



Reflective Practice International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives

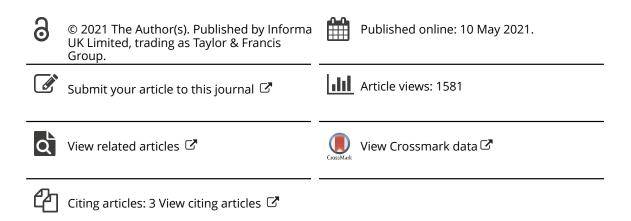
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Promoting interconnections between reflective practice and collective creativity in higher arts education: the potential of engaging with a reflective matrix

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ABSTRACT

Reflective practice has long been understood to be integral to the arts, but has predominantly been conceptualised in terms of tacit or individual activity. Identifying the need to reimagine and deepen reflective practice in higher arts education as explicit, collaborative, and integrally connected to artistic practice, this article explores the potential of a reflective matrix focused on ensemble practices, teamwork and collaborative learning in the arts for promoting interconnections between reflective practice and collective creativities. The article reports on a collaborative research approach based on in-depth interviews with 12 professors and lecturers of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts from the University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland that were analysed in stages using the reflective matrix. The results demonstrate how working with the matrix provided opportunities for extending understandings of ensemble practices and particularly of the collective creativities within them. Insights gained include the ways in which our iterative and dialogic way of engaging with the matrix challenged our initial expectations and deepened our understandings of two professional dilemmas: engaging with an audience and navigating correctness. The article concludes by attending to the implications of our approach for both research and practice in higher arts education.

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Audience: collaboration: ensemble; errors; higher arts education; reflection; reflective practice

Reflective practice has been recognised as a critical dimension of practical, embodied professional disciplines such as the arts, law, medicine, and teaching, at least since the seminal work of Schön (1983). Reflection concerns thinking about practice before (reflection-for-action), during (-in-action) and after (-on-action) it takes place. It draws from both experience and professional knowledge to support informed practice and 'transcend routine or habitualised actions' (Thompson & Pascal, 2012, p. 319). Reflective practice is essential both for initial expertise development and for maintaining and enhancing expertise in the flux of real-world practice (Billett et al., 2014; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2015; Dent et al., 2016; Sugrue & Solbrekke, 2011). It is therefore important in higher education for supporting employability, critical awareness, and expanding professionalism (Boud et al., 1985; Coulson & Harvey, 2013). However, the development of reflective practice in higher arts education (henceforth HAE) has been a contested

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process in the last thirty years (Alix et al., 2010; Tregear et al., 2016). While the teaching of reflective practice requires engaging in explicit cognitive reflection, this has not always been welcomed in HAE where some students and teachers have considered it antithetical to practical learning and the real work of making art (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020; Guillaumier, 2016). This may be because explicit reflection has often been framed as assessed reflective writing, which may feel disconnected from the embodied and non-verbal dimensions of making and reflecting on art. With this in mind we sought to contribute to reimagining and deepening reflective practice in HAE by developing meaningful processes more integrally connected to artistic practices themselves. We did so based on two starting points.

First, strengthening reflective practice may support artists in engaging with the rapid change and unpredictability characterizing contemporary contexts. This has become even more evident through artists' challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic. As highlighted in recent literature (e.g. Bennett & Hannan, 2010; Guillaumier, 2016), reflective practice aimed only at developing high level artistic expertise within an established domain, may not sufficiently prepare artists to sustain successful careers. Reflective practice that encompasses emerging (societal) needs and opportunities (Gielen & De Bruyne, 2009; Westerlund & Gaunt, in press), however, may help artists continually refresh their practices and career trajectories in ways that embrace complex interdisciplinary possibilities, professional dilemmas and ethical concerns (Barnett, 2008; Gale & Molla, 2016). While critically reflective practice can support artists doing so in ways aligned with their values (Thompson & Pascal, 2012), paradigm reflection may even emerge and contribute to evolving the purpose and goals of the systems in ways that better fit our changing world (Sloboda, 2011). Such fundamental rethinking may even become 'the stuff of high creativity, the setting of new trends, the reconceptualisation of the field or the activity' (Sloboda, 2011, p. 13).

