Karlsen forthcoming).

The fact that these institutional changes have taken place during the process of this research is not irrelevant to my work. On the contrary, my personal journey of writing the thesis and the institutional journey of implementing program changes have mutually influenced each other. Just as my contribution to the (emerging) music education researcher community of practice has had an impact on the competence of the community through generalized reciprocity (see Chapter 5.3), the growing competence of the community has in various ways moulded my experience as a junior researcher and thus changed my "ability to create new meanings" (Wenger 2006, p. 18), which, ultimately, is what learning is all about (see Chapter 2; Wenger 1998; 2006). Any evaluation of this thesis must therefore be made in the context of the changes implemented in the Sibelius Academy's music education doctoral studies program. I have already reflected on the methodological choices of the research (see Chapter 3.6), as well as the impact and implications the research findings can be expected to have in terms of the meaningfulness of music education practices (see Chapter 4.4). I will now return to some of the main themes of the thesis, although this time reflecting on them in the context of the developing music education researcher program.

One of the aims of the changes implemented in the Sibelius Academy's music education doctoral studies program was to create a music education researcher

community of practice in which the members could pursue shared activities, create knowledge, and benefit from each others' expertise. A visible manifestation of this aim is the research project *Creativity, Agency and Democratic Research in Music Education* (CADRE), which brings together several researchers from different universities, each having different levels of expertise and experience, in order to "reconstruct theoretically music education by examining the field from the viewpoint of participatory democracy and to study the experiences and expressions of agency in both informal and formal learning environments" (Westerlund 2009). CADRE is thus an example of an inter-generational, international, and inter-institutional research community, being at the same time a network of multiple communities.

This thesis is one of the several interrelated sub-projects of CADRE, aiming to contribute to the project's overall goal but also drawing upon the competence of the community. Being a sub-project of a larger project could be considered to have a positive impact on the credibility of an individual study. Although this thesis consists of three case studies, it could still be considered to provide only a limited, local, and partial knowledge. Situating this knowledge within a larger body of knowledge – that provided by the CADRE project as a whole – provides access to multiple data sources and thus results in an increased and deeper (although still partial) understanding of the phenomenon under study. It is in this sense that I understand the relationship of this study and CADRE, to provide each other with different viewpoints, or reflections, by which to approach the world. The traditional notion of triangulation (e.g. Denzin 1978; Yin 1994; Stake 2006) has been, within this understanding, extended to that of *crystallization* (Richardson 1997). According to this view, the aim of research is not to validate findings in a way that would leave no room for doubt, as if there were "a 'fixed point' or 'object' that can be triangulated" (p. 92). Rather, by utilising the image of a crystal combining "symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach" (ibid.), this study and the CADRE project are viewed to be prismatic to each other: they "reflect, refract...and grow" (p. 136), and as such transform and are transformed by each other. Importantly, as a consequence of these reflections and refractions, our understanding of the topic depends upon the angle from which we view the crystal: "we know more and doubt what we know" (p. 92).

Although highly important, the CADRE research project has not been the only prism through which to reflect this thesis, my ideas, and, indeed, my growth as a researcher. In order to create a more student-centred doctoral programme, maximise the sense of ownership amongst the students, create task-based communities (Riel & Polin 2004), and provide opportunities for the students to build basic researcher skills (Rikandi, Karlsen & Westerlund 2010), the structure of the doctoral studies program

has been profoundly changed. This change has shifted the emphasis of the program from concentrating almost exclusively on the production of an individual thesis to that of planning and conducting various “real-life” research tasks that require the students to take on professional responsibilities and interact with each other actively in research-based communities during the course of their studies (for more detailed description, see Westerlund & Karlsen forthcoming). Over the three years of my doctoral studies I have therefore participated in various extensive research tasks, including a project of writing and publishing a book (Rikandi 2010b), co-writing peer-reviewed articles, and participating in planning and executing a research project in Cambodia. All these research tasks have come by way of an intense collaboration between doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and senior researchers. Furthermore, as the music education researcher community of practice – based on a long-term commitment to construct and re-construct knowledge beyond any particular artefact – as well as task-based learning communities with more specific short-term goals (Riel & Polin 2004), have grown and extended beyond the borders of the Sibelius Academy and the borders of Finland, finding the most appropriate tools and technologies to facilitate the needs of the communities have become one of the most important and in many ways the most challenging quests to embark upon. This is due to the fact that the changes made within the doctoral studies program have largely been enabled by or interconnected with digital and virtual technologies. As I have not lived in Finland during the time of my doctoral studies and, consequently, mainly participated in the interaction and collaboration virtually from London, UK, the opportunity to experience first-hand some of the challenges and opportunities that simultaneously living in local and global realities engenders has provided yet another important viewpoint from which to approach the topics of this research.

Conducting research and collaborating with colleagues primarily through digital technology has added a very personal aspect to the definition by Wenger and colleagues (2009) of a digital habitat being “not just a configuration of technologies, but a dynamic, mutually-defining relationship that depends on the learning of the community” (p. 38). Over the past years, my colleagues and I have come to realise that although we are surrounded by a plethora of technological tools, platforms, and features to choose from, it is not always easy to find the technological configuration that would best “provide the places and support the ways in which members experience togetherness” (ibid.). Two years ago, after spending an extended period of time together with my peers at an inspiring international pre-conference organised in Finland, I realised how much I missed the collegial support and continual sense of being part of the community. As I was not the only doctoral student in our programme living abroad, we had infrequently utilised Skype or Facebook to

support each other by discussing our research, and to chat more informally about, for instance, how it felt to not be in Finland with the others. This interaction was most often created ad-hoc, based on our need to interact rather than following a curriculum or our supervisors' advice. Although I strongly identified myself as being part of the Sibelius Academy's music education researcher community of practice, my participation in the specific, mostly digital technology-enabled communities of the doctoral students living abroad acted "as a mediating context of engagement for negotiating the meaning of large structures and [my] experience of identity in them" (Wenger 2006, p. 15). During Autumn 2010 the idea of utilising Skype on a regular basis to strengthen our ties to Finland and to each other eventually led the whole community of our doctoral programme into a new era, as participation in the weekly doctoral seminars no longer required physical attendance. Participating in the seminar through Skype on Fridays soon became part of my weekly routine, and I did, at least to some extent, experience a sense of togetherness with other members of the community. We rather quickly realized that one of the biggest obstacles to achieving a sense of full participation was the lack of video, and decided to change our tool to Adobe Connect web conferencing software, which had a feature that allowed for video even with multiple participants. However, as more and more people began to virtually participate in the seminar, our chosen tool too often appeared to limit rather than support our community activities. Time and time again, the connection would be unreliable, or the sound intermittent, or the picture would periodically freeze. These technological issues resulted in frustration in all the participants, as it was sometimes almost impossible to follow and participate in the discussion, thus highlighting rather than diminishing the sense of distance. Although many of the most serious problems have been solved by now, we are still looking for configurations of technologies that would facilitate "an experience of place" for the whole community (Wenger et al. 2009, p. 38).

I have invested quite a lot of space in this narrative, as I believe it aptly illustrates the ongoing interplay of communities and technology, and thus that of the learning and identity work of the members of those technology-enabled communities, as discussed in Chapter 2. The adoption of technological tools, platforms, or features in any educational context should be rooted in the knowledge of the needs of the community and the ways in which the community operates. Only by making choices that are based on an understanding of "how certain features meet the needs of [the] community or how the lack of a feature constitutes a specific problem because of the way the community operates" (p. 44) – keeping in mind that the most current technological development is not necessarily always the most suitable solution – can we facilitate environments that best support the learning and identity work of those who participate in the "relational network" (Fuller 2007, p. 19) of the community.

Technology can work as a powerful asset or a crushing liability in efforts to create “conditions of trust and commitment” (Westerlund & Karlsen forthcoming), as well as designing for learning partnerships and settings in which it is clear “why people are there, what they can learn from each other, and what they can achieve by learning together” (Wenger et al. 2011, p. 12).

I have also used this self-narrative as a way of concluding the thesis, in order to stress my own position as a traveller-researcher engaged in a process of knowledge construction (see Chapter 1; Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). My journey of conducting this research has been anything but simple or straightforward, but has nevertheless been vital and rewarding. As discussed above, the journey has taken place simultaneously with a larger institutional journey of change that has had a profound impact on my research and on me as a researcher – not only by providing ideas for possible theoretical or methodological approaches, but also by changing my ability to participate in the world, and as such, by changing me. I concur with Packer (2011, p. 5) when he states that researchers ought to be challenged and transformed by the encounters with the people they study, but I am inclined to include the social learning systems that the researcher is part of in those transformative influences. As with any successful expedition, this journey has not only brought about new knowledge about the task at hand, but produced new understanding about myself also (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 49). My hope is that the thesis has articulated some of this experience to the reader – not in the form of a souvenir from my journeys, but as a living narrative of an ongoing exploration.

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Appendix 1: Article I

Reconceptualising musical learning: new media, identity and community in music education

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Societal and technological progresses have created a multitude of new ways for people to engage with music, and as a result music can nowadays be learned from an ever-expanding variety of sources. In this article, we engage in a theoretical exploration of the underpinning societal forces that have enabled this expansion, as well as its significance for the development of musical identity and knowledge. The exploration proceeds through sociological theories of modernity and theories of sociocultural learning. Examples from a recent ethnographic study of the Finnish online music community *Mikseri* provide insight into how musical identities can be constructed and maintained in web-based reality, as well as how online music sites may function as communities of practice where the members, through sharing and discussing their own music, develop music-related knowledge. A discussion about the implications of the current media-musical situation for music education practice and research is provided.

Keywords: new media; online music communities; informal musical learning practices; musical identity; community of practice

When music is everywhere – bewildering opportunities for musical engagement

Shifting social situations and cultural artefacts enabled by technological developments have not only caused that music in present society is everywhere, in the sense that

live and recorded music can be heard regularly in the course of everyday activities (North, Hargreaves, and Hargreaves 2004). Societal and technological progresses have also created a multitude of new ways for people to create, perform and in other ways be actively involved with music. For example, in 2010 a moderately equipped Western middle-class teenager may, during an ordinary day, engage with music in the following ways. On her way to school she creates new ring tones for her mobile phone (Tanaka 2004), and then distributes them among her friends. During the music class she attends as part of her general education she is told by the teacher to create a composition of her own using the CD Rom *Dance eJay* (Mellor 2008). After school she goes to a friend's house to play *GuitarHero*®, and in the evening she relaxes by playing a video game, in which much of her success will depend on her ability to understand and decipher the narrative functions of the music provided as part of the game (Wingstedt 2008). Before going to bed our teenager performs in a gig put together by the band she has joined in the capacity of the avatar¹ Leila, her preferred alter ego in the online virtual world of Second Life (Arnesen and Espeland 2008). In addition to this active musical engagement, our teenager has also carried her iPod around for most of the day, and used the music on it, among other things, to create her own 'space' while writing assignments in a noisy classroom at school, and to reduce her level of stress (DeNora 2000) while taking the tube back home during the rush hours.

Our fictive example shows only a few of the bewildering opportunities for musical engagement that is provided by twenty-first century so-called 'new media'.² When we approach our teenager's music-related practices from the perspective of music education, we may ask further questions. How is her wide musical engagement related to her experience of self – her self-identity? Where and from whom does she learn what she needs to know in order to engage in her music-related practices in meaningful ways? How and through what means does she learn music? Finally, what are the implications of the answers to the preceding questions for music education practice and research?

The British musicologist Cook (1998) wrote, 12 years ago: 'Deciding what music to listen to is a significant part of deciding and announcing to people not just who you "want to be" . . . but who you are' (5). Consequently, during the last decade, the connections between identity and music have become a frequent topic in the discourse of music education theory (e.g. MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell 2002); and various studies have revealed how music can be used, not just as a tool for self-presentation (Hargreaves, Miell, and MacDonald 2002) but also, for example, as devices for mood regulation (DeNora 2000), self-care (Ruud 2008), communication with others (Batt-Rawden and DeNora 2005) and empowerment (Mantie 2008).

Returning to our fictive teenager, it seems most likely that the music-related practices in which she engages are related to how she constructs and maintains her self-identity.

In the last decade, music education research has begun to explore the different modes of transmission of music teaching and learning that are inherent in informal contexts. According to Folkestad (2005), the whole continuum between the poles of formal and informal needs to be explored in order to realise and comprehend the multidimensionality of music learning. Folkestad (1996) is also among the scholars (see also for example, Bolton 2008; Brown 2007; Stålhammar 2006) who have directed our attention towards how modern technology has dramatically increased our options for making, sharing and learning music. Through fast Internet connections and moderately priced equipment, such as mobile phones, the CD Rom *Dance eJay* and *GuitarHero*® games mentioned above, it has become possible for almost anyone to compose, arrange, record and mix music, as well as distribute it for others to enjoy, discuss and critique. Our teenager's favourite online community called 'Second Life' is just one example of the plethora of late modern web contexts in which people share music-related experiences, knowledge and skills.

Recognising that people nowadays learn music from 'a bewildering and ever-expanding variety of sources, including the media, the Internet, MIDI equipment, personal hi-fi and recording equipment and so on' (North, Hargreaves, and Tarrant 2002, 604), we will in this article engage in a theoretical exploration of the underpinning societal forces that have enabled such an expansion, and the significance of this expansion for the development of musical identity and knowledge. Our exploration goes through sociological theories of modernity (Giddens 1990, 1991) and theories of sociocultural learning (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998, 2006). Meanwhile, our 'theoretical tale' will be illustrated with examples taken from a Finnish online music community named *Mikseri*. In the following, we provide a short description of this community, its participants and functions.

The case of *Mikseri*

Mikseri (<http://www.mikseri.net>) is an open online community that specialises in copyright-free music made by its members. Established in 2001, *Mikseri* is the largest Finnish music portal. At the moment, it has about 140,000 registered Finnish-speaking users, most of them using nicknames.

Like all online communities, *Mikseri* provides certain services for those who choose

to use it. Since it is an open community, anyone who ‘steps by’ for a visit can listen to the music on *Mikseri* and read the reviews and discussions within the portal without having to register. However, if you are a registered community member, you may also upload your own music onto the site and communicate with fellow members in several ways. As a member, you are allowed to create a profile page, in which you may contribute as much or as little personal information as you wish. Other members may also post comments on your written work, pictures or pieces of music. Community members also have access to a message board, which functions as a medium for social interaction, in-depth conversations and discussion, as well as for the sharing and distribution of information. Although the discussions on the message board make up an important part of the *Mikseri* community’s activities, the musical artefacts, in other words the over 80,000 copyright-free pieces of music on the portal, are the main interest of its members. While the *Mikseri* participants are on average fairly active musicians, both as performers and as composers, only a minority of them have formal musical training (Salavuo 2006).

During the period from November 2006 to May 2007, one of the authors of this article collected data at *Mikseri*, using a virtual ethnographic approach (Hine 2000). By invisible, and later on also visible observations of the activities of the community, she was able to have a holistic picture of its everyday life and of the negotiations that took place among its members. In addition to field notes from observation, data were collected from the message board of *Mikseri*. Ten message ‘threads’³ were selected, which totalled 1329 messages. The observation field notes and the messages from the message board were analysed using an approach that is based on creative and logical deduction and argumentation. Alasuutari (1998) compares this process to that familiar in detective stories. The observations are taken as clues that are examined by proceeding ‘both from the specific to the generic and vice versa’ (32). Like a detective, the researcher both reduces the amount of observations by examining them from given theoretical viewpoints, and combines the reduced observations by searching for common features between them. Finally, the researcher ‘solves the mystery’ by interpreting the selected clues to ‘create a logical model of explanation’ (34). In a subsequent stage of the analysis, the researchers also acted as narrative finders (Kvale 1996) in order to locate the musical life stories of the members of *Mikseri*. The stories were hence analysed attending to Labov’s (1972, 1982) definition of what characterises a fully formed narrative.

While this article is not an attempt to report the *Mikseri* study in full,⁴ we will make use of its data and findings to illustrate some of our theoretical points. This concerns in particular how new media-created opportunities for engaging with music may become tools for constructing musical identities (MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell

2002), as well as serve as musical communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998, 2006).

New media and the dynamism of modernity – getting the big picture straight

Obtaining a broad view of our present society's bewildering opportunities for musical engagement means seeking out theoretical perspectives through which it is possible to answer questions such as: How did we reach the state of all kinds of music being everywhere? What are the societal forces that underpin this rapid development? and How is it that people nowadays can meet via new media, musically and otherwise, across time and space?

