

# Shaped by the Sea

## Artistic Identity and the Process of Leadership and Collaboration in a Transcultural Context

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# 1 Project Overview

## 1.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to document and analyse the process of working together with a diverse group of musicians from different cultural and musical backgrounds, with the aim of researching the art of leadership and collaboration in a trans-cultural context.

Collaboration in this context is defined as a process in which artists work together equally to exchange ideas and create new work, under the guidance of a leader. I, Nathan Riki Thomson was the project leader, facilitating the collaboration through the vehicle of my own compositions. The participants included musicians from Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Finland and Wales. The project was implemented in three phases, and resulted in a series of concerts and workshops in Finland and the UK, as well as a CD release.

Although the practical outcomes of the project have been documented and are included as part of this thesis, the main focus of this paper is to analyse the process of working together, with an emphasis on observing the group dynamic and interaction between musicians, as well as reflecting on the techniques used to facilitate the collaboration, and the essential skills required to make it a success. This collaboration forms the basis of practice led research into working methods involving musicians from more than one cultural background and musical tradition. A second area of focus is on the search for my own artistic identity, with reflections of my cultural heritage, homeland, ancestry, travels, migration and transcultural arts practice.



I refer to the term transcultural based on the following description by Kors and Schippers:

- **Monocultural** (with a single, dominant cultural reference)
- **Intercultural** (a voluntary meeting of cultures with a focus on product)
- **Cultural diversity** (a neutral indication for the presence of more than one culture in any given situation)
- **Multicultural** (in its most general use, this concept has a meaning more akin to cultural diversity. More specifically, it can refer to an approach to cultural diversity where various cultures exist together without much contact between them, as distinct from...)
- **Transcultural** (a total merging of content and underlying values)

(Kors, N., Saraber, L., Schippers, H., 2003:6)

As a musician, composer and workshop leader, I have been involved in transcultural arts practice in different forms over the past 17 years. Although this work is not new to me the process of defining my own artistic identity within this context, as well as identifying effective leadership and collaborative skills is an ongoing process. This project has therefore been analysed as a case study within an ongoing process.

## **1.2 Structure of the Project**

The project comprised three interconnected phases:

### **Phase One: Initial Collaboration, March - May 2011**

This process began with a one-week artistic residency to develop the initial musical ideas. The residency took place at Dartington Hall in the UK, in April 2011. The following musicians were involved in the residency:

Adriano Adewale (Brazil), percussion  
Dylan Fowler (Wales), guitar  
Nia Lynn (UK), vocals  
Maurizio Velasierra (Colombia), Andean flutes  
Genevieve Wilkins (Australia), marimba / vibraphone  
Nathan R Thomson (Australia), double bass, flutes, kalimba

A two-day studio recording followed the residency at Assault and Battery Studios, London.

### **Phase Two: 2011 - 2012**

Establishing a new Helsinki based ensemble, which involved collaborating with a group of Finnish musicians to rework the musical material as well as to create new material.

### **Phase Three: March - May 2013**

Culminating collaboration between Australian, Brazilian, Finnish and Welsh musicians, leading to the CD release and tour in Finland and the UK.

The project participants for phase three were:

Adriano Adewale (Brazil), percussion  
Dylan Fowler (Wales), guitar / lap steel  
Mikko Hassinen (Finland), drums / electronics  
Ilkka Heinonen (Finland), jouhikko  
Kristiina Ilmonen (Finland), trad wind instruments  
Maija Kauhanen (Finland), harmonium, kantele, vocals  
Mari Kalkun (Estonia), vocals

Nia Lynn (Wales), vocals  
Nathan R Thomson (Australia), double bass, flutes, kalimba  
Nora Vaura (Finland), vocals  
Timo Väänänen (Finland), kantele / pyngyr

Phase three, project schedule:

- 4 - 6 March 2013, intensive collaboration with the Finnish musicians in Kallio Kuninkala, Finland.
- 8 - 10 April 2013, intensive collaboration between Finnish musicians and Brazilian musician Adriano Adewale in Kallio Kuninkala.
- 6 - 10 May 2013, intensive collaboration with full ensemble of Finnish, Welsh, Brazilian and Australian musicians in Kallio Kuninkala.