Second, ensembles and teamwork are vital to contemporary artistic practice (Gaunt & Treacy, 2020; Hakkarainen, 2013). Theorisations of creativity have shifted from conceptualisations of individual genius and insight to dialogic and interpersonal elements (Burnard, 2012; Cook, 2017; Sawyer, 2003) and the importance of group processes and communities of practice (Barrett, 2014; Hakkarainen, 2013). Leaning on Sawyer, Hakkarainen (2013) describes 'collective creativity' as 'a temporally distributed process in which novelty and innovation emerge collaboratively through the dynamic and fluid developmental processes (Sawyer, 2005)' (Hakkarainen, 2013, p. 20). As artistic ensembles diversify and evolve, collective creativities increasingly extend beyond familiar domains and across disciplines and situations. Such novel opportunities may lead artists outside their comfort zones and to collaborations where they lack a common language. Consequently, an imperative exists not only for artists to strengthen their individual reflective practice, but also to develop meaningful reflective practices for ensemble contexts (Paavola et al., 2004). Cultivating explicit and collaborative reflection as part of ensemble work in HAE could therefore open pathways for students to solve multi-layered problems and maximise collective creativities, thereby contributing to students' abilities to evolve a lifelong career.

Considering these starting points, we developed a reflective matrix (see Figure 1) aimed at supporting reflective practice by structuring reflection while connecting to

1. Purnose and vision

Maintaining tradition (artistically/socially) <--> Creating something new (artistically/socially)

Focus on product and performance values <--> Focus on process and learning/development values

Planned goals <--> Emergent goals

Individual goals/motivation <==> Shared goals/motivation

Short term goals <--> Long term goals

2. Resources: People, materials, working structure, and context

Duo <--> Large ensemble with conductor/director People from one discipline, culture, ability level <--> People from diverse disciplines, cultures, ability levels People coming together for the first time in one-off sessions <--> People working together regularly over years Working from notation (score/text etc.) <--> Composing, improvising, making/devising Existing skills and predetermined/familiar working structures <--> Emergent skills and working structures Familiar contexts and ways of engaging with them <--> New contexts and ways of engaging with them

3. Leadership

Single authoritative leader <--> Fluid distributed leadership Coordinating solo contributions and individual expression <--> Facilitating collective voices and collaborative making Avoiding conflict <--> Embracing conflict and its creative possibilities Hierarchy dependent on perceived talent <--> Democracy Managing familiar practices and established abilities <---> Managing new processes and risks outside comfort zones

4. Qualities of interaction

Disconnection and fear of others <--> Trust, mutual respect, intimacy, and shared vulnerability Surface listening, one-way transmission of ideas <--> Embodied listening and attunement, mutual learning Power dynamics. feedback, and reflection restrict the creative process <--> Power dynamics. feedback, and reflection facilitate the creative process

Figure 1. A reflective matrix for ensemble practices in the arts (Gaunt & Treacy, 2020).

practitioner experience. The matrix was developed through critical analysis of literature on ensemble practices and teamwork in dance, music, theatre, and visual fine arts (Gaunt & Treacy, 2020). Its four overarching issues (Purpose and vision; Resources; Leadership; and Qualities of interaction) each comprise three to six continua, which emphasize the diverse possibilities within ensemble practices. This article reports on a collaborative research approach designed to explore the potential of engaging with this matrix to promote interconnections between reflective practice and collective creativities. Following this introduction, the article presents the methodology. The findings then illuminate the nature of insights into ensemble practices afforded by our approach, focussing on ways it challenged our expectations and deepened our understandings of two professional dilemmas. The discussion attends to implications of our approach for reflective practice in HAE.

Methodology

This section describes our methodology and how we engaged in collaborative research as an 'evolving, emergent, and iterative' process of 'collaboratively construct[ing] meaning' (Paulus et al., 2008, p. 226, emphasis original).