The British sociologist Giddens (1990) provides, through his writings about the consequences of modernity,⁵ lenses for analysing and understanding the media-musical situation in general as well as online communities, such as *Mikseri*, in particular. In his understanding, three interconnected phenomena underpin what he calls the extreme 'dynamism of modernity' (16), as well as the pace, scope and profundity with which this dynamism progresses: (1) the separation of time and space; (2) the development of 'disembedding mechanisms' (53); and (3) 'the reflexive appropriation of knowledge' (53).

Firstly, by the separation of time and space, Giddens (1990) refers to the relatively new phenomena through which, because we have standardised and generally agreed upon time zones, the experience of time is no longer connected to any particular space. Consequently, people may arrange for future interaction although they are not in the same physical place. So two members of the *Mikseri* community may agree to meet on the Internet at specific hours regardless of their locations. Furthermore, since time is not connected to space, there is also an upheaval of the connection between space and place. While place refers to the 'physical settings of social activity as situated geographically' (18), space is where people meet regardless of locales, for example in virtual Internet-based communities' chat rooms, personal member sites and message boards. The time-space separation enables, when experienced through new media, entirely new contexts for social interaction, including those conducted in the field of music.

Secondly, the concept of disembedding mechanisms denotes 'the "lifting out" of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space' (21). Giddens suggests that 'symbolic tokens' (22),

such as money, represent one such mechanism, because it is ‘a media of interchange which can be “passed around” without regard to the specific characteristics of individuals or groups that handle them at any particular juncture’ (22). We also suggest that the Internet, in particular online communities like *Mikseri*, may be understood as ‘disembedding mechanisms’, because they allow for the ‘lifting out’ of musical social interactions from the traditional context of school buildings into web-based meeting places. Furthermore, the context itself becomes restructured, not only in terms of localities, but also in terms of a shift in focus from teacher-led education to peer and community-directed learning.

Thirdly, the reflexive appropriation of knowledge is, according to Giddens, caused by the fact that the scientific search for a truth built on reason has led instead to an undermining of the certainty of knowledge. Not only is social life and its organisation constantly transformed and revised in the light of new information and knowledge, but it is also propelled ‘away from the hold of pre-established precepts or practices’ (20). While this third phenomenon may be seen to underpin, for example, the flourishing of new musical styles and genres, and, at the same time, the de-canonising of the tradition of Western classical music, it may also be understood as a factor that destabilises the long established practice and belief that formal, school-based music education is the main and most prominent arena for the musical fostering of children and adolescents. When researchers engage in exploring and understanding the possibilities that are inherent in people’s widespread musical engagement with different kinds of new media, this may lead to a reconceptualising of how, where and through which means musical learning takes place.

Features of the self – constructing musical identities in web-based reality

Alongside his broader ideas concerning the growth of late modernity, Giddens (1991) offers a framework for explaining how this profound societal development affects the creation and maintenance of individuals’ self-identity. He argues that, ‘in the context of a post-traditional order, the self becomes a reflexive project’ (32), meaning that the self is not viewed as one or several distinctive traits or a core possessed by the individual, but is created and maintained reflexively by the person ‘in terms of her or his biography’ (53). The complexity of late modernity also implies a fragmentation of the subject, meaning that the possession of multiple, parallel and even, at times, contradictory (Hall 1992) identities are possible or even necessary.

For constructing and narrating stories about oneself, one needs to draw, not only on one's own experiences, but also on different kinds of available and surrounding resources. While Giddens (1991) is not particularly concerned with the social aspects of identity construction, Hall (1999) calls attention to identity as a multilayered and contextual continuum, constituted of personal, social and cultural dimensions. Sharing many of the basic ideas of both Giddens (1991) and Hall (1999), Wenger (1998) emphasises that identity construction involves negotiating 'the meanings of our experiences of membership in social communities' (145), and recognising that it exists in the 'constant work of negotiating the self' (151). Furthermore, his theories explain how this comprehensive work of identity is intimately interconnected with processes of learning.

According to Hargreaves, Miell, and MacDonald (2002) and Ruud (1997), the narrative aspects as well as the fragmented and contextual features of late modern selves are also relevant to the construction of musical identities. The multilayered nature of musical identities may emerge as, for example, a person occupying several 'identities in music' (Hargreaves, Miell, and MacDonald 2002), or showing great affinity towards a multitude of different musical styles (Karlsen 2008). Furthermore, DeNora (2000) shows how music becomes crucial to our construction of the late modern self when utilised as 'a technology for spinning the apparently continuous tale of who [we are]' (63). In addition, musical identities are negotiated socially through, for example, membership of fan groups and musical subcultures (Thornton 1996). Following the ideas of Wenger (1998) above, music-related identity work will also inevitably entail learning of and through music.

As mentioned earlier, societal changes affect how individuals create and maintain their identities, including musical ones. When new possibilities and contexts for identity work emerge, they are immediately brought into use. With respect to online communities in general, earlier research (Gallant, Boone, and Heap 2007) has shown how there is a clear parallel between creating a personal profile on profile pages, such as *Mikseri*'s, and constructing identities. Also, members of such sites may manipulate and recast their profiles, play with or stage multiple identities and gravitate towards others with similar interests or backgrounds. In this way, they may be identified and recognised as a 'certain "kind of person" in a given context' (Gee 2001, 99), and known by other members, although they have never interacted or met:

What I like most about *Mikseri* is to surf the profile pages, read diaries and browse photo galleries. Even if I have never sent any messages to them, and not to even mention met them in person, I feel like I know many of the *Mikseri* members just based on their profile.

Observing and analysing the everyday life of *Mikseri*, it became evident how community members use the site, not just to share their music, but also to construct their music-related identities within a web-based reality. The identity work happened through three different ‘modes’ connected to the *Mikseri* community by providing: (1) a space through which the outward display of the musical self was possible; (2) a forum for sharing members’ musical self-narratives; and (3) a social context for dialogues and negotiations of identity. Let us further explain these three ‘modes’.

Firstly, as mentioned above, registered *Mikseri* members are allowed to create their own profile page, which may be interpreted in terms of narratives or as an outward staging of the musical self (Ruud 1997), as with the avatar Leila in Second Life, who was our imaginary teenager’s alter ego. The profile pages of the *Mikseri* members represent the identities they choose to show the outside world. Whether the music-related identities displayed on the web actually correspond with members’ non-virtual appearances or not, might be of less importance. Online music communities allow for the possibility of, for example, creating and maintaining an identity as a composer, although family members or non-virtual friends and acquaintances might not recognise you as such. Hence, the online world certainly adds to the possibilities of possessing multilayered and contradictory music-related identities.

Secondly, discussions found within the threads of the message board of *Mikseri* revealed that sometimes this space is used for telling and sharing musical life stories (Hargreaves, Miell, and MacDonald 2002). Through detailed biographical tales, members give accounts of their lives with music and hence reflexively construct (Giddens 1991) their music-related identities. The following narrative exemplifies how a *Mikseri* member constructed himself as a *mainly self-taught* composer:

As a little boy I loved to draw and while doing that I used to sing things . . . after a while, a music teacher moved into our neighbourhood . . . and the teacher acquired a brand new . . . computer designed for his own audio work. While visiting the teacher’s house and watching larger-than-life-creating, I realised that all the kicks and the feelings of pleasure gained from drawing were nothing compared to the multiplicity of composing. Somehow...I acquired a MIDI sequencer program and a Scream Tracker...and already next Christmas, I was hoping to get a MIDI keyboard for a present. I haven’t had any instrument lessons mainly because my own enthusiasm and practising have been so intense . . . it might be that my own enthusiasm would have dropped right at the start if my parents had put me through piano lessons. I am simply not interested in studying ready-made stuff; I actually just want to come up with new things. During the years, the machine music [the music made using electronic equipment] has been accompanied by drum, bass and guitar playing, band projects, home studio as well as a variety of ordered works. Music is a

way of life. I like it. Time just flies so quickly 'cause it is so much fun to make music.

Thirdly, the members of *Mikseri* actively comment on each other's musical pieces and engage in peer-to-peer evaluations. Such practices can be considered crucial from the point of view of constructing identities, since, as Wenger (1998) suggests, identity formation involves negotiating our experiences and their meanings in social communities (see also Hall 1999). This is exactly what the *Mikseri* members do when they engage in immense message board discussions about the meanings of music and musicianship, or rate and comment on each other's compositions and blogs. According to Taylor (1991), such negotiations are vital for constructing and defining both the individual and collective identities of the members of a community.

Sharing music as affiliation – online music sites as communities of practice

As mentioned earlier, sharing their music is *Mikseri* members' main interest (Salavuo 2006), it is what brings them together – their main affiliation. As one of the members puts it: 'Music is *the* thing in *Mikseri*. Like sharing my own music, receiving feedback, as well as listening to music and giving feedback'.

According to Dickinson (2002), all communities are bound to centre around a common interest and a strong, shared purpose, which unite the members to achieve collectively something that would be unachievable by an individual member. Consequently, in communities such as *Mikseri*, the members' allegiance to each other does not come primarily through their personal interrelations (Gee 2001), but through the joint activities of sharing music as well as music-related knowledge and skills. Using Gee's (2001) terminology, *Mikseri* may be understood as an affinity group, which is constituted by its members 'participating in specific practices' although they are 'dispersed across a large space' (105). While participating and sharing music and information as an affiliation, the *Mikseri* members develop 'affinity identities' (100), or in other words collective identities connected to their participation in the community.

Recent research into online communities in general (Ito et al. 2008) has revealed that they are used for exploring interests and finding information and peers beyond the school or local community. In addition, they offer an easy access to self-directed learning by means of a plethora of information. When used as a tool for facilitating learning within larger institutions and organisations, online communities have also

been found to function as communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), in which the participants achieve knowledge and skills through their ‘virtual peripheral participation’ (Gray 2004).

In Wenger’s (1998) understanding, communities of practice are platforms for the ‘negotiation of meaning, learning, the development of practices, and the formation of identities and social configurations’ (133). Learning happens through ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ (Lave and Wenger 1991), or in other words by members being situated in a social world constituted by the community of practice, taking part in its activities and interacting with its identities and artefacts. Furthermore, as stated earlier, Wenger (1998) regards identity and learning as two aspects of the same phenomenon. He states that ‘learning transforms who we are and what we can do’ (215). Hence learning is also an experience of identity.

While *Mikseri* may be understood as an affinity group, it also has many of the characteristics of a community of practice. As is evident from the above, it is clearly a platform for the formation of identities, individual as well as collective; and the observations of its daily life show that the forming of social configurations takes place by the members developing ‘sustained mutual relationships’ (125) with each other. Peer network and deep friendships are developed through interest-driven engagements while sharing and discussing musical pieces. During long message board conversations, relationships are constructed and strengthened and information shared and distributed. As mentioned above, *Mikseri* members also engage in discussions about the meaning of, for example, musicianship, the community in itself and making one’s own music. Another important indicator of the existence of a community of practice, namely ‘the rapid flow of information’ (125) is also visible. *Mikseri* members share a lot of music-related knowledge, and such information travels fast. In addition, they discuss a wide range of current topics, from politics to new movies, and they develop a ‘local lore’ (125), or in other words a joint base of stories, rumours, anecdotes and slang words, which functions as a boundary dividing ‘inside’ community members from ‘outsiders’.

As Ito et al. (2008) emphasise, online communities such as *Mikseri* offer easy access to self-directed learning. From the above accounts of this particular community’s members’ extensive identity work, there is also reason to believe that quite a lot of learning happens through intertwined identity-learning processes (Wenger 1998). In addition, based on the observations of the community’s everyday life, we suggest that peer and community-directed learning is widespread. As the *Mikseri* member quoted below emphasised, comments received from other community members are often experienced as beneficial for one’s own musical development:

Getting feedback is always positive, especially if it comes from another person involved with music either professionally or just for fun. Constructive feedback about dynamics, mixing et cetera is always helpful, and one tends to try out the received suggestions and improvements in the next project.

Hence, taking into account that only a few *Mikseri* participants have formal musical training (Salavuo 2006), this online music community of practice may represent a very important and powerful context for the development of its members' musical skills and knowledge. Moreover, some *Mikseri* members have even actively resisted participating in formal music education due to the fear that their strong dedication and motivation towards learning music might drop. Wenger (2006) emphasises this latter phenomenon by directing our attention towards how communities of practice may serve the individual learning trajectories⁶ of its participants in a much better way than formal schooling, precisely because their existence is dependent on 'identity, passion, relationships, and a mutual commitment to a domain of knowledge' (36).

Customising individual learning trajectories – what is the role of music education?

At the beginning of this article, we asked four questions from the point of view of music education, which were related to our imaginary teenager's musical engagement with new media. Approaching the first three questions through the assumption that this teenager is a *Mikseri* member or participates in similar online music communities would produce something like the following answers: (1) parts of the teenager's music-related (and probably also other) identities are constituted, maintained, displayed, verbally constructed and socially negotiated *through* her new media-related musical engagement; (2) what she needs to know in order to engage in her favoured practices in meaningful ways, she learns on her own, and by joining communities that have been built from a joint interest in such practices, thereby interacting with and learning from peers; and (3) the answers to the preceding questions also illustrate how and through what means the teenager learns music, namely through identity work, self- and peer-directed learning, community participation and direct engagement with musical artefacts and music-related practices. Then, coming back to our fourth question, we ask once again: what are the implications for music education practice and research? When outlining some answers, we wish to take into account, not only *Mikseri*, but also the entire late modern, bewildering, rapidly transforming media-musical situation.

As emphasised throughout this article, we are now in a situation in which the ‘global reality’ of online communities and similar virtual and digital worlds, as well as the ‘local reality’ of the schools, bands and other music groups in which students participate, provides platforms through which people engage with and learn music. Consequently, virtual worlds are present inside the school as well, because children bring their knowledge, skills and experiences there, independent of whether or not this is recognised or acknowledged by the teacher. Hence, the challenge for students is to find a way of navigating between their global and local realities, bridging the gap between them and experiencing them as a holistic continuum instead of as an incommensurable dichotomy. We believe that school has a responsibility to help students to build such bridges, to find their place between the local and the global and to understand the global without abandoning the local culture of their community. This implies that music teachers should not only have factual knowledge about the learning taking place through students interacting with new media, but they should also be able to provide tools and support so that students may approach such learning equipment and environments ‘on as equal terms as possible’ (Karlsen 2009, 257), as well as connect in a meaningful way the knowledge and skills acquired at the ‘global level’ to the education students receive at school. Neglecting the task of bridging this dichotomy may, at its worst, lead to a situation where the gap between music learning environments outside and inside school grows so wide, so that students will regard the values and practices of school-based music education as increasingly alien and meaningless.

As noted above, Wenger (2006) directs our attention towards how a community of practice, such as *Mikseri*, may serve its members’ individual learning trajectories in a much better way than formal schooling. Following this line of thought, he also predicts that a paradigm shift in education may be needed so as to make formal education correspond in a better way with the world our students are facing. In short, he suggests that we will have to shift from ‘an industrial model of education as the mass production of skills toward a knowledge-era model of education as the customized production of individualized learning trajectories’ (41). In his view, the educational system’s present ‘obsessive focus on curricular content and test scores’ (41) discourages students from personal engagement in learning. Likewise, he is of the opinion that it seems more and more meaningless to establish a universal curriculum, not least because the dynamics of late modernity underpin the destabilisation of cultural canons, and, as pointed out by Giddens (1990) above, undermine the certainty of knowledge both regularly and at an ever-fastening pace. In looking for alternatives, Wenger (2006) asks rhetorically: ‘What kinds of experience are more likely to launch students on a sustained learning trajectory than the extent of curricular content?’ (41). His answers include shifting focus

‘from teaching to learning’ (Folkestad 2006, 136) as well as focusing on ‘identity transformation in social learning systems’ (Wenger 2006, 41). In searching for a ‘curriculum of meaningfulness’ (42), he emphasises a range of experiences that the students should be offered, such as a sense of full membership of specific communities of practice; peer-to-peer learning; engagement in a shared task that ‘forces cross-boundary negotiation’ (42); being fully creative in an activity; and experiencing agency and power.