Tour Schedule 2013:

11.04. Adriano Adewale workshop, Sibelius Academy  
11.05. Concert Vuotalo, Helsinki  
13.05. Dylan Fowler, guitar lessons at Sibelius Academy  
16.05. Concert Black Box, Helsinki Music Centre  
20.05. Concert, The Forge, London  
21.05. Concert, Borough Theatre, Abergavenny, Wales  
23.05. Workshops, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London  
24.05. Concert St Ethelburgas, London

### **1.3 Research Questions and Approaches**

Research approaches have included documentation and analysis of the rehearsal process, photos, written observations, interviews, written feedback from participants and a studio recording, resulting in a CD. The culminating CD, entitled 'Shaped by the Sea', was recorded in London and Helsinki during the period between April 2011 - December 2013. It was released under the Sibelius Academy folk music department CD series, in May 2013.

For the purpose of this research I have chosen to focus on phase three of the collaborative process, which took place in Kallio Kuninkala and Helsinki from March to May 2013. As a leader, my aim was to create an environment that was conducive to effective and meaningful collaboration, where musicians felt able to contribute to the artistic process. I chose to lead the process strongly in terms of the artistic ideas, but to allow space by finding the right balance between composed and improvised material. I was interested in trying to create a framework where musicians from diverse backgrounds could work together on an equal level, establish a creative working environment and a meaningful connection between people, whilst maintaining my own strong artistic vision.

Through documenting the rehearsal process, I have tried to observe myself as a leader and reflect on the techniques used to facilitate the collaborative process, with the aim of identifying effective leadership techniques in this context. I have also analysed the ways in which the musicians have responded to this environment, with the aim of identifying essential skills needed for effective collaborations.

The focus of the artistic research was underpinned by the following questions:

How do musicians from diverse cultural and musical backgrounds find effective ways of working together that successfully result in

transcultural collaboration and the creation of new work? What are the most effective ways of leading / facilitating this process whilst maintaining one's own artistic identity?

Inherent within this question were other main areas of interest, including:

- How do I set up and facilitate the collaborative process?
- How does this structure affect the way musicians can contribute to the process?
- Do participants feel able to contribute and express themselves freely in this environment?
- Can unfamiliar musical approaches stimulate creativity?
- Which ways of working tend to produce interesting and integrated musical outcomes?
- What do participants learn? What are the experiences of the musicians taking part in the project?
- How do participants learn?
- What are the essential skills required by the musicians in order for the collaboration to be successful?
- Can I maintain my own artistic vision within this collaborative context, and does this context ultimately change or enhance my vision?

I kept these questions in mind throughout the project and have continued to reflect on them afterwards. It is clear that this is an ongoing process and whilst some of these questions have resulted in new insights, others remain open or only partly answered, to be further developed in the future.

## **2 Personal Artistic Identity**

### **2.1 My Background (Identity / Homeland / Migration)**

I am an Australian born musician and composer, and for many years I have been pondering questions of cultural identity and musical expression. As an Australian with European heritage, I was born into a culture, which from my perspective didn't seem to match the land. In other words, our traditions were borrowed or learned from the UK, but the land around us suggested other ways of living. Contrastingly, the Australian Aboriginal traditions and beliefs have existed for thousands of years and seem to be completely at one with the environment around them. Growing up in Australia I found myself admiring their connection to our land and the ancient musical traditions they upheld, and a part of me wished I were somehow connected to that musical culture as an Australian.

Given the troubled history of Australia and the fact that many Australians hail from mixed heritage, I have never felt that I belonged to one particular musical heritage. My ancestors were from Scotland, England and New Zealand, and I grew up on the Gold Coast, on the east coast of Australia. Many of the people around me also shared similar mixed heritage. In Australia I was trained as a European musician would be trained, and was taught music belonging to European traditions. This music originated from some distant land that I could not even imagine as a child, and although I found enjoyment in the music, I didn't really feel a deep connection to it. Even though I completed a classical degree at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music in Brisbane, I realized fairly early on during my studies that the western orchestral path was not right for me. Later jazz caught my interest, but I also wondered if that music was culturally connected to me in any way.