Empirical material

Twelve 45- to 105-minute semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) were conducted with University of the Arts Helsinki professors and lecturers recommended by a university steering group based on their skills and experience working with ensembles

in HAE. Their disciplines and pseudonyms are dance (Hanna, Sara), music (Daniel, Eva, Johan, Julia, Matti, Peter), theatre (Karl), and visual arts (Aaron, Katja, Rasmus). Interviews were used to stimulate reflection (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) on interviewees' artistic practices, and focussed on their perceptions and understandings of teamwork and collaborative learning within ensemble processes. To allow unexpected themes to emerge, interviewees were not presented with the reflective matrix – the draft of which was being finalised at the time – however interviews were guided by its four overarching issues. Interviewers aimed to uncover implicit knowledge through a co-constructive conversational approach, and to test contradictions and tensions that arose between elements of the matrix's continua. Analysis thus already began in part during the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The English (n = 8) and Finnish (n = 4) interviews were transcribed by an outside firm and transcripts were checked by interviewees. Finnish transcripts were then translated to English.

Analysis

Analysis of the interview material occurred in three stages characterised by deepening engagement with both the reflective matrix and with 'dialogic, collaborative ... meaning making' (Paulus et al., 2008, p. 240). Stage one involved iterative thematic coding using categories developed and revised while devising the matrix and its continua. Interviews were coded independently, and the research team met periodically to refine and clarify the codes and ensure intercoder agreement. In stage two, interviewees' artistic practices were mapped against a draft of the matrix independently before a preliminary analysis was collaboratively written organized by its four overarching issues and attending to all continua. Research team dialogue emerging from this analysis confirmed the relevance of the continua and refined the matrix toward its published form (Gaunt & Treacy, 2020). Additionally, our recognition of the impossibility of presenting the extensive analysis in one article stimulated a shift in our engagement with the matrix and collaborative meaning making.

In stage three we engaged in reflexive interpretation (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Researcher dialogue stimulated reflexivity, both regarding 'critical questioning and deeper debate around taken-for-granted issues that have potential moral and ethical implications' (Cunliffe, 2016, p. 745) and regarding 'the way different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written' (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p. 9). Researcher dialogue uncovered cross-cutting themes not explicitly appearing in the matrix but arising through the dynamic interaction between continua, and we chose one for further exploration: collective creativities. The interview transcripts and preliminary analysis were then re-read and re-coded using the matrix to analyse the interviewees' descriptions of collective creativities. This independent work stimulated further researcher dialogue regarding how the process had challenged our initial expectations and illuminated professional dilemmas.

Researcher position

Both authors are musicians, music education researchers, and teachers in HAE, thus the research process was inevitably coloured by our professional experiences. Our insider

perspectives fostered in-depth understanding of the importance and challenges of reflective practice for professional training and for artists, and provided a testbed for ways the matrix might be developed and used constructively as a reflective tool in HAE. The diverse perspectives of interviewees closer to our artistic experiences and of those from less familiar disciplines stimulated a powerful reflective process on our perceptions and personal experiences of ensemble work.

Ethical issues

This research received ethical approval from the University of the Arts Helsinki, and all interviewees gave informed consent. Reporting was undertaken with awareness of the challenges the small number of professors and lecturers in the university poses to maintaining anonymity.

Insights from collaborative research with the reflective matrix

Our collaborative research approach using the reflective matrix extended our understandings of collective creativities in ensemble practices as practitioners and researchers. In this section we illustrate the nature of insights gained from this approach by first sharing ways it challenged some of our initial expectations and then focussing on two professional dilemmas.

Challenging expectations about collective creativities

Collaborative research with the matrix emphasised how collective creativities can be understood from multiple perspectives. Notably, this challenged some of the beliefs and expectations we had developed through our artistic experiences. We began, for example, expecting collective creativities to be most relevant for those creating something new. Collective creativities, however, were integral across the entire continuum of practices, from creating something new, to using existing works as 'an archive' or 'tradition' to be 'enlivened' (Katja) and reimagined into new works, and when maintaining tradition. Regarding the latter, collective creativities were emphasised for 'decid[ing] what's best for the purpose of the interpretation' (Matti) of scores, scripts or choreographies. Chamber musician Matti described how the ideas contributed by four individuals in a string quartet interact and expand 'in an exponential way.' Even when working with 'highly regulated material' theatre practitioner Karl asserted the ensemble's collective creativities can be engaged through centring the work rather than the 'makers' and together attending to both the needs of the work and 'whatever this shared process needs to remain ... nourishing and motivating and exciting' (Karl).