Let us now revisit the above mentioned idea, according to which a community like *Mikseri* may hold potential to serve the learning trajectories of its members in better ways than formal schooling. By taking into account Wenger’s ideas on meaningful education, we suggest that possible adaptations for music education should imply that experiences of online practices, like the ones explored in *Mikseri*, be considered valid within formal education, even to the extent of adopting them as a significant part of it. Firstly, in order to make formal music education correspond better with the musical worlds that students are facing, music teachers are required to recognise and acknowledge the musical competencies their students have acquired within online environments, for instance. Secondly, participation within such environments could be included as part of formal music education, hence bringing this part of the students’ individual learning trajectories into formal schooling situations. Thirdly, presuming that the above suggested inclusion truly does take place, teachers could, for example, use this as a platform for creating peer-to-peer learning situations by letting students who are already competent in working within online environments cooperate with less experienced students on specific tasks. However, these suggestions point only to some of the many possible ways of customising individual learning trajectories and building meaningful educational practices within music education. In order to continue designing fruitful learning environments and curricula, it is essential to take into account not only the full range of experiences that students are required to be offered, but also the constantly evolving opportunities for musical engagement. In our view, the recent developments in music education towards empirical explorations and practical implementations of the strategies found within music-related informal learning practices (see e.g. Green 2008) represent a good start in this respect. However, introducing popular music into the classroom and letting students explore it on their own is simply not enough. As Väkevä (2009) points out, the informal learning approaches also involve, for example, ‘computers, social networks, and other assets of digital music and information technology’ (9). In other words, the whole range of digital and virtual technologies enabled culture of music making and listening. Consequently, for a ‘good start’ to flourish and develop, a comprehensive, research-based exploration of informal learning practices is in order. A great number of those practices are connected to digital technologies

and new media, and challenge music educators to a profound reconsideration of where, how and by what means people become musically educated in this day and age. In addition, researchers are called to be willing to take on the responsibility of turning the learning strategies recognised within the aforementioned practices into ‘pedagogies’ that can be utilised as part of classroom music teaching. Consequently, it is imperative to educate music teachers to make use of these pedagogies and hence utilise research as part of their own planning of educational environments. Our task as teacher educators will also include encouraging teachers to implement current musical practices, and reflexively reorganise their approach to, and understanding of music education. However, the adaptation of new practices calls for a deep awareness of the ethical and social responsibilities of teachers. For instance, the recognition of how teachers are not always the only experts in the classroom, and the important contribution of autonomous learning practices and peer-directed learning to formal music education are current insights that must be weighed against the disadvantages of the teacher ‘standing back’.⁷ By building music education curricula and practices on this basis, schools may be able to face the challenges of customising individual music-related learning trajectories, and acting as sources ‘of coherence for real trajectories of [musical] participation’ (Wenger 2006, 43).

With reference to Giddens (1990) once again, social life and its organisation are constantly transformed and revised within the dynamics of late modernity. This reflexive change is also bound to affect the field of music education. As such, it is the responsibility of music education researchers to explore and discover these transformations, and sometimes to even underpin them, for example in the way of implementing findings from certain practices within music education into adjoining fields. In our opinion, these responsibilities can be sufficiently undertaken only if researchers remain in close contact with the multiplicity of today’s musical learning practices, be they formal or informal.

Notes

1. An avatar is a computer user’s representation of himself/herself. In computer games, an avatar is normally in the form of a three-dimensional model representing the embodiment of the user, whereas in online communities avatars are most often two-dimensional icons (pictures).
2. These opportunities come, of course, in addition to the more traditional modes of engaging with music, such as instrumental tuition, garage bands and school

orchestras, or going to festivals.

3. In online discussions, a set of messages that have been both posted as replies to each other and visually grouped by topic, are called threads. The message board of *Mikseri* contains multiple threads. Any member can start a new thread by posting a message that is not a reply to an earlier message.
4. The study is reported, along with other issues in Partti (2009) and Partti and Westerlund (2008).
5. The notion of modernity refers, according to Giddens (1990), as ‘modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence’ (1). The state of our present society is often designated ‘late modern’ (Giddens 1991) or even postmodern (Hall 1992; Lyotard 1984), depending on whether the author believes that we now experience modernity *in extremis*, or if we have reached the stages after (post) more traditional forms of modernity.
6. According to Wenger (2006), learning in the world today goes through ‘*multi-scale social learning systems*’ (4), which involve a complexity of practices, communities, networks and institutions. An individual’s participation in and route through this multiplicity of contexts constitute her learning trajectory.
7. While we fully recognise the radical possibilities that are implicit in Green’s (2008) pedagogy to the extent of the importance of students’ self-governing of educational processes and the requirement of teachers to ‘stand back’ from the processes of learning, we wish to remind that such approaches are also to be examined with relevance to their less fortunate implications. For instance, as argued by Georgii-Hemming and Westvall (2010) and Westerlund (2006), informal learning pedagogies may also lead to a limitation in repertoire, content and teaching methods as well as fall short in facilitating students’ creative engagement with music and securing a socially just access to learning situations and experiences.

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Appendix 2: Article II

Cosmopolitan musicianship under construction: Digital musicians illuminating emerging values in music education

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Abstract

This instrumental case study aims to explore meanings and values in digital musical culture, and to reflect on them in relation to wider conceptualizations of musicianship in the field of music education. The study employs a narrative-biographical approach in analyzing the music-related life stories of a group of practitioners at a London-based music college, whose music-making practices utilize mainly or only digital technologies (they are hence referred to as ‘digital musicians’). The results suggest that those values emphasizing aspects of musical versatility and flexibility, as well as mobility between various musical communities of practice, are specifically connected with digital musicianship. In this study, the values relate to ‘musical cosmopolitanism’, and are believed to furnish possibilities for application to pedagogical/educational practices as well as providing a way forward for 21st century professional musicians.

Keywords: case study, community of practice, digital musicians, musicianship, narrative analysis

Introduction

It is now widely recognized that today’s technological advancements have had a

significant impact on the culture of music making and learning in many parts of the world. Music software and hardware make it possible for almost anyone to create their own music regardless of their instrumental training or formal and explicit knowledge of music theory (see, for instance, Bolton, 2008). Also, rapidly growing online communities offer a platform for the distribution of one's own music to others (Salavuo, 2006; Partti, 2009a). Despite far-reaching changes in the ways, places and spaces of music making and learning (e.g., Söderman & Folkestad, 2004; Salavuo, 2006; Brown, 2007; Finney, 2007), research on musicians empowered by and educated through digital and virtual technologies is scarce.

The field of music education research could be compared to an art gallery that includes a multitude of paintings portraying musicians in (electro) acoustic musical practices, particularly in Europe, Australia and North America, but has only a sparse collection of depictions illustrating 21st century 'digital musicians' (Hugill, 2008) – the practitioners who make music by utilizing mainly or only digital technologies. Inquiries into musicians' development and identity, for instance, 'continue to focus on people playing traditional instruments' (North & Hargreaves, 2008, p. 48), and practitioners within the field of digital and virtual technologies are still most often either bundled in with popular musicians or left out altogether from the studies.

This is unsettling, as the aforementioned phenomena in the culture of music making are expected to affect traditional ways of defining a 'musician' (Cook, 1998; North & Hargreaves, 2008, p. 47) as well as the requirements set for the professional field of music (e.g., Bennett, 2008). Following Hugill's (2008) definition, digital musicians are musicians who either make music by creating principally original material on a computer; producing new pieces of music by applying, for instance, recycling and remixing procedures; or musicians who record and/or mix music that is originally created either by themselves or other people (often called music producers). However, they habitually originate *and* perform, as well as create *and* produce music (p. xiv). According to Väkevä (2010, p. 60), 'the creative mosaic' of digital music making brings forth 'such practices as DJing/turntablism; assembling of various bits and pieces to remixes; remixing entire songs to mash-ups in home studios; [and] collective songwriting online' (p. 63). These music-making practices are increasingly part of the acquisition of musical knowledge and skills of many students enrolled in formal music education (Finney, 2007; Karlsen, 2010; Partti & Karlsen, 2010). In order for music educators to keep pace with this reality of their students' lives, a deeper exploration into musical culture that is enabled by digital technologies is required.

The notion of musicianship

This study is based on an assumption according to which ‘any practice of music making and listening’ is always underlain by the notion of ‘musicianship’ (Elliott, 1995, p. 67). By following Elliott’s praxial philosophy, musicianship here refers to an area of know-how and expertise which encompasses various creative practices of music making, such as performing, improvising and conducting (p. 40), as well as listening to music (p. 42), and is considered to be a situated and rich form of musical understanding (p. 68). In this study, the music-making references are particularly related to activities typical of digital musicians, such as producing, songwriting and remixing (see Hugill, 2008; Väkevä, 2010). Closely related to the notion of musicianship is the concept of ‘musical identity’, understood as deriving from ‘generic distinctions between broad categories of musical activity, as well as . . . [from] specific distinctions which cut across these categories, in particular *instruments* and *genres*’ (Hargreaves, Miell & MacDonald, 2002, p. 14, emphasis in original). In other words, the self-definitions of individual musicians are understood only *in relation* to broad cultural musical practices and social categories, including the meanings and values given to different musical activities.

Aim of the study

While North and Hargreaves (2008, p. 47) call for ‘up-to-date research concerning precisely how people in the technological world define themselves through their musical activities’, in this study, the need for examinations into the world of digital musicians is understood in even wider terms, concerning not only musicians’ self-definitions, but also the parameters of the culture of digital music making, as well as the characteristics and the development of musicianship within it. This study hence aims to investigate the meanings and values of musicianship within digital technologies, as this understanding is believed to help music educators in their efforts to design learning environments that better interact with the world the students are facing. While recent discourse (see, for instance, Green, 2001; Söderman & Folkestad, 2004; Schippers, 2010) mapping musicianship outside of traditional Western classical music practices has chiefly concentrated on informal and non-institutional music making and learning, this study explores the phenomenon through a case study of a group of digital musicians within a formal and institutional setting, namely a London-based music college.

Methodological and ontological starting points

The research project was designed as a qualitative instrumental case study (Stake, 1995), in which the values and meanings of musicianship in digital musical culture are examined through the use of a case study of a group of digital musicians at a music college. The instrumental interest in analyzing the music-related life stories of the digital musicians was focused on an examination of the ways in which the musicians narrated meanings of music making, learning and participation in related communities. While recognizing that the case study does not provide a basis on which to draw ‘conclusions about some general type of phenomenon or about members of a wider population of cases’ (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000, p. 5), generalizability was in this study considered within the context of qualitative research in which it is possible to make *analytical* generalizations (e.g., Stake, 2005) ‘based on theory’ (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 263) by ‘specifying the supporting evidence and making arguments explicit’, thus allowing ‘readers to judge soundness of the generalization claim’ (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 263). Consequently, through exploring the values and meanings of musicianship within the case, the researcher aimed to craft her interpretations (see Stake, 1995, p. 9) in the search to promote a broader understanding of the values and meanings inherent in digital musical culture and to reflect on perceptions of musicianship in the field of music education in general.

Participants

The criterion in selecting the participants was to find musicians with at least some years of experience in making music utilizing digital technologies in order to better obtain information about their personal processes of development and growth as digital musicians. An independent, specialist music school (hereafter referred to as *the college*) in London, United Kingdom (UK), was contacted in order to observe and interview the students along with their teacher from the music performance and production course.¹ On the course there were five students altogether. Four of them (between 21–27 years old), were able to participate in the study. At the time of the data collection, the students were in the last year of a three-year course. Due to the alternation of independent and group working, the teacher and students considered the last weeks of the semester as the most fruitful time for the data collection. Therefore, access to the school was granted for a limited time period (April–May 2009). The study hence employs an intensity type of sampling strategy (Miles & Huberman, 1994) by providing an information-rich case that illustrates ‘the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely’ (p. 28).

Video observations

In order to generate questions for the interviews, and to provide background and additional information on the music-making context of the participants, the data collection period began with video-recorded observations during four separate sessions of the students and their teacher working with the final course assignments. The observation material opened a window to the everyday life of the digital musicians and to some specific situations and/or practices later referred to in the interviews (see Kelchtermans, 1994). The time spent observing also helped to build closer relationships with the participants than could have been attained by meeting them only during the interviews. As is suggested by Adler and Adler (1998, p. 90), an understanding gained through observations was regarded as especially valuable when combined with other methods, in this case interviews.

Interview process

The process of data collection assumed that musicians organize their music-related life, social relations and interpretations through narrative discourse; being who they are partly as a result of what is told about them and what they tell about themselves (see O'Neill, 2002; Pietikäinen & Mäntynen, 2009). Based on this assumption the study employed semi-structured interviews, typical for an educational study when 'focusing on the subject's experience of a theme' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 25), in this case the participants' experiences, opinions, motivations and understandings in terms of music making and learning, as well as through interaction with other members of music and technology related communities. Five individual interviews (each lasting approximately 45 minutes) were conducted in order to attain 'storied answers' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 13); that is, narratives, as the participants were encouraged to reminisce on their music and technology-related life and to freely reflect on 'how and why something occurred or what led to an action being undertaken' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 13). Following a suggestion by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 130), the interview guide consisted of 'an outline of topics to be covered' with some suggested questions. Kelchtermans (1994, p. 94) calls the research procedure that aims at making an interviewee look back reflectively 'and to stimulate them to "thematize" their experiences' a stimulated autobiographical self-thematization. The interviewees retell, organize and, in doing so, make sense of their life and experiences by making choices about the inclusion of people and events they consider important in terms of their experiences (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

Data analysis

The aim of the data analysis was to construct a portrait of digital musicianship by looking for the digital musicians' socially-constructed stories about their musical lives, as well as to construct new narratives by synthesizing 'many different happenings into coherent stories' (Kvale, 1996, p. 201) in order to expand the view into musicianship.

Prior to analyzing the interview material, video footage of observations was analyzed by following definitions and suggestions typical for data analysis in qualitative inquiry (e.g., Huberman & Miles, 1994; Yin, 1994). The analysis included three interconnected sub-processes, namely those of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. The procedures and results of the analysis are fully reported in an unpublished pilot study on musical learning among digital musicians (Partti, 2009b).

Following Kelchtermans' (1994) narrative-biographical approach, subsequent analysis of the interview data was two-fold: the 'horizontal analysis' intended to find more general themes in the material, whereas the 'vertical analysis' examined the participants individually. Kelchtermans' distinction between horizontal and vertical analysis is similar to Polkinghorne's (1995) 'analysis of narratives' and 'narrative analysis'. In Polkinghorne's terminology, the former process separates the data into its constituent parts by identifying and describing general themes or conceptual manifestations across a collection of stories, whereas the latter synthesizes the data into a new story, 'an emplotted narrative' (p. 15).

After several readings of the word-by-word transcriptions of all the interviews, the interview data was thematized by aiming to let the data lead in the process of thematization and sustaining an open-as-possible attitude towards the interviews. An increasing familiarity with the data prompted a revision of the initial thematization. Consequently, some initial categories were merged into two main themes, namely 'Musicianship shaped by digital devices' and 'Musicianship directed by aural awareness'. The outcome of this horizontal analysis is later presented as a thematized depiction of digital musicianship.

The description of general themes across the interview data is followed by an emplotted narrative. In analyzing the material vertically (narrative analysis), each interview was approached as an individual entity, and happenings described in an interview were merged 'into a temporally organized whole' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 5). This 'configurative process' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 5) employs a thematic

thread to lay out happenings as parts of an unfolding movement that culminates in an outcome. The thematic thread is called the plot, and the plot's integrating operation is called emplotment. When happenings are configured or emplotted they take on narrative meaning. Although the interviews of every participant were analyzed vertically, only one emplotted narrative was chosen to be presented in this report due to space limitations. This re-created narrative belongs to one of the student participants, Brian (the name has been changed to maintain the interviewee's anonymity). Brian's narrative is similar to that of the other participants but being, however, particularly rich in nuances. Consequently, 'Brian's story' is here used to present the attained understanding of the phenomenon under exploration (Kelchtermans, 1994), and to unite and give meaning to the data (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Conceptual framework

The reading of the data proceeded through current socio-cultural learning theories (see, in particular, Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) that emphasize the intertwined relationship between learning, identity construction and participation in communities. According to this paradigm, music-related learning takes place by participation in 'communities of musical practice' (e.g., Barrett, 2005), and the nature of expertise can be best understood by shifting the focus from an individual's cognitive processes to 'the relational network' of people who are taking part in shared activities 'to become full members of, or "knowledgeable practitioners" in, the relevant community(s) of practice' (Fuller, 2007, p. 19). Musical learning, whether taking place in the solitude of a studio or in a group with co-musicians, is assumed to always be intertwined with others, as our practices, languages, artefacts and worldviews reflect our social relations and utilize images and perspectives that we understand through co-participation in the shared practices of social communities (Wenger, 1998, p. 146).