But what music should I play? What is 'my' music? What is the music of my culture? Are there any tunes, rhythms, instruments, or even musical ideas that belong to my cultural heritage? These are questions I have pondered for many years, and it wasn't until I started writing my own music and working with

improvisation that I began to feel like I was playing the music closest to me.

I lived in Australia until the age of 21, and since then have travelled extensively. After 'backpacking' for some time, I settled in Africa where I lived for 5 years, followed by 10 years in London and the past 2 years in Helsinki. Music has been the common thread connecting these diverse places, and it has been my vehicle for communication and expression. Through this project, I have begun to consolidate my experiences, by drawing on the influences, knowledge and inspiration gained from these travels. Since leaving Australia, and having had the opportunity of experiencing different parts of the world, I realise I have gone through three phases musically:

Phase One: being seduced by 'exotic' musical cultures and wishing I had somehow been born into them.

Phase Two: trying to learn as much as I could about these cultures and somehow get close to playing their music.

Phase Three: accepting that I may be inspired by these different cultures, but I will never be able to fully integrate into the culture or play the music in the same way as someone who had been born into that culture.

Reaching phase three has been somewhat liberating, and I now feel free to create my own music. I have realised that my cultural heritage is made up of many diverse elements, and the environment I grew up in, including the ocean, the bird song, the trees, the sun and the smell of the land, has shaped the music I make. I have also come to realise that a big part of my cultural heritage lies in the fact that I was born in an Aboriginal country. As Germaine Greer points out in her book *Whitefella Jump Up, The Shortest Way to Nationhood* (2004):

The common perception from within the country is that white Australian and black Australians are very different, but I for one am struck by the degree of influence exerted by Aboriginal people on the formation of the Australian character and way of life.

Australians cannot be confused with any other Commonwealth peoples; they behave differently from Canadians, South Africans and even New Zealanders. It is my contention, diffidently offered, that the Australian national character derives from the influence of the Aborigines whose dogged resistance to an imported and inappropriate culture has affected our culture more deeply than is usually recognized. From the beginning of colonization, the authorities' deepest fear was that the settlers would degenerate and go native. In many subtle and unexplored ways, they did just that. Indeed, they may already partake in more Aboriginality than they know.

Regardless of ones cultural heritage or up bringing, musicians have always borrowed from each other, and have been inspired by other musical traditions. This is a natural part of being an inquisitive musician and composer. As Juniper Hill states in her article about Finnish folk music, "*the folk music that served as national symbol was itself an amalgamation of a variety of cross-cultural influences...*" (Yearbook for Traditional Music, Vol. 39, 2007)

The musical starting points for this project are my own compositions. The pieces are inspired by my homeland of Australia and my parents' homeland of New Zealand, as well as five years spent living in Africa, various travels to distant shores and the past two years living in Helsinki. The compositions draw on memories from childhood, sounds that I grew up with, people I've met in my travels, experiences of encountering new cultures, bus rides in Africa, swimming in the sea, travelling by water, meeting my wife and the birth of my three sons.

In the end, even though I may not be able to identify my own cultural heritage in the traditional sense of the term, perhaps my music has in some form been

inherited from some combination of my diverse ancestry, intertwined with my upbringing, homeland and subsequent travels. As Christopher Small (1987) observes:

...nothing human is ever quite lost; no culture ever quite disappears but is transformed over and over again, so that every one of us carries within him or herself elements of who knows what cultures and societies, in shards and fragments, passed down from grandmothers to sleepless grandchildren, nursemaids to their charges, older children to younger, in snatches of old songs, garbled tales, odd words, expressions and proverbs, little personal rituals and superstitions (Small, C, 1987, p119).

## **2.2 Learning in a New Environment - Tacit Knowledge**

I lived in Tanzania for three years, and in Zambia for two years after that, working as a musician and workshop leader with mostly traditional musicians and dancers. When I look back at the musical material I learnt while I was there, in terms of actual melodies and rhythms, it is a relatively small amount. But the experience of working with those musicians, playing with them, listening to them, experiencing their culture and approaches to music, these experiences continue to inspire me in my musical life. Although I don't really play traditional music from Tanzania or Zambia, I am convinced that the way I play my own instruments, the way I compose, teach and think about music has been directly affected by my time in Africa. Some of the things I learnt there are impossible to describe in words and are not tangible. It could perhaps be described as tacit knowledge.