Another challenged expectation was that collective creativities are only relevant for those working in ensembles. Those in solitary disciplines, however, described collective creativities as enabling feedback and reflection to facilitate the creative process and nurture individual outcomes. This was apparent in the visual artists' descriptions of their ways of working together, and in the benefits Katja expressed from working with people from different disciplines who offer fresh ideas, tools, and approaches. Ensemble working was valued for its social dimensions of peer support and belonging. Katja, for example, emphasised the opportunity for 'really being ... in contact':

that people feel that they are not all separate from each other all the time that other people exist, that other people are important ... the feeling that I'm belonging somewhere. And I think it itself is somehow important at least to visual artists who are quite individual and also quite, not necessarily people who easily connect with other people.

Similarly, dancer and choreographer Hanna expressed how doctoral students are often alone in the field and how 'emotionally important' it is for them to 'have peers ... in a similar situation' with whom to discuss their questions, artistic processes, and work.

Finally, our expectation that ensemble members would have similar goals and motivations for engaging in collective creativities was challenged. This was perhaps foreseeable in situations where large numbers of people from different disciplines collaborate. In opera, for instance, Julia described how the person 'rehearsing lines ... doesn't necessarily feel that [s/he is] in an ensemble with the person sitting behind the lights' unless there is 'verbalised active sharing'. Dissimilarities between those in closely aligned disciplines, however, were more surprising. Performers of classical music, orchestral conductor Johan and chamber musician Matti, described substantially different goals and motivations: Johan stated 'the nature of [orchestral] work is so clear – simply to play together and play correctly' while Matti emphasised a shared passion for the repertoire being performed, stating 'the purpose is that we get together and we get deep in the love or the wisdom of what the piece is about.' The artistic research group Katja established offers an example of diverse concurrent motivations within one ensemble. These 'experimental ... collaborative workshops' offered a solution for navigating her motivations to both meet the aims articulated for her students and to feed her artistic voice, giving her 'enough time to teach and do [her] artistic work.' While creative processes often continued even with diverging motivations, some instances of discord resulted that challenged artistic outputs. Speaking of her improvising dance ensemble, Hanna recalled 'a moment when someone tried to choreograph something and that created a conflict with some of us.' The breadth of possibilities in individual goals and motivations within ensemble practices underlines the need for more explicit reflection amongst ensemble members, both to avoid potential conflict and to nurture collective creativities.

Deepening understandings of professional dilemmas in collective creativities

Collaborative research with the matrix also illuminated a number of professional dilemmas central to collective creativities. Two of these, engaging with an audience and navigating correctness, are explored here.

Engaging with an audience

Diverse and changing ways of thinking about audiences and how interactions between artists and audiences can be a site for collective creativities were expressed by interviewees. Contrasting views existed on the degree to which the audience was considered during the creative process. For some, the audience was seen as an important productive constraint. This positioning was particularly evident in artistic ensemble practices focussed on devising new works. Theatre practitioner Karl, for example, emphasised how considering the experiences of and relationship with the audience can counter the potential 'pitfall' of excitement and overflow of creativity that can result in 'masses of material' and risk becoming 'a kind of introverted piece that panders to one's own pleasure, satisfaction, and creativity, but doesn't account for, make sense to, or engage the audience.' Folk musician Peter similarly emphasised finding ways to 'create music that really feels good to the ensemble and communicates something to an audience.'

In some practices, however, not considering the audience was seen to enable art. Jazz musician Daniel pointed to the importance of artists being able to follow artistic impulses in an unfettered way, even associating this with the essence of art. He described bebop as

the first style of music . . . where musicians kind of decided that now it's just for the music, it's for us. This is not gonna be even for the audience anymore, we don't care if anybody likes this or not. This is the way we wanna play. So I would say that in the 40s, jazz really became an art form, instead of being some kind of entertainment or whatever.

In other practices, the audience was directly engaged in devising new works. Such processes were most common amongst the visual artists and often connected to the social and political purposes of art. Aaron, for example, described the 'contact and cowork' of inhabitants of a 'problematic block of houses' who transformed their stairways with portraits. This aspect of collective creativities is particularly important in our contemporary world, where social responsibility and impact are increasingly foregrounded in the work of artists.