As is typical for an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995), the aim of this inquiry is to step beyond the description and understanding of the case to gain insight into the wider theoretical question of conceptualizations of musicianship. Due to the context-sensitive nature of musicianship (Elliott, 1995), musicianship within digital technologies-enabled musical practices can be assumed to differ from those developed within more traditional musical practices. However, no depiction can be created or examined in separation from other portraits in the gallery; the new illustration of digital musicians is bound to have an influence on traditional conceptualizations

of musicianship, but previously created pictures portraying musicians within more established musical traditions work as mirrors for an in-progress construction. Investigations on popular musicians' learning strategies (Berkaak & Ruud, 1994; Fornäs, Lindberg & Sernhede, 1995; Green, 2001) and applications to music education (Green, 2008), for instance, cast light on how youngsters may develop into professional musicians through solitary and peer-directed, often trial and error-based, learning, and use listening and the copying of recordings as essential tools in constructing their own musicianship. While well-known performers, friends and informal groups play a significant role in the development of rock, jazz and folk musicians, Western classical musicians' identity work seem to be much more strongly tied to formal music studies, including instrumental/vocal teachers, exams and music competitions (Davidson, Moore, Sloboda, & Howe, 1998; Hirvonen, 2003; Burland & Davidson, 2004; Huhtanen, 2004; Creech et al. 2008b). Studies examining Finnish pianists (Hirvonen, 2003; Huhtanen, 2004) also suggest that, during the years at a music institution, classical musicians' identities begin to be constructed in particular directions, such as that of a chamber musician or a *Lied* pianist, for instance. In this sense, classical musicians' musicianship is heavily influenced by the tradition of *specialization*. Furthermore, whereas non-classical musicians regarded making music *for fun* as essential in terms of the growth of their musicianship (Creech et al., 2008b), for classical musicians, the heart of development seemed to lie in *solitary* (Creech et al., 2008b) and *deliberate practicing* (e.g., Ericsson, Krampe & Tesch-Romer, 1993; Sloboda, Davidson, Howe & Moore, 1996; Jørgensen, 2002). Thus the literature provides diverse depictions of the values and meanings of musicianship within various traditions. By revealing differences in the ways to grow in musical expertise and in the principles regarded as important, the literature works as a point of reference while constructing a portrait of digital musicianship as presented here.

A depiction of digital musicianship

The Music Performance and Production programme at a music college in London has been designed to prepare the students to work professionally in the music industry, mainly as music producers. The course description emphasizes the importance of being competent in all the approaches and technologies of today's music making, regardless of one's personal preferences in music. It also highlights that music producers are not to be equated with studio engineers, and accordingly one of the aims of the course is to prepare the students to face their intricate role in the business of music. The applicants are required to have some experience in music making, although formal music training is not obligatory. However, a willingness

and ability to work with other people and within diversified projects is required, and the course is described as being unsuitable for musicians whose endeavours are restricted to only their own projects or to one narrow view of music.

Theme 1: Musicianship shaped by digital devices

As is typical for digital musicians (Hugill, 2008), the participants' knowledge and skills have developed within various learning contexts. Many of them, such as online music communities, are outside of formal music education and represent an abundance of musical styles and genres. Prior to coming to study at the college, none of the student participants had received any formal training in music technology, and only one of them had taken extracurricular music lessons. The course teacher had no formal training in music or music technology either, although he had worked as an accomplished session musician and studio producer for over three decades.

The participants' musical inventions and discoveries are enabled by the potential of the computer and other digital devices, such as software, samplers, sequencers and drum machines, that they use to explore, store, manipulate and process sound. For digital musicians these technologies are the core element of music making and the cultural landscape for their identity construction. Digital instruments are also the vehicle they use to progress, to explore something new, and to search for the yet unknown (Brown, 2007; Hugill, 2008). One student illustrates this by telling about her recent production work during which she felt like being carried away by 'the computer . . . [and] all the gear' and consequently proceeding from her initial and strong ideas into a surprising and new direction. 'And that is amazing!', she concludes, 'You never know what to expect'.

For the student, a computer seems to serve as an instrument of musical thinking: the musician is not using the computer to merely execute the ideas she has in mind, but allows the computer to *shape* the creative process to the extent that she feels surprised by what the end product turns out to be.

Theme 2: Musicianship directed by aural awareness

In addition to digital devices, the participants also utilize (electro) acoustic musical instruments and their own ears in their music creation. Many of the stories concerning their day-to-day music making refer to the challenges and possibilities involved in discerning the differences between sounds, or to looking for the most appropriate ones, thus highlighting the importance of having a high level of *aural awareness*, 'an

ability to hear and listen both widely and accurately’ and to understand ‘how sound behaves in space and time’ (Hugill, 2008, p. 4). Hugill considers aural awareness to be one of the main requirements for digital musicians. Referring to the songs at their mixing stage, one of the students asserts: ‘. . . if you’d hear these tracks when we first do them they sound so different, and it’s these small things that you appreciate’.

Indeed, one distinctive mark of the expertise among the participants seems to be the understanding of *which* sound decisions are appropriate in a given context and *how* those sounds are created. This kind of expertise requires various music and technology-related skills and knowledge: from cultural understanding to playing and improvising to arranging and band leading to recording and post-producing. As argued already in 2003 by Hargreaves, Marshall and North, being a musician in today’s world of music hardware and software involves far more than it did only a few centuries ago, and ‘the dividing lines between the composer, the arranger, the performer, the studio engineer, and even the listener are becoming much less clear-cut’ (p. 149). Similarly, the teacher compares the practices of record producing to the work of a film director: one has to be able to understand the ‘big picture’ and hear beyond individual instruments or sounds.

Accounts ranging from the course description of the college to the participants’ statements on their every day working practices highlight the complexity of digital musicianship and the centrality of acquiring as wide a musical understanding as possible. For the digital musicians, musical understanding seems to be inseparable from the instruments they use within their music-making practices. The instruments and technologies serve as *mediating artefacts* (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005) that the musicians use as they interact with each other through multiple music-related creative activities. I will next delve deeper into the nature of digital musicianship through Brian’s emplotted narrative.

Brian’s story

Brian is a 23-year-old man who, like the other students of the college, was busy working on his final assignments at the time of the interview. The days spent below street level in the windowless studio premises are long – overflowing with sounds and devoid of fresh air. Still, the young graduate-to-be looks energetic and excited. His time at the college is drawing to an end, and the yet unknown future is opening up with a multitude of possibilities.

Pathways to learning

Brian begins his music-related life story by reminiscing about his first experiences of music making. For him, the world of music making opened up through buying a guitar, an act that soon led him to ‘spending like whole day just playing guitar’. He tells, ‘I used to just go home and I got really into like . . . Jimi Hendrix, bit of old surfers. And I used to just put the CD on and just jam to my CDs and stuff’.

During his jam sessions with Hendrix and the ‘old surfers’, Brian seems to have been involved in what Folkestad (2006) calls informal learning practices. Brian’s description of learning to play guitar is similar to that of the rock musicians studied by Green (2001), for whom the practices of enculturation from purposive listening to the copying of recordings were at the core of acquiring musical skills. ‘I’d go I’d learn it [a song] by ear. I just listen to it and usually I just jam to it, find my own notes and then I actually sit down and start learning it note by note’.

Brian’s first experiences with music making enabled by digital technologies were also based on informal learning practices:

My mom gave me a computer we’ve had for 10 years . . . And then one of my friends had a crack for a programme called Reason 3 and I . . . started making music through that . . . And I suddenly found that I was spending all my time on it and I got really involved with it.

Whereas the majority of popular musicians studied by Green (2001) had chosen to move away from formal music education, for Brian, the direction has been quite the opposite, although initially he was not planning on acquiring a formal education at all.

I was almost a little bit *against* the idea of being taught . . . because I liked music so much that I started learning it. It wasn’t to learn the technical basis of it . . . I went to get caught up the rush of it [rather] than learn how to play it technically.

However, after three years at the college, the enjoyment he feels from ‘having someone testing you’ has taken him by surprise. He states that he has ‘a great appreciation for understanding’ what he is playing, ‘and it’s like just looking at things differently. It’s kind of reshaped my thinking for the positive . . . opened my ears a lot more’. Like every participant, Brian’s route to music and technology-related expertise has taken place on the continuum where formal/informal and institutional/non-institutional are inversely related and neither is superior to the other. For Brian, the knowledge and skills acquired through formal education *complement* those already acquired

informally, outside the college. Although an important part of his learning has been self-directed and has taken place in various settings beyond schools, the meaning of formal and institutional education is also important as it provides him, for instance, with concepts and a deeper understanding of previously learnt contents.

Negotiations on professional musicianship

Brian's music-related activities take place within a wide range of different kinds of practices. For instance, he plays the electric guitar in one band, makes beats in another, and writes songs for a third. He moves fluently between different musical genres and talks about his projects with the same passion, whether it involves playing in a grunge band, writing for and singing in an acoustic group with a violin and double bass, recording trip-hop tracks, or helping his friend 'to boost everything and make it sound phat' in his dubstep project. Brian's multifarious musicianship is thus in contrast to that of classical musicians (see, in particular, Hirvonen, 2003), for whom choosing to go down the route of a chamber musician, for instance, appeared to be an essential act of identity work. For Brian, the tapestry of possibilities, loose ends and paths to choose from offer a playground to enjoy, rather than a box to pick one option from. In this sense, his musical expertise is mingled rather than compartmentalized: 'I mean I do loads of stuff . . . I absolutely love making music. I think it's great. I wouldn't do it otherwise. Like it's got to be the creative aspect for me'.

In terms of musical styles and roles, this fluency gives him access to multiple music-related communities of practice. Travelling through and between these communities broadens his creative horizons by providing ideas and material from multiple sources, and enables him to make use of his technological or musical knowledge and skills, as required in any given situation.

[M]y final track was to record a band. I came in and I was literally just: 'I know what I'm doing, I'm gonna record it'. And I'd have no input there and I would not consider myself to be a musician in that context in any way. I'd consider myself to be fully an engineer, to be honest, 'cause they've got their stuff written and I just came in and just recorded it. But then there's other stuff that I'm doing and like say this one person I'm working with and I'm actually gonna be in the band 'cause I'm doing so much production on it, I've got to play laptop in it, with that, helping with the beats. [I] went around to my mate's house the other day and we recorded beats and I'd say: 'Try this, try that, try the other'. I'm playing guitar in it, as well and stuff like that. Coming up with ideas. So, in that context I think I am song writing, as well.

Brian's creative work contains a wide selection of knowledge and skills that he actively imports and exports between the communities to which he has access (see Wenger, 1998, pp. 108–110 on multi-membership). He employs his expertise like an artist uses his set of paintbrushes, selecting the piece of knowledge or skill that appears to be the most helpful at any given moment.

I mean, sometimes it maybe be . . . like: 'Ah, that guitar sounds cool, but let's put a flange pedal there, and maybe try a different distortion pedal. Or on the vocals let's put an SM57'. I mean, to me that is still quite musical but that's more production approach.

Life in between communities also raises challenges – both for Brian in terms of his own desires and for his relationships with the people he works with. Sometimes issues arise out of the obscurity or misunderstanding of his role.

[My last recording/engineering project] was meant to sound like the Strokes and I just stood with the vocal and I had the singer just constantly whining at me for not using the Neumann, this one and a half grand mic. I just used the one of the 50 quid ones. And that frustrated me . . . I didn't change it 'cause it's my project as much as it is hers, but say I work in this studio and I have to make a change like that. That would really irritate me. And I don't wanna be compromising that position.

To avoid frustration and to foster a fruitful outcome for the combination of different, and sometimes conflicting, features of his musicianship, Brian is purposefully aiming to surround himself with people who are open to his dynamic and changing approach to music making:

I'd personally like to go down the route of . . . recording a band, going into a giant mansion and living there for two months with the band, they're coming up with some basic ideas and then we'll sit around and look at them all and we'll build it. That's what I'd like to be involved with.

In terms of a future career as a professional musician, Brian places great importance upon the freedom to experiment and to 'be involved in the creative aspects' in the music-making process with co-musicians who are 'willing to try stuff out' and take risks with him.

A 'rush of satisfaction' and other goals

At the moment, though, the majority of these dreams still belong to the future, and the biggest challenge for Brian is to finish his final tracks in order to graduate from

the college. I ask Brian whether recording and mixing music that other people have written feels as satisfying as writing one's own songs for a band, for example. He states the following while glancing at his peers in the control room on the other side of a glass window:

You're standing there at the mixing desk, eq-ing it: 'That sounds crap' . . . You're pressing it and then suddenly you just hit one thing and you just go: 'F***ing YES!'. And then you just feel like brilliant and you talk [to] everyone all about it all day . . . Yes, you'll get that same rush of satisfaction, definitely!

During the interview, Brian has introduced a glimpse into his musical world with a wide variety of styles, practices, roles, communities and possible ways to proceed. However overwhelming this world might appear to be for an outsider, Brian himself seems at ease with it. After all, for him, the configuration of different features represents merely different sides of the same coin. It is all about the creation and satisfaction it brings.

I'd rather to be remembered for what I actually did in something than just to being a big name . . . I wanna have a record that I give out and say: 'Yeah, I'm proud that I did that' . . . I'd rather turn around and it's more the *experience* than the success. So I guess my goal is to just experience it, throwing myself into this as much as possible.

For Brian, the journey of music making is as important as the arrival at a destination. Reaching the goal of finishing a track or 'being a big name' is not enough if the quality of the process has not been satisfying. Brian defines the quality of the process through the quality of the *experience* he has had, including all his musical experiments, adventures and opportunities for throwing himself 'into this as much as possible'. Inevitably, the quality of the experience of making music is indeed related to its meaningfulness, and in that sense to the quality of his *life* as a whole (see Westerlund, 2008).

Towards cosmopolitan musicianship

This article has provided a construction of digital musicianship that has certain values and meanings connected specifically with it. This portrait lends itself to scrutiny from at least two possible angles. Both angles also provide further questions and possibilities for implications in terms of the bigger picture that interests music educators, namely the wider culture of music making and learning.

Musicianship as an expedition

As digital musicianship is closely intertwined with the instruments and technologies utilized in the practices of music making, the technologies are not merely external and convenient tools for getting a job done. Rather, digital musicians' musical identities and professional expertise are partly constructed *through* digital technologies as they provide musicians with the cultural landscape for creative expeditions and progression. Brown (2007) compares the interaction between musicians and digital technologies to a *partnership*, in which the digital musician 'accepts any influence of the instrument on their music as an inherent aspect of the music making' (p. 12). This process of thinking through instruments and using them as 'an ideas amplifier' (p. 11) challenges the widespread and majorly cognitive view of musicianship as a matter of procedural knowledge and knowing (Elliott, 1995). Rather than applying 'practice-specific knowledge' (p. 55) in a performance situation and aiming for musical authenticity or a loyalty to traditions, the digital musicians are working in partnership with the technologies in their aspirations for 'trying innovative paths in order to *break* [traditions]' (Westerlund, 2008, p. 170, emphasis added). By offering the musicians opportunities to change technologies and/or their relationship with them, digital devices enable innovative paths of musical thinking and acting (Brown, 2007, p. 3).

In which ways are the various meanings of cultural artefacts taken into account in the music classroom? Digital technologies provide the students with possibilities for musical expeditions and pervasive experiences of music making, where the students can 'change their own musical environment' (Westerlund, 2002, p. 16) and be changed by their musical experiences. Such agency entails that, rather than considering themselves as 'just students' they begin to see themselves as musicians, who participate in socio-cultural activities to advance their 'collaborative inquiry and shared knowledge rather than merely pursue their own learning agendas' (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005, p. 554). This study argues that, by developing music classrooms where activities are increasingly organized around digital artefacts, such as digital instruments and the pieces of music created utilizing them, it is possible to advance a creative culture of learning where the students are encouraged towards forming 'an identity of a prospective builder or creator of knowledge' (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005, p. 554). In this culture, the value of education is not determined by its possibilities to enable the students to produce good musical outcomes or even to have 'flow' experiences (cf. Elliott, 1995), but to prepare the students to act as moral agents in communities by offering the students activities that increase their sense of ownership and responsibility.

Musicianship as ‘brokering’

This study presents digital musicianship as kind of a ‘melee’: a combination of multiple music and technology-related practices, knowledge, skills, styles, roles and communities. For the digital musicians, to become a competent musician is to become, in Wenger’s (1998, pp. 108–110) words, a capable ‘broker’ – one who travels fluently through as well as *between* communities, transferring ideas, styles and interests from one practice to another. This ability is highlighted in the practice of music producing in which the ability to combine creative ideas by various people could be considered as one of the most important prerequisites. Rather than aiming to deepen and master one or two musical practices ‘authentically’, the participants’ musicianship is based on the values of flexibility and versatility. In contrast to Elliott’s (1995, 1996) suggestion that we cherish ‘musical belonging’ in music education, the college fosters musicianship that could be described as widely distributed; the kind of musicianship in which musical breadth is very much a virtue (cf. Elliott, 1995, p. 211).

The practice of ‘brokering’ could also be considered as ‘musical cosmopolitanism’ that is intrinsically somewhat ambivalent: in order to import and export new perspectives between different communities, ‘brokers’ have to fight the temptation to extend their roots too deeply into one community, as the ‘brokers’ ‘contributions lie precisely in being neither in nor out’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 110), while still safeguarding the connections to avoid becoming rejected as intruders. Cosmopolitan musicianship is built on the values that ‘renounce the need to identify with any particular community’ (Delanty, 2000, p. 54), and welcome participation in various communities ‘by choice, on a temporary basis’ (Jewson, 2007, p. 79) and even by intentionally staying at the fringes of some or every community. Cosmopolitan ‘brokers’ are indispensable to the communities involved, but their uprootedness can be challenging, as Brian’s story reveals. To enhance the balance and ensure the continuity of their task, ‘brokers’ need each other for mutual companionship and the development of ‘shared practices around the enterprise of brokering’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 110).

This study suggests that a community of musical practice could be understood in wider terms than simply as a movement from peripheral participation towards the core (see Lave & Wenger, 1991) within one community. A contemporary music classroom in general education is often a hybrid of many memberships in various communities of practice, as students ‘maintain many social ties, possibly over considerable distances’ (Jewson, 2007, p. 79), and intentionally or accidentally bring these ties into the classroom. By paying attention to movement *between* communities

of practice, it is possible to better understand the nature of the digital musician; ‘a cosmopolitan socio-psychological disposition’ (Jewson, 2007, p. 79), and to provide education that helps the students to face and successfully operate within these circumstances.

Consequently, every community of music education that wishes to be dynamic, fluid and open to change should provide an environment where ‘brokering’ is tolerated, embraced, and even requisite. As a hybrid of memberships, the music classroom could potentially provide fruitful surroundings for importing and exporting knowledge and ideas that interest the students, and also a safe place for mutual support and negotiation of values and practices. This means that the pursuit of the practice of ‘brokering’ in a classroom will not necessarily lead to a profound understanding within the musical field, but it will in turn provide an avenue for advancing positive and natural attitudes towards rounded musical thinking, and to quest for equal, and at the same time creative, music-making practices.

Concluding remarks

The portraits created during the past decades of musicianship have had a profound impact on educational practices and values that are now easily taken for granted. The slowly growing body of portraits of digital musicianship call us to once again check the direction in which we are heading and to ask challenging, yet essential, questions about our understandings, values and practices. This leads us to questions such as: is multi-membership of *various* communities of musical practice and ‘cosmopolitan musicianship’ a *threat* to a sterling music education? And if not, what role could a teacher take in creating or combining various kinds of communities and networks among students? Should music producing be introduced into the classroom to complement other practices, such as composing and playing an instrument? In what ways could we as educators construct learning settings in which ‘cross-genre collaborations’ (Welch & Papageorgi, 2008) between musicians with different kinds of musical expertise and views of music are actualized? Could the pursuit of non-territorial and multifaceted musicianship also work as a model for the advocacy of ‘cosmopolitan teachership’ in future teacher education?

Instead of promoting the development of compartmentalized musicianship firmly rooted in particular genres, styles and communities, should we be pursuing something more dynamic: musical expertise that reaches beyond traditional boundaries and is developed as a result of something that could be characterized as

uprootedness? Could this kind of expansion offer a solution for the professional field of performing arts, where '[s]ociocultural, economic and political dimensions of globalization' cause more uncertainty and challenges in employability than in any other professional field today (Bennett, 2008, p. 44)? Indeed, recent reports in northern Europe (e.g., Youth Music, 2002; The Higher Education Academy, 2003; Creech et al. 2008a; Tolvanen & Pesonen, 2010) have reviewed the relationship between the needs of the music industry and the training routes for musicians, suggesting that the only way forward for professional musicians is the development of musical versatility and the adoption of technological, social and business skills.

As expected, the culture of digital musicians is sometimes accused of being short-sighted and shallow, and its close links to user-generated media are under particularly fierce criticisms of amateurism and uncritical mediocrity (see, for instance, Keen, 2007). While undesirable influences will undoubtedly increase in the future, to ignore or deny the implications for creative and fruitful education would be a regrettably limited view of the culture. Even if the field of music education would not be willing to embrace the values of the culture of digital music making, an examination of those values enables us to widen our horizons and breach canonized, narrow or outdated understandings of what constitutes musicianship.

Furthermore, the culture of musical cosmopolites is not likely to be a passing phenomenon; rather its values and practices are expected to take on an increasingly important role in the lives of our students and future musicians, also in developing countries.² By creating music classrooms that are not defined only by portraits of more established musical practices, tested by time, music educators may invite their students to join communities where different views of musicianship exist simultaneously and are negotiated, shared and critically explored. A willingness to both face and accommodate the new by altering existing institutions may well be the key to constructing a music education that answers the needs of 21st century students in even more meaningful ways.

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Notes

1. The Music Performance and Production course is one of several options provided by the college. The college is among a growing number of music schools that offers undergraduate musical training in the UK, with its education revolving around musical genres including, for instance, heavy metal, soul, jazz and electronica.
2. Wider access to information and communication technology (ICT) in developing countries is one of the key focuses of the current Programme and Budget of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, for instance (e.g., Semenov, 2005; UNESCO, 2010). Although an analysis about the impact of increasing the availability of ICT in developing countries is beyond the scope of this article, it is suggested here that this is an area that calls for further research, also in music education.

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Appendix 3: Article III

Envisioning collaborative composing in music education: Learning and negotiation of meaning in *operabyyou.com*

Heidi Partti and Heidi Westerlundⁱ

Abstract

This qualitative instrumental case study examines collaborative composing in the *operabyyou.com* online music community from the perspective of learning by utilising the concept of a ‘community of practice’ as a heuristic frame. The article suggests that although informal music practices offer important opportunities for people with varied backgrounds to participate in the production of art works, and may thus represent and illustrate important aspects of the community life of the society, they do not necessarily provide ideal models for the music classroom. Based on the analysis of the *operabyyou.com* community, we discuss conditions for collaborative composing when aiming to design educational settings that support the students’ construction of identity and ownership of musical meaning.

Introduction

Composing still remains relatively marginal in the general music educational practices of many countries. This is in spite of several attempts already made decades ago to point out the educational significance of composing in general (e.g. Paynter & Aston, 1970), as well as more recent arguments emphasising the importance of giving arenas for students’ creativity (e.g. John-Steiner, 2000; Barrett, 2006; MacDonald, Byrne & Carlton, 2006) and the development of agency (e.g. Walduck, 2005; St. John, 2006; Mantie, 2008). Teachers may lack confidence in teaching composing (e.g. Winters 2012), often due to the rather common view of composing as the solo endeavour

of a 'lone genius' producing authentic musical ideas, and embarked upon only after lengthy formal studies. This individualistic view of musical expertise, reserved for the chosen few, is still widespread among professional educational institutions within Western classical music, and has prevented the profession from fully recognising the ever more evident strengths of collaborative composing, particularly in educational settings. According to a recent report in Finland, for instance, nearly half of the students (47%) in lower secondary schools stated that they had never experienced making their own music in school even though composing has been included in the Finnish National Framework for Music Curriculum for several decades (Juntunen, 2011).

As suggested by recent studies, collaborative composing may function as a way to 'generate more, and a greater variety of musical ideas' (Faulkner, 2003, p. 115), and provide 'opportunities for increased development across a broad spectrum of musical intelligence' (Brown & Dillon 2007, p. 97), as well as supporting students' deeper self-understanding (Barrett, 2006), mutual appreciation (Rusinek, 2007) and the growth of their 'cultural knowledge and confidence' (Miell, 2006, p. 147). Moreover, collaborative composing offers potential for developing more democratic learning environments (Allsup, 2003; 2011). Despite this growing awareness of composing collaboratively, music teacher graduates are reported to often have only few, if any, personal experiences of group composing when entering school (e.g. Faulkner, 2003), and may find themselves perplexed in the midst of the complex and diverse processes of teaching musical composing to groups of students (Fautley, 2005; Clennon, 2009; Sætre, 2011).

While there are only few experiences and pedagogical models of group composing within institutions of higher music education (e.g. Allsup 2011), user-generated online communities are increasingly providing new possibilities for a wide range of music makers to experience and learn composing through an open-ended collaboration (e.g. Salavuo, 2006; Partti, 2009; Partti & Karlsen, 2010). In this article, we will explore one such community, namely the international *operabyyou.com*, initiated in May 2010 by the Savonlinna Opera Festival in Finland, with a public performance at the festival of a collaboratively composed opera named "Free Will" scheduled for July 2012. The Opera by You project not only exemplifies an emerging cultural shift from an individualistic one to that of a collaborative understanding of composing, but it also demonstrates a blurring of the boundaries between formally educated experts and informally trained amateurs within the same community as it provides online access for anyone, independent of their educational background, stylistic preferences, or geographical location, to contribute to the opera – to the writing of the libretto, composing of the music as well as to the designing of the sets and

costumes.

By advancing heuristically the theories of sociocultural learning (e.g. Bruner, 1996) in general, and of so-called communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Lea, 2005; Wenger, White & Smith, 2009) and communities of musical practice (e.g. Barrett 2005) in particular, we will explore collaborative composing in *operabyyou.com* (hereafter abbreviated as OBY) from the perspective of learning; learning understood as a thoroughly social endeavour, having a dynamic relationship to one's construction of identity and experience of meaning. We will employ the approach of a qualitative instrumental case study (e.g. Stake, 1995) to investigate how OBY informs, though may *not* yet model, collaborative composing in music education, and ask *how is the learning and ownership of musical meaning enhanced or constrained in the OBY online community*. By collaborative composing, we refer to composing activities leading to a joint product that has been created by more than one person providing a musical contribution(s) to the process and/or to the end product of the collaboration. Unlike other music education researchers who have been interested in musical learning outside of formal education (see, for instance, Green, 2001; Söderman & Folkestad, 2004; Salavuo, 2006; Karlsen & Brändström, 2008; Waldron, 2009), our approach to the Opera by You project is critical. Hence, this study takes a critical stance toward musical practices outside institutional music education to envision *educationally* grounded collaborative composing practices beyond the case of the OBY community.

The case of *operabyyou.com*: data collection and analysis

The OBY online community operates on a web platform that facilitates communication between the members of the community in several ways: the members may create their own profile page, initiate and participate in discussions or post comments on each others' contributions related to the overall composing task. As such, the research data for this study consists of the OBY member's individual online profiles, the composing task related online discussions collected during the first year of the OBY community from May 2010 until June 2011, and computer-assisted interviewsⁱⁱ. Besides the online profiles, discussions and the email interviews, the Festival organisation provided demographic statistics related to the participants of the emerging online community. To ensure the successful completion of the opera within the given time frame, the Festival organisation appointed six professionals within the field of dramatic art – referred to as 'operatives by the Festival Organisation' –, including a production leader, librettist,

producer and composer, to lead the work in the OBY community. Having begun in mid-September 2010, composition had been set to proceed under the leadership of the musical operative, a Finnish professional composer, Markus, whose role is to guide the OBY participants who engage, in any capacity, in the creation of the music for the opera. In short, Markus' duties are to design, present and explain the musical assignments for the community to get on with. It had also been decided by the Festival Organisation that Markus will combine all the notated musical passages composed by the OBY members and merge them into one score.

Opera by You is the first opera production operating on a platform called Wreckamovieⁱⁱⁱ that was initially launched to facilitate online collaborative film making. Consequently, online discussions on OBY have appeared in three separate areas that reflect the division of labour of the Wreckamovie platform's structure: 1) TASKS, a notice board on which the musical operative could announce new Tasks for the members to work on, and where the members could upload their own contributions, i.e. Shots, as well as comment on each others' Shots; 2) BLOG, a forum for the musical operative to start Threads, which include discussions about tools, practices and other more general themes related to the composing of the opera; 3) FAQ, a discussion board for member or operative initiated questions and/or comments about the production, referred to as Shots. Every discussion about the composing of the music was collected and analysed during the data collection period. There were 7 Tasks (with 59 Shots and 72 Comments) on the TASKS area, 9 Threads (with 12 Comments) on the BLOG area, and 10 Shots (with 89 Comments) on the FAQ area; altogether 259 online messages.

The structured, computer-assisted interviews, carried out with five voluntary OBY composers serve as an additional source of case study information (see, for instance, Yin, 1994). The choice of interviewees was based on the list provided by the Festival organisation of 'the most active composers in OBY' (email communication in March 21, 2011). According to our own calculation, there were altogether approximately 10 to 15 members involved with composing the music in the OBY community during the period of the data gathering. We approached the seven 'most active' composers through their OBY profile by sending them a message in which we explained the purpose of the study and provided a list of questions. Five of them answered the questions. Each of the interviewees were asked the same questions enquiring about the composers' reasons for and experiences of participating in the OBY project as well as about their musical background and possible previous experiences of collaborative composing. While an email interview may fall short of providing 'rich and detailed descriptions' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 149), the interviews proved to be a practical and non-threatening way to address aspects in the lives of

geographically distant people (see, *ibid.*).

Rather than providing a thick description of the cultural system of OBY, our instrumental interest in analysing the initial stages of the collaborative composing project was to reflect on the conditions for learning in OBY and the transformation of a group of people, from various parts of the world, and provided with different levels of musical expertise, into a collaboratively composing community. Through exploring the processes of negotiation of meaning taking place in the early stages of OBY, we aim to ‘draw [our] own conclusions’ (Stake, 1995, p. 9) beyond the case. The verbal negotiation, descriptions, interviews and other accounts appearing in the research material were analysed by using a ‘theoretical reading analysis’, as proposed by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009; see also Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 245-246). The analysis proceeded through carefully reading and re-reading the research material from the aforementioned positions and by reflecting ‘theoretically on specific themes of interest’ (p. 236) to make interpretations based on the theories. In this type of analytical approach, the researcher is considered to be a ‘craftsman’ (p. 234), whose creativity (p. 239) and ‘extensive and theoretical knowledge of the subject matter’ (p. 236) is of crucial importance ‘in putting forth new interpretations and rigorousness in testing the interpretations’ (p. 239). To ensure that the theoretical reading would not ‘block seeing new, previously not recognized, aspects of the phenomena being investigated’ (p. 239), the research material was also examined through narrative analysis, where we constructed ‘coherent stories’ (Kvale, 1996, p. 201) of successions of happenings on OBY by synthesising and temporally organising them into new episodes^{iv}. The aim of the process of narrative configuration (Polkinghorne, 1995) was to obtain an understanding of the happenings ‘from the perspective of their contribution and influence on a specific outcome’ (p. 5).

Theoretical points of departure: ‘community of practice’ as a heuristic lens

As a starting point, we agree with Etienne Wenger (1998) that whenever we come together to do things and collaborate, we engage in various activities utilising all sorts of techniques and instruments, yet, it is not these activities, techniques, or tools in themselves that give meaning to our experiences. Rather, we are actively *producing* meanings ‘that extend, redirect, dismiss, reinterpret, modify or confirm – in a word, negotiate anew – the histories of meanings of which they are part’ (pp. 52-53). This production of meanings surrounds and penetrates learning, and constitutes a process that Wenger refers to as *negotiation of meaning*. Negotiation of meaning is

shaped by our present and previous experiences, interactions and negotiations of meaning in a variety of social communities, but it also shapes the situation in which the negotiation takes place, and hence has an impact on every participant involved. In short, through negotiation of meaning, one is able to experience the activities and one's engagement in them as meaningful – or meaningless.

According to Wenger, negotiation of meaning is an inherent part of such communities that essentially revolve around learning, regardless of whether the community is set up explicitly for learning purposes or not (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002; Wenger, White & Smith, 2009; Wenger, Trayner & de Laat, 2011). As a distinction from any kind of temporary social setup, communities of practice are understood to be built on the mutual engagement of the participants who pursue a joint enterprise through ongoing interaction and by developing a variety of shared resources, 'produced or adopted' over time, having become part of the practice of the community (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). The members of a community of practice negotiate their experiences, interpretations and understandings *while* partaking in the activities and interacting with others in the community. Therefore, a community of practice is a place for 'the formation of identities and social configurations' (p. 133), the development of practices, and 'joint learning' (p. 96), in which learning takes place through *participation* in the shared activities of the community of practice. As Wenger writes, learning is understood as a thoroughly social process rather than 'a special category of activity or membership' (p. 95) or simply a mental acquisition process of an individual. Accordingly, learning is always also an experience of identity, as it changes 'our ability to engage in practice, the understanding of why we engage in it, and the resources we have at our disposal to do so' (pp. 95-96). As a heuristic, the concept of a community of practice provides a lens through which to investigate not only how a community may enhance learning through participation, but also, as Lea (2005) suggests, the ways in which learning is constrained and how 'certain ways of making meaning are privileged to the exclusion of others' (p. 188).