In the moment of performance, two-way communication and interaction with the audience was seen to enable collective creativities different to those possible during rehearsals or devising processes. Orchestral conductor Johan, similar to Peter above, stressed communicating with the audience, and the 'greatness of the reward' that comes from interacting with them and learning to read their reactions. Audience feedback was even described by Chamber musician Matti as enhancing collective creativity as the ensemble 'start[s] to trust each other more and do more things and go deeper into the music.' Attention to audience reactions was equally important in practices physically blurring the boundaries between the performers and the audience, such as with new works devised by visual artist Rasmus or choreographer Sara. According to Rasmus, playing with these boundaries enabled collective creativity and provoked tensions or an 'uncertain feeling' associated with straying too far away from the expected rituals of performance.

Navigating correctness

Diverse perspectives were also expressed regarding correctness and the tensions involved in navigating correctness. Accuracy in reproduction was of notable concern in practices centred on performing precisely notated musical scores, scripted works for theatre, and pre-choreographed dance. In these practices the desire for accuracy was frequently connected to the desire to serve the score by remaining as loyal as possible to what was received from the composer, author, or choreographer. The extensive training of classical musicians combined with the great attention given to maintaining accurate notation also appeared to free musicians from extensive rehearsal periods. Johan stated, 'there is just a once-over and then the concert' and Matti concurred, 'we play only once through and it's as good as it gets.' Tensions surrounding the desire for accuracy, particularly in relation to creativity, were evident in the interviews. On the one hand, attention to accuracy was considered a source of creativity. Dancer Sara described how learning a choreography well allowed the dancers to 'begin to do it in our own way So, it didn't feel restrictive.' Matti – in contrast to his statement above – similarly recalled how intense attention to detail during chamber orchestra rehearsals enabled creativity and the 'freedom to take the intuition of the moment' during concerts: 'we didn't do anything that we planned ... we improvised everything, because we knew all types of possibilities we just forgot where we were and we were just doing something completely new.'

On the other hand, attention to accuracy was described as potentially inhibiting artistic expression and creative freedom. Within a recording process this was described by both Johan and Matti as limiting, with Johan explaining that it inhibits in-the-moment 'feeling-[s] of surpassing oneself.' Matti also observed that by 'making it perfect' recordings distort the expectations of performers and audiences alike resulting in 'people go[ing] to concerts and ... listen[ing] for mistakes ... instead of listening for the secrets.' Expectations of correctness even appeared to change in relation to context. Matti recalled a performance by one master in which the audience was 'mesmerized, hypnotized or something ... [the master] was not acting, he was living so strongly something that he took the whole space.' While this was 'correct' and remarkable for the live performance, upon later hearing the concert recording, Matti noted 'there was not one tone which was near to the right one ... from the tape it was really bad playing.'

Both opera practitioner Julia and theatre practitioner Karl cautioned that attention to mistakes – defined by Karl as things '[not] go[ing] exactly as written in the score' – risks diverting practitioners' focus and energy and may even elicit feelings of fear. Such feelings are not limited to practices focused on accuracy in reproduction, however. Even in practices like jazz that rely less on detailed notation and involve improvised performance, Daniel noted how 'playing [things] right' and avoiding 'mistakes' is strongly connected to one's professional status and employability. Due to 'really heavy competition,' for example, he said 'when you play music ... you have to prove yourself somehow. You have to show that you can play in order to ... earn your credentials.' Still, Julia warned 'If people are afraid of making mistakes they won't find anything new.'

A common perspective among interviewees was that mistakes are opportunities and vital for creativity. Mistakes were described as a way to potentially 'find something that you didn't expect' (Katja) and 'a catalyst for the creation of something new' (Karl). For some, mistakes were even required to break into new territory and creativity was seen as something fundamentally disruptive. Visual artist Rasmus described how 'in a fine arts university we learn the rules, but then we presume that the art of the future is something other than following those rules. That it's something more'. Thus, some artists choose to paint 'badly on purpose constantly doing things distastefully' (Rasmus).