OBY as a task-based community

Since the beginning of the community, the demanding objective of producing the final public performance of the opera within a relatively short period of time has been at the centre of activities in OBY. Therefore, OBY could be compared to *task-based learning communities*, using Riel and Polin's (2004) terminology, with its

principle interest in the completion of a task; the production and completion of an artefact. The activities of a task-based community are strictly defined by its stated goal, yet, the participants of such a community may, as pointed out by Riel and Polin, ‘experience a strong sense of identification with their partners, the task, and the organization that supports them’ (p. 20). In their online profiles and interviews, OBY participants indicated indeed that being part of the creation of a ‘real’ opera was highly motivating. The reasons for joining OBY varied from curiosity about the novel project to the expectancy of finding a platform for one’s own music.

I didn’t initially intend to compose music [for the “Free Will” opera], as I do not, in any way, regard myself to be even close to being ready to compose an opera--I do not have skills of a professional composer, but apparently I am able to draft music to the extent that a professional such as Markus can use my sketches as material. After realising that I might end up hearing the music composed by me on the stage of Savonlinna for real, finding and maintaining the motivation has not been difficult. (Member A, interview material)

I enjoy writing music, and while I have been involved with some other projects, I have never written the music for an opera. What did I hope to gain? Well, I guess you could say the most important thing in the world: enjoyment, and the ability for other people to hear my music. (Member D, interview material)

Many of the participants also viewed OBY as ideal in allowing its members to be involved in a community where it would be possible to accomplish something greater than one could ever do by oneself, as well as to learn more about composing. As some of the composers explained:

[I a]lways wanted to contribute to writing an opera. [I have] just finished a musical together with a couple of friends and want to continue learning. (Online profile 1)

---it’s so very exciting to be working at a high level with people from all over the world. It really gives you the sense of participating to something great! (Member B, interview material)

I compose music occasionally---and I want to see how this project became real on a stage to encourage me to follow composing. (Online profile 2)

I think it is a nice experience to collaborate with many people from all around the world in creating a great art work (Member E, interview material)

OBY hence has provided a unique opportunity to attend the production of an opera, or, in Meyerson’s (1948) and later Bruner’s (1996) terminology, an *oeuvre* that exceeds any individual capacities; that can fulfil an existence of its own and ‘give pride,

identity, and a sense of continuity to those who participate, however obliquely, in their making' (Bruner, 1996, p. 22). Importantly, the OBY participants share a love of opera and a willingness to keep the art form thriving:

I love opera, and it is the responsibility of opera lovers around the world to keep reinventing the genre, so we can gain more and more fans of opera of all ages and national backgrounds! We must keep opera alive! (Online profile 3)

[My motivation to participate is:] The experience of collaborating with others around one of my greatest passions..., OPERA! (Online profile 4)

As with many other online music communities, becoming a member of OBY is made easy: all one has to do is to sign up by entering a name, email address and password onto an electronic form. Within a year after the launch of the OBY online community, approximately 400 individuals between 30 to 35 years (of which female ratio approximately 40%) were collaborating in the project as a whole. Geographically, the participants have come from 43 countries, and approximately 20 of them are involved in the composing of the music. In the interviews and online profiles, the composers define themselves anywhere from being beginning amateur musicians, self-taught musicians with prolonged histories of various music-making, to professional musicians with formal education. Unlike online music communities such as *mikseri.net* where people may contribute whatever they wish (e.g. Parti 2009), in the OBY community the participants compose music for particular parts of the score at a given time, as commissioned by the musical operative. Although the assignments are designed and given by the musical operative, there are, however, no directives or limitations in terms of the musical genre or style. After the members have submitted their notated contributions – ranging from one bar to lengthy passages – the musical operative merges the musical snippets into the piano score, and later into the final orchestra score, thus aiming to weave the spectrum of various styles into a coherent piece of art. Moreover, the musical operative does not merely create a musical collage according to his own taste, but strives to democratically utilise all the contributions of the members.

As a consequence of this division of labour, effectiveness in promptly completing the task appears to be the strength of the OBY community. 'Theoretical reading analysis' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) enables us, however, to view why this might be considered educationally limited. In the following, we will further examine learning and identity work in OBY through a sociocultural perspective.

The dual process of identity construction

In the same way that meaning does not come into being by itself but is constructed and reconstructed through negotiation, identity is here understood to exist ‘not as an object in and of itself – but in the constant work of negotiation the self’ (Wenger, 1998, p. 151). By negotiating the meanings of their experiences of membership in the OBY community, the participants are also building their identities as opera composers. This identity work is considered to be an interplay between two distinct, but reciprocally accomplishing and inseparable elements, namely *identification* and *negotiability*. To open up this dual process of identity construction, Wenger uses the metaphor of economy of meaning to highlight ‘the social production and adoption of meaning, and thus the possibility of uneven negotiability and contested ownership among participants’ of communities (p. 210). Communities and economies of meaning draw attention to distinct aspects of social configurations, and hence ‘require and reflect different kinds of work of the self’ (p. 210). As illustrated in Figure 1, the former links closely to the work of identification and the participants’ ‘investment in various forms of belonging’, while the latter reflects the work of negotiability, referring to the participants’ ‘ability to negotiate the meanings that matter in those contexts’ (p. 188).

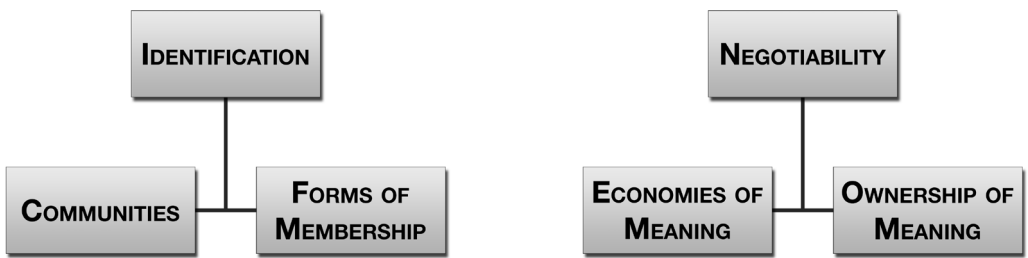


Figure 1. Dual process of identity construction (the figure is based on Wenger’s (1998) diagram on p. 192, and p. 198)

Identification

The reasons the OBY composers gave in the interviews for their participation reflect the power of imagination as a source of identification with specific large groups of people, such as that of ‘opera composers’.

--- working on a real Opera was really something I had been dreaming of. It was mainly this which inspired me, along with the fact that I appreciate much of Finland's musical reality. When I read about the project in a newspaper, I immediately thought: this is the chance to prove my value, and to see if I can be appreciated for my work and my knowledge. (Member B, interview material)

According to Wenger (1998, p. 195), 'imagination can yield a sense of affinity, and thus an identity of participation'. This imagined sense of affinity inspires the participants of OBY to invest their time and effort in composing, and engaging in the project was consequently seen to offer significant *existential value*.

--- my main purpose was to give my (musical) contribution to something that would hopefully survive in time, and live beyond me --- participating in the work is like putting a little piece of my soul into something that will potentially live forever. (Member B, interview material)

My motivation of participation is tjo be a part of something unique. Showing the world of creativity to my daughter (now age 7) and letting her be a part of it too. Proving to myself that there is life after cancer. (Online profile 4)

This perception of the value of the envisioned 'joint product' — the collective oeuvre (Bruner, 1996, p. 76) — forms starting points for the OBY community to appear. Imagination, for its composers, is like 'looking at an apple seed and seeing a tree' (Wenger, 1998, p. 176): an ability to envision the opera performance and their own place in the canon of opera music, while participating in the slow and often arduous crafting of composing. For the participating composers, identification hence provided material for defining their identities as opera composers through their engagement in the activities and social interactions in OBY.

Negotiability

According to Wenger, identification is, however, only one aspect of social configurations. The other aspect, negotiability, enables the composers to use the material provided by identification to assert their identities 'as productive of meaning' (Wenger, 1998, p. 208). This takes place by negotiating what it *means*, or *how* to be an opera composer within the context of OBY. The participants' pursuit of acquiring 'control over the meanings' (p. 188) in which they had invested is exemplified in an online discussion that took place at the beginning of the composing work, and was initiated by the participants themselves.

I would like [to] ask the operatives if they have formulated any ideas about the process of collaborative composing? Since the days of Beethoven, composers have been seen as torch bearers of heroic individualism. It would be quite something if this [OBY] could be made to work as a truly collaborative effort. I don't think it would be very good if we end up in a situation where everyone is in parallel composing his/her own thing in the loneliness of his/her study.
--- ('TASKS' commentator 1 in September 27, 2010)

The discussion continued with the writer considering some practical ways to organise the composing work in a way that would ensure both the coherence of the final score and the collaborative nature of its creation. Another OBY composer concurred, and proposed that the community should have *'a pool of musical ideas that can be shared by everyone and can inspire others, giving them the opportunity to evolve, as melodies or arrangements'* ('TASKS' commentator 2 in September 27, 2010). The suggested tool would have been similar to ones used in software development to enable participants to share and organize any snippet created by any member of the community: *'Everyone could then listen to the different versions of scores, choose the one s/he likes the most and contribute to its development'* ('TASKS' commentator 2 in September 27, 2010).

As the composing of the opera continued throughout the following months, it became clear that suggestions for an open source *'pool of musical ideas'* would not come to pass. Instead, the musical operative would make all the final choices between various musical suggestions, and merge the extracts into one score. This lack of admission to the process of assembling the musical whole led to discussions about ways to 'cut and paste' different snippets. One member voiced his puzzlement at finding a snippet by another composer placed in the middle of his own fragment. In his opinion, this *'breaks the structure of the original fragment and therefore loses its coherence'* ('FAQ' commentator 1 in January 21, 2011). Other composers were quick to bring about reconciliation instead of continuing to defend their 'own' snippets. They reassured that *'the beauty of the music is in the right balance between predictability and surprise'*, and that *'the fragmentation'* could, in fact, be considered as *'a part of the style of this work'* ('FAQ' commentator 2 in January 21, 2011).

Although negotiation exhibits the OBY composers' concern for collaboration and learning, interestingly, the urgency to complete the task resulted in a reluctance to get involved in a prolonged negotiation of meaning. As stated earlier, identification and negotiability can each result in participation as well as non-participation (Wenger, 1998, p. 189), and identification 'can be both positive and negative' (p. 191) as it always includes what one prides oneself on being and what one scorns. Furthermore, as a socially organised experience, identification might give rise to non-participation as we are labelled not only by ourselves but also by others, hence

potentially being included in a community we dread and excluded from one we admire. Identification, in other words, ‘is defined with respect to communities and forms of membership in them’ (p. 197). Negotiability, for its part, ‘is defined with respect to social configurations and our positions in them’ (ibid.). In this sense, whilst a strong identification can be analysed from the members reasoning, negotiability, being ‘shaped by structural relations of *ownership of meaning*’ (ibid.), can be considered as being severely compromised in OBY through the emphasis put on finishing the task.

Consequently, the apparent avoidance of conflict, as seen in the preceding story, is problematic particularly in terms of musical learning and the formation of a democratic learning community. According to Wenger, the ‘three dimensions of the relation by which practice is the source of coherence of a community’ are mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire (p. 72). None of the characteristics, however, necessarily entail or result in homogeneity or like-mindedness. Rather, diversity and differentiation are natural, and often beneficial, parts of the communities of practice, and ‘disagreement, challenges, and competition can all be forms of participation’ (p. 77), as well as a valuable ‘learning resource’ (Wenger et al., 2009, p. 9). Or, as Sawyer (2007) argues, ‘the friction that results from multiple opinions drives the team to more original and more complex work’ (p. 71). Wenger (1998) reminds us that ‘[t]he enterprise is joint not in that everybody believes the same thing or agrees with everything, but in that it is communally negotiated’ (p. 78). Likewise, Dewey (1996, LW 7, p. 166) points out that conflict has a positive function by bringing a clearer recognition to different interests. This recognition may then lead further to ‘a challenge to inquiry—that is, to operative intelligence’ (Dewey, 1996, LW 12, p. 524). In OBY, however, there is no space for this kind of search for shared solutions (as use of intelligence). Whether deliberately or not, negotiations of meaning are labelled as being useless tiffs and thus are seen as speed bumps on the way to the destination of successfully completing the task, as exemplified in the above story. By self-censoring any sign of friction, the OBY composers settled for conformity rather than striving towards active agency, fulfilling their need for identification while sacrificing deeper ownership.

Conditions for educative collaborative composing

Although informal musical environments, such as OBY, may represent and illustrate important aspects of the community life of the society, we propose that they do not necessarily provide ideal *models* for the music classroom, as informal practices are

rarely based on equal values or aim at similar goals to formal education. Hence, at the same time as we agree that learning can be seen as a trajectory in a community of practice instead of a separate activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), we also wish to point out that not all group activities or practices in the society are particularly effective in terms of enhancing such learning that facilitates the construction of identity and an ownership of meaning. As Sawyer (2007) states, simply '[p]utting people into groups isn't a magical dust that makes everyone more creative' (p. 73). Also, as Seddon's (2006) study on computer-mediated music composing showed, a collaborative environment does not guarantee collaborative engagement. Based on our analysis of the OBY community, we therefore suggest that at least the following conditions for collaborative composing may need to be considered in educational contexts.

Task-based learning communities as the basis for collaborative composing may involve limited community mechanisms. As suggested by Riel and Polin (2004), it is possible to begin the transformation of traditional music classroom instruction with the idea of a joint task. In this way classrooms may be transformed into learning communities that may even extend across grade levels and involve a variety of expertise (p. 23). However, as illustrated throughout the article, by simply emphasising the completion of a task – a collaborative composition, or an oeuvre – as the final *end* to collaboration, we might compromise the formation of such a community that deliberately supports the students' learning and identity work through facilitating possibilities for negotiations of meaning. Indeed, in their analysis of different kinds of learning communities, Riel and Polin hesitate to refer to task-based learning communities as communities at all, stating that in some ways task-based learning communities could be considered as 'micro-communities' as they fall short of sharing 'all of the characteristics of full-blown communities' (p. 23). As a result of the short timeline, a task-based learning community established for a specific purpose, such as a musical performance in school festivities, does not necessarily allow for the development of 'community mechanisms such as shared discourse and shared sets of practices, values, and tools' (ibid.).

Even within longer projects, such as OBY, where there are tools and shared practices developed that have been negotiated and discussed, the final creative product is non-negotiable and non-modifiable. Although the participants of OBY are given opportunities to contribute to the final opera score by generating musical ideas and material, ultimately the entirety of the opera's music will lie in the hands of the musical operative. Hence, membership in OBY does not necessarily designate *mutual engagement*, which, according to Wenger (1998), 'defines the community [of practice]' (p. 73), and significantly surpasses the mere act of logging onto a website.

Wenger argues that the first requirement for 'being engaged in a community's practice' is to be 'included in what *matters*' (p. 74, emphasis added) and what matters in a given community is not merely a question of a stated and static goal, like the task that forms the basis for the existence of OBY, but one of *a joint enterprise*. This second requirement, according to Wenger, is always 'the result of a *collective process* of negotiation...defined by the participants in the very process of pursuing it' (p. 77, emphasis added), which further 'creates among participants relations of mutual accountability that become integral part of the practice' (p. 78). Thirdly, the joint enterprise results as *a shared repertoire* of 'routines, words, tools, ways of doing things...concepts' (p. 83) and so on, thus creating a set of 'resources for negotiating meaning' (p. 82) in the community. While the OBY members do share a joint endeavour – a task that matters – as well as ways of accomplishing it, the three dimensions of a community of practice are not fully present since possibilities for negotiation are limited by the role of the operative.

In an educational setting, the cost of short-time efficiency in completing the task might become eventual weaknesses in terms of providing challenges that would allow for new levels of expertise for the students through the occurrence of 'learning as social construction' (p. 17). Instead of considering the successful performance of a collaborative composition at a school event as the end of a musical production, the teacher may need to consider how participation in the project could enable new levels of expertise and thus increase a sense of ownership in the classroom, school, or beyond. Furthermore, established forms of musical activities and the 'physical structure of a classroom' (Barrett, 2005, p. 276) may inhibit new collaborative forms of learning in school. According to Barrett, even small structural changes 'may assist in creating public and private spaces for individual, small group and large group engagement' (ibid.).

Students' identity work and learning in collaborative composing go hand in hand. As shown above, the OBY project has provided an innovative platform for a group of people to be identified as opera composers, yet only a limited forum for constant reflection and negotiation. This has significant consequences in terms of learning in the community. As the musical operative is the final musical designer of the OBY music, the participants' access to development as composers and experiences of meaning is compromised by the lack of chances to shape the practice of their community (see, Wenger, 1998, p. 57). This is manifested in OBY particularly in the omission of learning through evaluation and reflection upon the process and, specifically, through *revisions of their own contributions*. It could be said, by paraphrasing Chapman (2008), that the absence of opportunities for the OBY

composers to ‘revisit their work to reflect on design and learning processes results in lost opportunities for deepening connections to learning’ (p. 41) and for organising prominent learning experiences ‘into some meaningful, coherent structure’ (p. 45). The authority of the musical operative may stir the composing process of individual participants, but with the exception of his working in co-operation with every individual OBY composer, all the other participants are working with their musical contributions alone, albeit having the possibility to discuss principles and the other participants’ general views online. By assembling the musical snippets of the individual composers, the musical operative takes on the role of a specialist who ‘knows best’ and who’s point of view prevails in lieu of the collaborators’ ‘commitment to shared resources, power, and talent’ (John-Steiner, Weber & Minnis, 1998, p. 776). Whilst this may be understandable as the Festival organisers needed to secure the end result, the situation closely reminds one of school projects where ‘*the creativity of a group*’ (Sawyer, 2006, p. 148, emphasis added) is overlooked if the teacher takes the lead in favour of *the creativity of the art product*. Often, as Hickey (2003) argues, ‘our controlled and hurry-up classroom culture’ (p. 34) is in contrast to the messiness and slowness required for creative thinking. For instance, the teacher may choose only the ‘best’ performers for the ‘most important’ tasks, and even ignore the contribution of those students with more modest skills and thus minimize sustained negotiation. One could argue that the emphasis put on the completion and quality of the end product endangers the pursuit of ‘a true collaboration’ in which, according to Minnis, John-Steiner and Weber (1994), ‘authority for decisions and actions resides *in the group*, and work products reflect a blending of all participants’ contributions’ (cited in John-Steiner, Weber & Minnis, 1998, p. 776, emphasis added).

While accepting that in an educational setting the teacher as a facilitator, coach (e.g. Ehrlich, 1998, p. 494) or a mentor (Chapman, 2008), may not necessarily need to share the entire process of production, there are crucial educational consequences arising from *not* sharing the *reflection* on the entire process. In fact, a mentor may have an important role in promoting intentional reflection as ‘part of the design activities and resultant interactions with other learners’ (Chapman, 2008, p. 41). As, for instance, Collins and Halverson (2009) state, systematic reflection on practice could potentially be enhanced by technology as it allows one to record performances and look back at how the task was done, hence affording people the opportunity ‘to reflect on the quality of their decisions and think about how to do better next time’ (p. 27). Moreover, as in OBY, the work and effort put into collaborative composing in educational contexts needs to be related to the students’ own life values and not simply subjected and reduced to those of the teacher or institution, so that the students can imagine a sense of affinity and construct meaning, i.e. identify

themselves with the task at hand and the people they are collaborating with. As Barrett (2005) argues, this is often a challenge in school settings in which educational practices are not necessarily based on the students 'interest in the topic' (p. 275). Barrett emphasises that in order to develop communities of practice in music education, one needs knowledge of the musical thoughts and actions brought to the classrooms by all participants in order 'to promote dialogue and discussion and the interrogation of a range of perspectives' (p. 276).

Conflicts and disagreements may be taken as a productive part of musical collaboration and community life. One educational approach that consciously deals with opening space for negotiability is the so-called 'project approach', or 'grouping' that deliberately leads students towards constant negotiations within collaborative work (e.g. Ehrlich, 1998; Simpson, 1999). This approach has not been welcomed without hesitation, since varying the division of labour is one of the characteristics that is difficult to deal with in traditional teacher-centred pedagogy in which educators wish to control what their students are learning, or when learning results are expected to be tested and therefore to be controlled by the teachers (Ehrlich, 1998, p. 499). Besides, the processes of negotiation in educational projects may allow for conflicts and disagreements that are interpreted as disruptions. However, this possibility for conflict could be seen as a necessary precondition for democracy and education into democracy. It is in this light that we understand Dewey's words: 'there is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication' (Dewey, 1996, MW 9, p. 7). Instead of seeing a community based on a concept of common good and like-mindedness, it should be built around the idea of a *common bond*, a sense of *collective concern* and *common interests*. In these kinds of communities, unity is created through activities in which there is space for conflicting views and constant negotiation that could be extended throughout educational processes. Furthermore, if, as we believe, the quality of the process of creating an art work is related to the participants' sense of the meaningfulness of the process, and in that way to the quality of their lives as a whole (Westerlund, 2008), the creation of collaborative art works may also require the learning of so-called 'non-musical' skills of collaboration, such as those of negotiation between different, even conflicting viewpoints. In this sense, the aesthetic quality of a collaboratively composed artwork never completely determines the quality of the collaborative composers' experience, or their experience of identity.

Conclusion

Having had our point of departure in sociocultural theories of learning, by and large, this study argues that music education – ranging from general music classrooms to teacher education in universities and beyond – could be increasingly conceptualised as providing flexible arenas for the co-construction of meanings, or collaboration in *creating* meanings. In addition, as recently emerging web-based cultural phenomena, such as *operabyyou.com*, illustrate, not only creating one's own music but also distributing it publicly has become available to larger groups of people than perhaps ever before. These new forums no longer conceptualise composing as the solitary practice of individual genii, but exemplify how social configurations can be combined with the creation of musical ideas. Collaborative composing may appear in different forms in online communities, with slightly different emphases on ways of working. These practices range from musical 'collage making' that utilises music made and uploaded by several people onto platforms such as YouTube, communities such as *mikseri.net* in which people mainly work on their own compositions but make revisions to them based on the feedback received from other community members (Salavuo, 2006; Partti, 2009; Partti & Karlsen, 2010), all the way to those such as OBY in which participants work on the same assignments as specified by a musical leader. Digital and virtual technologies enable the process of composing to become public and open up opportunities for collaboration. Hence, it is expected that these novel phenomena will soon have a greater impact also on schools, conservatories and universities that do not want to isolate themselves from fruitful and creative societal and cultural developments. However, in order for educative projects, including collaborative composing, to become inclusive orchestrations of democratic and versatile musical learning, the nature of interactions and the division of labour within collaborative communities needs to be thoroughly reflected. Acknowledging the cultural value of informal musical practices does not necessarily entail an uncritical copying of those practices in institutions of formal music education. For envisioning educationally grounded collaborative composing practices, this article has suggested that Wenger's sociocultural theory of communities of practice may offer a useful heuristic frame for reflection when designing settings that aim not only at collaborative composing but also at powerful learning and the ownership of musical meaning.

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Endnotes

- i The first author would like to thank The The Selim and Minna Palmgren Foundation of Sibelius Academy in Finland for financially supporting this work.
- ii The authorisation to conduct the study on OBY was issued by the Festival organisation in October 2010. A public announcement of this study and its intentions was made in OBY in March 2011.
- iii Wreckamovie, <http://www.wreckamovie.com>
- iv The direct quotes from the data are from the discussion areas and online profiles of OBY and from the email interviews; they are presented as they appeared on the data. However, as English is not the native language of all the members of OBY, spelling/grammar errors have been corrected to ensure the equally easy understandability of all the quotes.

Appendix 4: Article VI

Democratic musical learning: How the participatory revolution in new media challenges the culture of music education

Heidi Partti and Heidi Westerlund

Musical learning can be seen as part of any musical practice, whether it takes place within formal educational settings or informal contexts, such as garage rock bands (Green 2001) or online music communities (Salavuo 2006; Partti 2009). It is symptomatic of music education, however, that researchers are becoming increasingly interested in musical learning outside of schools—particularly in pointing out how different this is from learning within them. Studies suggest that there may be a misalignment between the students’ genuine needs and life experiences, the new and rapidly changing requirements of society, and the content taught in educational institutions (e.g. Hargreaves, Marshall and North 2003; Folkestad 2006; Collins and Halverson 2009). This stream of research is coupled with a wider sociocultural theoretical turn in education—now leaning towards a collaborative approach to knowledge creation and the growth of the culture of expertise (Paavola and Hakkarainen 2005) and emphasising the importance of peers and communities in one’s learning (Vygotsky 1978; Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998; 2006). According to the sociocultural critique, instead of examining all musical learning solely as a transfer of knowledge between the expert teacher and the student, learning should be seen more widely as constituted through social participation in shared activities and negotiations in constantly changing and growing networks and in the relevant “community(s) of practice” (Lave and Wenger 1991). In other words, instead of occurring only through the relationships between teachers and students, learning is seen as taking place in communities where “mutual engagement, a negotiated enterprise, and a repertoire of negotiable resources accumulated over time ... are present to a substantial degree” (Wenger 1998, 126). Stemming from the days of Ivan Illich in the 1970s, various theorists have claimed that the school classroom, even at a professional level, may no longer be the only important environment when

it comes to meaningful learning (see, for instance, Young 1998, 179). Considering the long tradition in conceptualising musical learning within formal education as a delivery process from the master teacher to the novice student (Westerlund 2006), the view of learning as social participation therefore has heuristic value in music education—particularly when questioning who has access to music-related social participation, to developing musicianship and learning, and to public musical expression, and the ways in which these are accessed.

In this chapter, we suggest that recently emerged informal learning environments and new digital and virtual technologies have brought forth a democratic revolution in terms of the wider opportunities available through music-related social participation, musical learning and artistic expression. As an extensive cultural phenomenon, this revolution should also be taken seriously by the music education profession. If the previous democratising global cultural stage came about through the innovations of the record industry that made regular music listening available to large audiences, even in schools, the twenty-first century revolution is essentially about freedom of artistic expression and developing musicianship according to one's own desires. Within the new media's emerging "participatory culture" (Jenkins et al. 2006), evident in forms such as Wikipedia and Facebook, one is able to personally create the contents of one's own culture. In this participatory culture, one can also blur the boundaries between consuming and producing music, as well as making flexible use of technology for self-expression and socialising (Gallant, Boone and Heap 2007), by carrying out discussions on music and musical craft—in other words, to learn and grow musically (Salavuo 2006; Brown and Dillon 2007; Partti and Karlsen 2010). We would argue that this revolution has subtly taken place, and is only slowly becoming acknowledged in the field of formal music education.

These rapidly growing technology-related cultural changes will be explored through two cases, both of which illustrate how the "participatory revolution" democratises the culture of musical learning by focusing on the creation of one's own music. We will show how digital and virtual technologies have enabled informal music communities to surpass hierarchies between different musical styles and genres; how they favour communication and an exchange of musical ideas independent of one's level of expertise, thus diluting the hierarchies between professional musicians and amateurs; and how they celebrate simultaneous participation in various global and local communities by flexibly and openly pursuing individual and social musical identities. By "democracy in music education", we refer to any process that reconstructs structures, practices, or the use of concepts for the benefit of all (Dewey 1996a, 5, 152; 1996b, 11, 182). This current cultural reconstruction provides individuals with the access needed to use their intelligence more freely for musical

growth and expression, and to share more democratically in the values of musical cultures. In this sense, identifying the needs of reconstruction in music education is political education in which pedagogy is considered as a moral and political practice (e.g., Giroux 1999, 199; 2003; 2011); learning is understood to be connected to students' growth as critical citizens with "the imperatives of social responsibility and political agency" (Giroux 2003, 9).

Digital musicianship—valuing extraterritorial musical flexibility and “The Mix”

Digital and virtual technologies enable participation in different musical practices and musical worlds that were formerly out of reach, for instance, due to cultural and geographical impediments. These possibilities, such as attending a virtual lesson run by an Indian “guru” teaching ragas to students in London via the Internet, exemplify the weakening of local boundaries and an increase in global curiosity about musical practices beyond the limits of our previous environments. Moreover, by participating in multiple communities, individuals are able to incorporate musical materials and play with various ideas from different sources, by (for example) using sampling and blending techniques.

In her study on the meanings and values of musicianship within the culture of digital technologies, Partti (2012) examines the music-related life stories of a group of musicians who make music by utilising mainly or solely digital technologies. Following Hugill's (2008) terminology, these practitioners are here referred to as “digital musicians” (see also Hugill this volume). Partti's study displays digital musicianship as a combination of multiple music- and technology-related practices, knowledge, skills, styles, roles and communities, and emphasises the crucial role of digital instruments in providing musicians with possibilities for musical expeditions which combine technological and musical experimentation. Rather than pursuing a deep understanding and the “authentic” expression of a small number of musical practices, digital musicians embrace the ideal of unrestricted musical breadth, cultural flexibility and multi-faceted technology-related knowledge and skills.

This celebration of musical versatility and flexibility, as well as mobility between various musical communities, forms a contrast to many established musical traditions and related approaches to musical learning. Digital musicians deliberately ignore such ownership that emphasises the originality and “authentic” voice of the composer; instead, they celebrate the idea of a shared ownership. Quite the opposite usually

applies, not only in Western classical music, but also in popular music, where the status of an artwork-original – or, following Väkeväs (2010) terminology, “a mix” – “grants the moral copyright to the original author”, thus making unauthorised incorporations “ethically dubious – a violation of the moral copyright” (60). Digital musicians’ ethos in its “creative blend of cultures and ideas” is a cultural-ideological counterpart to “a mix”. Väkeväs refers to this counterpart as “The Mix” and remarks how it produces aesthetic hybrids (often digitally made and distributed) in the forms of mash-ups, remixes and collective online songwriting (63). Within the culture of hybrid aesthetics and digital musicianship, music making and learning are based on the values of musical open-mindedness, cross-genre flexibility, and mobility in and between various musical communities. Digital music making entails giving space to new ideas across different musical practices rather than reproducing or aiming at ideals within a practice. The value of music making is based on the unlimited possibility to create, even if it means the recycling of already existing material.

Lave and Wenger (1991), among other sociocultural learning theorists, are often referred to in order to support traditional, specialised learning styles due to their strong emphasis on learning as a novice’s movement from the fringes of a community of practice towards full membership. In Wenger’s later studies, however, learning can be seen as not necessarily taking place within the borders of any one community, but as a process, which is constructed by multi-membership of various communities of practice (see, in particular, Wenger 1998, 108–10). This understanding of musical learning as a dynamic and cross-boundary movement within and between communities of practice reflects the values of the digital musical culture. Within this culture, an ideal musical learner is one that fluently and creatively transfers ideas, styles and interests from one community of practice to another (Partti 2012). This juggling could be understood as a form of musical play (Nilsson and Folkestad 2005), with its emphasis on freedom and unpredictability and the coexistence of old, new and emerging ideas. As the culture enhances extraterritorial learning practices, the hierarchical discrimination between different musical styles is not aroused in the same way as within musical cultures that view learning as a deep process of enculturation within one or a few communities of practice.

***Operabyyou.com*—an open invitation to collaborative composing**

The popularity of musical self-expression, and today’s possibilities for accomplishing this, radically challenge us to rethink our understanding and the learning practices

related to composing. The traditional institutional notion of an individual composer as the sole maker of artwork-originals and the owner of the moral copyright is challenged in the face of the culture of “The Mix” (Väkevä 2010). Within this culture, composing one’s own music is not only self-evidently original, but the question of ownership also needs to be readdressed in radically new ways, often in collegial or collaborative terms.

An example of new ways for people to collaborate creatively is the ongoing online project *Opera by You* (<http://www.operabyyou.com>), OBY, that welcomes anyone, independent of their educational background or stylistic preferences, to contribute to the creation of an opera by writing the libretto, composing the music or designing the sets and costumes. Initiated by the Savonlinna Opera Festival, OBY offers an experiment in claiming territory within the established practice of Western classical music. Launched in May 2010, a year later there were over 400 members from 43 countries working together to produce an opera, the performance of which is scheduled for July 2012 in Savonlinna, Finland. The work is led by a group of six operatives, including a production leader, librettist, producer and composer. The music composing proceeds step by step under the leadership of the musical operative, who presents the tasks for the community to get on with, makes the final choices between various musical suggestions, and merges the extracts into one score. The significant role of the operative in the OBY community radically distinguishes it from online music communities such as the Finnish *Mikseri.net* (see Salavuo 2006; Partti 2009; Partti and Karlsen 2010), where all the practices are completely or mainly led by the members of the community.

As the creative activities in OBY are aimed at contributing to the completion of a jointly produced artefact, the negotiation around musical composing that takes place between the participants and operators of the OBY project is significantly related to questions of ownership and sharing. In order to complete the task of creating a coherent opera score, the members inevitably have to align their own voices with those of others. In this sense, the learning and identity work of OBY members is defined by the shared goals of the community rather than by the members’ individual goals alone. The preconditions set forth by a shared goal forces the members to reshape their previous assumptions about the principles and practices of composing. In OBY, an individual composer has to conform as part of the collective and to a certain extent let go of her or his own aspirations. OBY hence exemplifies the culture of “The Mix”, with its extreme demand to subsume into the collective and the dismantling of the ideal of an individual author.