Notions of correctness were also tied to shared, often implicit, cultural understandings surrounding particular artistic practices, repertoire, and nuances of style, which can be simultaneously liberating and limiting. Matti described the immediate ease facilitated by playing with those who share the 'same kind of background' and thus 'way of thinking' and 'articulation'. He explained that such shared cultural understandings are 'educated in

your blood' so that it is 'impossible to make a concert' if 'somebody plays in a completely different style' and 'doesn't change' to match the others. By contrast, folk musician Peter emphasised ensemble processes that value and embrace individuality and diversity. When devising new works he identified the need for,

an environment where the ensemble is free to really push themselves into new directions, new areas, into unsafe territory and really explore all the possibilities there before it starts to define what the music is going to ultimately sound like.

Implications for reflective practice in higher arts education

We began this study with the aim of exploring the potential of engaging with the reflective matrix to promote interconnections between reflective practice and collective creativities in HAE. While we have limited our use of the matrix to supporting a collaborative research process, the number and nature of insights gained from doing so suggests the matrix may be a rich resource, not only for researchers, but also for teachers and students in HAE.

For researchers

While our research approach offers just one example of working with the matrix, it draws attention to qualities of the matrix and ways of engaging with it that promote reflective practice, potentially inspiring the development of further reflective tools. The matrix provided a clear and explicit framework for structuring reflection that could be used in multiple ways. The four overarching issues offered an entry point into the reflective process, while the continua drew attention to a breadth and depth of details, and thus a range of potential focal points. Additionally, the use of continua emphasised the dynamic nature of the themes within them, and the interconnections and tensions they hold with each other. This promoted both familiar and new ways of thinking of artistic practices. As the insights presented above illustrate, the matrix thus facilitated examining the nuances of diverse ensemble practices, through challenging assumptions and deepening awareness and understanding of these practices. The reflexivity stimulated by this process has potential for engaging in the paradigm reflection (Sloboda, 2011) needed in contemporary societies.

Our iterative and dialogic way of engaging with the matrix involved spiralling between the matrix, the interview material, and our experiences. While the matrix promoted explicit reflection, this way of engaging with it also required 'thinking [to be] made explicit in a way that is difficult to replicate as a single researcher' (Paulus et al., 2008, p. 236). Furthermore, engaging with the matrix to analyse the artistic practices of others stimulated ever deepening reflection and reflexivity – both integral to 'a well-developed approach to reflective practice' (Thompson & Pascal, 2012, p. 320) – and we found ourselves reflecting-on-action regarding our past experiences and -for-action in order to understand more deeply which past artistic practices had best aligned with our professional values and aspirations and why. This resulted in abundant insights also on issues not explicitly appearing in the matrix but arising through interactions between continua. We thus experienced collaborative research with the matrix as a collective creativity close to the lived experience of artistic practice. Just as theatre practitioner Karl identified the risks related to generating masses of material in creative processes, our insights were far too many to report in one article. The matrix thus supported us in making informed choices about what to report, and in allowing ourselves to explore the significance of specific areas of practice deeply rather than feeling the need to attend to the matrix's entirety.

For teachers and students

Our experiences as musicians and teachers in HAE suggest that the qualities of the matrix identified above hold potential for developing more meaningful reflective practice with both teachers and students in HAE. This could be achieved through using the matrix as we did to facilitate reflective dialogue, or through a wider range of reflective practices including more traditional individual written reflection. Earlier research has highlighted the benefits of reflective frameworks in higher education for supporting students in collating and structuring their ideas (e.g. Roberts et al., 2021) and this was a strength of the matrix in our research process. Therefore, we see the matrix as having potential for responding to the call for 'more systematic forms of reflective activity' in the arts (Burnard, 2006, p. 10) and for structuring the teaching and learning of reflection.

One systematic form of reflective activity could be mapping artistic practices against the matrix as we did. Such mapping could offer a way of supporting HAE teachers and students in 'heighten-[ing] their awareness of self, practice and context' (Guillaumier, 2016, p. 355) as they develop more explicit reflection. As already mentioned, this is of particular importance as so much of artistic practice is tacit and embodied, with reflection tending to be implicit and in-action (Schön, 1983). Through mapping their artistic practices, teachers could examine their artistic expertise and the pedagogical traditions from which they come, which could lead to a broadening of pedagogical approaches for more effectively teaching diverse students. Encouraging students to map their artistic practices on the matrix – individually or collaboratively, formally or informally, and in written or oral form – could develop students' understandings of nuanced elements of their practice and the skills involved. Moreover, when a problem or question arises, the matrix may help students in gathering information, investigating, and imagining solutions, all skills Guillaumier (2016) identifies as integral to reflection. The matrix could thus support students in generating new possibilities of who they are and wish to become as artists.