However, OBY is also a platform for the members’ personal aims, as it has

provided a forum for their creative expression and a channel through which it can enter highly professional as well as commercial arenas. OBY thus opens a public window for one to freely participate through any kind of contribution, or simply to witness the process of crafting musical materials. At the same time, it compels one to accept the social conditions for such work. This intertwining of personal and collective purposes highlights the social and relational character of learning through participation, a central aspect for many sociocultural theorists (see, in particular, Lave and Wenger 1991). As Billett (2007) argues, the relationship between the social practice and the individual is “agentic on both sides” (56), shaped by the norms, practices and goals of the social situation as well as the desires and intentions of the individuals. A shared goal—the completion of the opera—necessitates the kind of individual flexibility that is not traditionally part of the process of composing, or learning to compose, where the search for one’s personal voice is cardinal. As such, OBY exemplifies not only a new kind of context for composing, but also a new set of rules. To learn and become fluent with these rules requires an acceptance of the interdependence between the personal and the collective.

Lessons for music education

Despite the broader and exciting new possibilities for music making, one could ask whether the musical “Mix” and opportunities opened up by online communities are degrading the quality of art. Are “the great seduction” of amateurism (Keen 2007, 11) and the celebration of “innocence over experience” (36) claiming space from professionals, historically and culturally grounded knowledge and the “epistemological richness and diversity” of academia (Koltay 2011)? Or has this new technology-related revolution given people more equal rights for experimentation, selfexpression, enjoyment, and musical learning? Our aim is not to juxtapose professional expertise with what we call the “participatory revolution”, but rather to view them as nurturing each other. The case studies referred to above demonstrate the genuine learning taking place within online music communities. As is typical for participants of learning practices outside of schools, members of communities direct their minds towards making music instead of learning how to make music (Folkestad 2006). Music making, and the learning that takes place alongside it, is part of the process through which the musicians create a personal relationship to music here and now, in their current circumstances. They pursue it in order to make sense of their preferred music, to be better able to express their music, to make it public, and even to improve their playing or singing skills. This kind of learning is related to people’s very *construction of identity* and their need for artistic expression. There may

be some lessons here for music education.

Firstly, informal music making practices often provide broad opportunities for learning and constructing musical identities in new ways. In the culture of music education, however, the students are still predominantly expected to adapt themselves to the existing institutional musical landscapes by practising certain repertoires or instrumental combinations (choirs or ensembles) instead of being able to cultivate an experimental attitude through composing. This adaptation may even be confusing for a student, particularly since the popular-culture image of a “musician” is usually of a person who makes his or her own music. One may perhaps argue that composing is not possible in a large group. However, as the OBY project demonstrates, group composition takes place even outside of classrooms. Furthermore, collaborative composing projects in the classroom could be seen as a way of providing students with a deeper understanding of themselves (Barrett 2006) while enhancing their self-esteem, appreciation of others (Rusinek 2007), and democracy (Allsup 2003).

This would require, however, collaborative composing to be included in music teacher education, so that future teachers could learn the related social rules and gain experiences of how a group becomes a community: A community emerges and is created through the means of collaboration and negotiation; it is not necessarily self-forming; it only exists “when the consequences of combined action are perceived and become an object of desire and effort” (Dewey LW 2, 330). As the OBY project indicates, one needs to grow into democratic artistic sharing and the related negotiation; to respect other people’s artistic contribution and accept that someone else might make changes to, or delete parts of, one’s own contribution. One must also accept that conflicts may appear in democratic processes (Dewey LW 7), and diversity and disagreements may be important resources for learning and participation (Wenger 1998, 77; Wenger, White and Smith 2009, 9).

Second, the generation using social media in their daily life is used to giving and receiving peer feedback as part of their interaction and related learning (Jenkins et. al 2006). In music education, it is often assumed that the teacher, as the musical expert, will take the lead in choosing the repertoire and deciding what is worth learning. This may be due to the nature of the subject, in which individual voices can create chaos if given free space. Lucy Green’s (2008) critical experiments on adopting peer-to-peer learning practices—widely used by popular musicians in schools (Green 2001)—makes the negotiation between students the centre of interest. The required changes in educational culture demand more than the simple inclusion of popular music in the curriculum. Consequently, the participatory revolution that involves

a genuine exchange of ideas severely challenges the view that musicianship and musical knowledge are solely the possession of experts (Partti and Karlsen 2010; Väkevä 2010). Rather, the communal cultural ethos prompts one to consider one's music *in relation to* others. The growth of social sharing and the importance of (for instance) peer-teaching and peer-assessment are thus essential aspects to consider when designing music teaching practices.

Third, one may need to rethink the prevalent notions of musicianship amongst professional music educators. Traditionally, musicianship has been tightly bound to musical instruments, genres, or even the ability to read notation (North and Hargreaves 2008). Related to this notion is a high level of specialisation which is gained through a careful step-by-step, atomistic method (see Schippers 2010, 81). Often, this specialisation is cultivated by avoiding sidetracks, and by being loyal to one musical genre and its aesthetics in order to preserve artistic credibility. Digital musicianship questions all of these assumptions. While not denying the necessity for specialised music education, we suggest that general music education might need to adjust its practices and goals by taking into account the challenges and opportunities brought forth by participatory culture and the new media. Indeed, what would classroom music teaching look like if it offered tools for learning through which one could immediately express oneself musically, choose freely from different musical materials, and juggle ideas in a manner that celebrates the very freedom of experimenting rather than lauding predefined outcomes.

Fourth, it is worth noting that in this emerging “participatory culture”, the rules of musical authenticity are under constant negotiation. The views that emphasise the importance of education in steering the student toward a deep and chosen “musical belonging” (Elliott 1995, 211) are still dominant, particularly within Western classical music conservatoires. It may be equally important in the future to enable students to recognise musical versatility and flexibility (see also Welch and Papageorgi 2008), as well as to guide them towards mobility between various musical communities, either online or face-to-face. Rather than teaching students how to follow traditional paths, schools should equip them with the skills needed to navigate rapidly changing “digital habitats” (Wenger, White and Smith 2009) where a free interplay between old and new elements across different musical styles and genres is an intrinsic part of artistic self-expression.

Finally, becoming aware of the students' potential virtual identities, and of their hopes and aspirations in regards to learning music, is still a challenge for many music educators (see, for example, Karlsen 2010) as there is seldom a platform for revealing such sides of the students' identities within our classroom practices.

Although music education practices in schools may not be built simply on fortifying students' existing musical knowledge, it is problematic if there is no way for a student to express this knowledge in music classes, or if the teacher has no tools for using such knowledge. This very alignment between students' earlier experience and the school is, however, emphasised in research literature and even in many written curricula texts (see, for instance, Finnish National Board of Education 2004).

New Media, digital musicianship and online communities have rapidly created cultural realities that differ, not so much in terms of the musical genres, styles or instruments used in today's formal education, but in terms of the values and meanings that relate to people's identity work and the demands made on the professional musicians' skill sets, including collaboration, knowledge creation and innovation. As Collins and Halverson (2009, 6) write:

Technology makes life more difficult for teachers. It requires new skills that teachers often have not learned in their professional development. Further, the lockstep model of most classrooms undercuts the power of the new technologies to individualise learning ... As a result, schools have kept new digital technologies on the periphery of their core academic practices. Schools often provide computer labs, tech prep courses, and computer literacy and programming courses to help students learn about technology, but do not try to rethink basic practices of teaching and learning.

Based on our analysis, we propose that rethinking the practices of music teaching and learning against the backdrop of new cultural phenomena would mean giving a more central role to experimenting with artistic expression, open sharing, publishing, and the democratic possibilities of communication in classroom music teaching. As happened during previous technological revolutions with the introduction of vinyl albums and video recorders, such an expansion of democratic possibilities may even reveal as yet unknown creative arenas for formal music education.

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Appendix 5A: Participant Information Sheet (Students)

2009 March, 13

Dear student of [The College],

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter concerning a study, which will be conducted at your school.

The aim of the study is to increase knowledge and understanding about the music related culture that has been enabled by digital technology, and the construction of music related identity among the musicians within the culture.

To explore these will require the observation of three separate sessions (approx. 2-3 hours in length each), in which the participants will be working with their compositions/remixes at [The College]. Please note that these will not be “extra” classes, but rather sessions in the normal curriculum that the students are enrolled in. The sessions will be recorded on video (possibly with the help of a research assistant), and examined in more detail by the researcher. At a later time, selected excerpts from the video recordings will be viewed with the participants (in a group or individually, according to the wishes of the participants), and the researcher will ask questions concerning the activity taking place on the video, as well as interview the participants individually about their views on music making.

General ethical guidelines and advice regarding research conducted within the area of human and social studies will be followed. Participation in the study is voluntary. The participants will be free to withdraw at any time, and their confidentiality will be protected at all stages of conducting and reporting the study. All participants have the right to withhold permission, as well as have any recording stopped or amended at any time. Only the participants, the researcher and the supervisor will see the recorded material. No characteristics of the schools or participants will be mentioned, and no actual names will be used in the final report. The research results will be reported in a non-judgemental way; that is to say, the quality and characteristics of the school and the participants will not be evaluated in the report.

The study is part of the researcher’s master’s dissertation of Applied Music Psychology at Roehampton University.

Participation in this study will require attendance in the studio and viewing/ interviewing sessions on the following dates:

Studio Session 1	(Date: TBC)	(Time: TBC)
Studio Session 2	(Date: TBC)	(Time: TBC)
Studio Session 3	(Date: TBC)	(Time: TBC)
Viewing/Interviewing Session	(Date: TBC)	(Time: TBC)

The participants will be asked to work, behave and talk *as normally as possible* during the course of observations and interviews.

There will be an oral debriefing after the final viewing/interviewing session. The aim of the debriefing is to discuss with the participants their experiences of the research and to answer to any questions the participants might have with regard to the study. Also, the participants are encouraged to contact the researcher or the supervisor of the study at any time during or after the course of the study with any questions they might have.

If you agree to take part in this study, please fill in the consent form below and return it to the researcher. Thank you in advance for your much-valued help!

With kind regards,

Heidi Partti

Contact Information:

MA Heidi Partti, The researcher
[email address]
[Name of the supervisor], The supervisor
[email address]

Appendix 5B: Participant Information Sheet (School)

2009 March, 13

Dear Faculty Member of [The College],

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter concerning a study, which will be conducted at your institution.

The aim of the study is to increase knowledge and understanding about the music related culture that has been enabled by digital technology, and the construction of music related identity among the musicians within the culture.

To explore these will require the observation of three separate sessions (approx. 2-3 hours in length each), in which the participants will be working with their compositions/remixes at [The College]. Please note that these will not be “extra” classes, but rather sessions in the normal curriculum that the students are enrolled in. The sessions will be recorded on video (possibly with the help of a research assistant), and examined in more detail by the researcher. At a later time, selected excerpts from the video recordings will be viewed with the participants (in a group or individually, according to the wishes of the participants), and the researcher will ask questions concerning the activity taking place on the video, as well as interview the participants individually about their views on music making.

General ethical guidelines and advice regarding research conducted within the area of human and social studies will be followed. Participation in the study is voluntary. The participants will be free to withdraw at any time, and their confidentiality will be protected at all stages of conducting and reporting the study. All participants have the right to withhold permission, as well as have any recording stopped or amended at any time. Only the participants, the researcher and the supervisor will see the recorded material. No characteristics of the schools or participants will be mentioned, and no actual names will be used in the final report. The research results will be reported in a non-judgemental way; that is to say, the quality and characteristics of the school and the participants will not be evaluated in the report.

The study is part of the researcher’s master’s dissertation of Applied Music Psychology at Roehampton University.

Participation in this study will require attendance in the studio and viewing/ interviewing sessions on the following dates:

Studio Session 1	(Date: TBC)	(Time: TBC)
Studio Session 2	(Date: TBC)	(Time: TBC)
Studio Session 3	(Date: TBC)	(Time: TBC)
Viewing/Interviewing Session	(Date: TBC)	(Time: TBC)

The participants will be asked to work, behave and talk *as normally as possible* during the course of observations and interviews.

There will be an oral debriefing after the final viewing/interviewing session. The aim of the debriefing is to discuss with the participants their experiences of the research and to answer to any questions the participants might have with regard to the study. Also, the participants are encouraged to contact the researcher or the supervisor of the study at any time during or after the course of the study with any questions they might have.

If you agree to have the study conducted at [The College], please fill in the consent form below and return it to the researcher. Thank you in advance for your much-valued help!

With kind regards,

Heidi Partti

Contact Information:

MA Heidi Partti, The researcher
[email address]
[Name of the supervisor], The supervisor
[email address]

Appendix 5C: Informed Consent Form (Students)

Please tick to
confirm

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study.	
I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	
I agree to take part in the above research study.	

Name	Date	Signature
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If you would like a summary of the results of this study e-mailed to you in the summer of 2009, please print your email address below:

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Appendix 5D: Informed Consent Form (School)

Please tick to
confirm

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study.	
I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
I agree to take part in the above research study.	

Name	Date	Signature
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If you would like a summary of the results of this study e-mailed to you in the summer of 2009, please print your email address below:

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Appendix 5E: Interview Questions

This message was sent in March 23rd, 2011 with the title: "Voluntary participants for a study on OBY"

Dear [...],

I hope you have noticed a message I sent to the Opera by You community on Monday, March the 21st. In the message I explained that I am a doctoral student at Sibelius Academy in Finland, and Opera by You is one of the cases of my in-progress doctoral dissertation (more about my research: http://muka.siba.fi/en/studies/doctoral_studies/heidi_partti/).

I am now looking for *voluntary participants* of the OBY community to answer to some questions regarding their personal experiences in being part of this kind of collaborative composing project.

I have noticed that you are one of the active composers of the Free Will opera, and I would be interested in asking some questions regarding your participation in the project. Naturally, participation in the study is *voluntary*, and you will be *free to withdraw* at any time. If you choose to participate by answering my questions, your *confidentiality will be protected* as well as possible at all stages of conducting and reporting the study. General ethical guidelines and advice regarding research conducted within the area of human and social studies will be followed in conducting this study. No actual names of the participants will be used in the final report(s). The research results will be reported in a non-judgemental way; that is to say, the quality and characteristics of the participants will not be evaluated in the report(s). This study is a part of the on-going Opera by You Research Project in the Department of Music Education at Sibelius Academy, Finland (more about the project: <http://muka.siba.fi/en/research/projects/#operabyyou>).

If you are interested in participating in the study, could you please drop me a line to answer the questions below. I might come back to you with some more questions at a later stage. Again, you are completely free to not to answer them, although your help would be greatly appreciated. If you choose to not to participate in the study, you don't need to do anything. In that case I wish you all the best with this opera and all other creative projects you might be involved with.

However, if you choose to participate in the study, here are the questions I would like you to reflect on:

- 1) Why did you choose to participate in the Opera by You project (what inspired/interested you; what did you hope to receive by participating)?
- 2) Have you had any musical training (e.g. lessons in playing an instrument, or in composing, music theory...)? If yes, please elaborate: what did you study, where and for how long?
- 3) Do you have previous experiences on composing together with other people? If yes, please elaborate: where and how did these projects take place?
- 4) Has composing the opera in the Opera by You community been what you expected it to be: in which ways yes, in which ways no? Has something in particular taken you by surprise?

Please send the answers to me either by email [email address] or by answering this message. Also, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions concerning the study.

Thank you very much for your time!

With kind regards,
Heidi Partti,
Sibelius Academy, Finland
email: [email address]

Appendix 5F: Participant Debriefing Sheet

Thank you very much for participating in this study. The aim of this project is to improve our understanding of the music related culture that has been enabled by digital technology, and the construction of music related identity among the musicians within the culture. Thus far, only minor attention has been paid by researchers to digital technology enabled music making, so your contribution to this study has been crucial.

The study addresses the important, yet almost completely neglected questions of the local and global aspects of music making/learning and identity construction. A deeper knowledge and understanding of these questions can be argued to provide vital new information, needed to revise music educators' assumptions and understandings concerning where and by which means people become musically educated. This will consequently prove invaluable in planning and executing ever more successful, versatile and ethical practices of music education.

The next step of this study is to analyze the data. The results will be made available to you if you included your address on the consent form that you signed.

You may keep this page along with the description of the study information, and if you have more questions later, please feel free to contact Heidi Partti, [email address].