These potentials are equally relevant to mapping artistic practices on the matrix as a form of collaborative reflective dialogue in ensembles. Such reflective practice could support individuals in understanding and navigating new and unfamiliar ensembles and artistic, social and cultural contexts. This is significant, for example, recalling Matti's description above of the challenges of preparing a concert with those from different backgrounds. Such reflective practice could also support ensembles in negotiating the varied preconceptions individuals bring to both familiar and unfamiliar contexts, and may inform choices when designing appropriate working structures and responding to the demands of, for instance, different forms of performance, audience interaction, interdisciplinarity, and mixed media (e.g. live and digital) working. In particular, the matrix may offer a common vocabulary for artists engaged in interdisciplinary work, and a way of locating tensions and uncovering unconscious bias – a key issue in addressing diversity and equality issues in the professional arts industries. Beyond supporting teamwork in

ensembles, the reflective matrix could also facilitate learning processes that develop reflective practice as part of collective creativities (Hakkarainen, 2013). As creativity 'is rooted in reflection' (Guillaumier, 2016, p. 356) and lies 'in shared knowledge practices cultivated by ... knowledge communities' (Hakkarainen, 2013, p. 19), we see collaborative reflective dialogue as potentially driving creativity and generating new knowledge and ensemble practices, for example, through imagining more innovative and evolved relationships with audiences.

Interconnections between reflective practice and collective creativity are particularly important for supporting teachers and students in expanding their professionalism for rapidly changing and unpredictable contemporary contexts (Gale & Molla, 2016). Gale and Molla (2016) connect reflection to professionalism to propose four types of professional: effective, reflective, enquiring, and transformative. Reflecting with the matrix could thus support expanding professionalism beyond effective and reflective types, to professionals who also produce knowledge and are reflexive and committed to change. Such reflective and reflexive work could support the navigation of professional dilemmas – for instance, the diversity of perspectives on correctness and the related tensions illustrated above – and contribute to more professionally responsible (Sugrue & Solbrekke, 2011) artistic practices that also incorporate socially-engaged objectives. Moreover, a commitment to change in such reflective and reflexive work could also support the paradigm reflection required by the current pace of sociocultural change (Sloboda, 2011). As deep paradigmatic reflection needs to be sustained and structured, however, reaching this potential will require ways of working with the matrix that are embedded in practice rather than "set apart" from the daily work' (Sloboda, 2011, p. 15).

Conclusion

The development of the reflective matrix was inspired by a search for more meaningful reflective practices in HAE. As presented in this article, our initial exploration suggests the matrix holds potential for both research and practice. Contrary to the potential irrelevance of individual reflective essays (Guillaumier, 2016), our collaborative research process was characterised by engaged conversations about our practices and those of the interviewees, which facilitated our collective creativities as we reported on the project. The matrix may therefore promote a turn towards a contemporary reflective practice that is embedded within the artistic process itself rather than a 'decoupled ... ensuing activity' (Georgii-Hemming et al., 2020, p. 249), involves both individual and dialogic elements, and is itself collective creativity. Our exploration, however, represents only a beginning in the search for more powerful, relevant methodologies and ways of understanding and evolving reflective practice in HAE and equally for professional artists. As our experience demonstrates that applying the matrix is not necessarily straightforward, we contend its use in HAE needs to be developed and adapted to the particular needs of each context and diverse group of students.

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Helena Gaunt is Principal of the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama (RWCMD) and an oboist. She sits on the Council of the Royal Philharmonic Society, and has a leading role for the European Association of Conservatoires' major project Strengthening Music in Society. Major publications including Musicians in the Making: Pathways to Creative Performance (2017) co-edited with Professor John Rink and Professor Aaron Williamon, and Collaborative Learning in Higher Music Education (2013) co-edited with Professor Heidi Westerlund. A further edited collection on Expanding Professionalism in Music and the Arts is in press with Routledge. Helena is a National Teaching Fellow (2009) and Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

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