In 1994 I sat under a big tree outside Hukwe Ubi Zawose's house learning to play the traditional overtone flute (Wagogo filimbi) from his tribe. Zawose would show me the blowing technique and then disappear for a while, to attend to goats or children, or his elderly father. After some time he would reappear and play the beginning of a tune for me to learn, then disappear again. Some days he would sit under the tree with me making another instrument or having a chat with a visiting friend, all the time feeding me

small bits of musical information, but not saying very much. He would then suddenly pick up another flute and play with me, and before I knew it I was playing the tune. The inspirations I carry with me from these experiences are more to do with how Hukwe Zawose was as a person and musician, and less about the actual musical content.

I witnessed another very clear example of this during a visit to Gambia in 2001. It was my first encounter with the Wolof drumming tradition, which I found to be incredibly rhythmically complex. As a musician I was trying to analyze the way the rhythmic patterns were structured and how they locked together. I was attempting to break them down into manageable parts in order to understand them. I then noticed the small children, as young as three, sitting along side the drummers with plastic buckets, tin cans, whatever they could find. They were simply copying the drummers and trying to play along. They were watching their Father's hands and feeling the rhythms in real time, gradually absorbing the rhythms like a language.

I have observed my own children doing the same thing with language. Hearing only Finnish from their Mother and only English from their Father, they have naturally absorbed the languages without analyzing them. The learning happens informally and completely naturally. These examples are perhaps the purest form of apprenticeships, and tacit knowledge. This model is well established in many musical cultures and I believe this way of learning is extremely valuable for us to adopt as musicians in the west, both in the context of developing ourselves as musicians, as well as a technique for teaching others.

Peter Renshaw speaks of tacit knowledge here in his report as a member of the research group Lectorate:

Tacit knowledge lies at the heart of human relationships and experiential learning. Like practical knowledge, it is rooted in action, and in commitment and involvement in a specific context. Although it is often

embedded in collaborative work that enjoys a shared history, values and forms of understanding, tacit knowledge has a personal quality that makes it impossible to formalise and describe discursively. Perhaps one of the earliest exponents of tacit knowledge was the philosopher Michael Polanyi (1966) who, in his book *The Tacit Dimension*, opens his analysis of knowledge by claiming that “we can know more than we can tell” (p. 4). (Renshaw, P. 2009, page 35)

It seems to me that tacit knowledge is a crucial part of intercultural understanding and transcultural arts practice. The subtle art of discovering, and coming to know something together is key. If the environment is right, this often happens without much analysis or verbalization of how to work together - it is caught rather than taught.

### **2.3 Encounters with Other Musical Cultures**

When I first met and heard the music of my Tanzanian teacher Hukwe Zawose, my initial reaction was that I wanted to become an ‘insider’, to completely integrate myself into his culture and learn to play his music. I began studying Swahili, learning two of the traditional instruments from his tribe and eating his food, even though I was vegetarian at the time! These things allowed me to get closer to Zawose and his traditions, and indeed built trust and friendship. I felt like I was accepted and had access to a tradition in the purest form. After some time, however, I realized that unless I dedicated the rest of my life to this path I would never really be able to play the music or to live like the Wagogo people. I also came to understand that although I had built trust and respect, Zawose was really only giving me a glimpse of his musical culture. In fact, perhaps the only way to achieve full integration into the culture was by being born into it.

Is it possible to learn another musical tradition outside of your own, and assimilate it as if you were born into that musical culture? If so, what is the purpose? The more I thought about it the more I realized that it was not

important to become fully integrated into the musical culture. That in itself was a dead end, an unreachable goal. The important thing was to allow myself to be an outsider and experience things from my perspective, with respect and genuine interest in the music and the people. When I engaged with the experiences in this way I found I had gained new knowledge and musical inspiration, which I could carry with me and make sense of in my own musical contexts. When I play the traditional Wagogo instruments today, I rarely play traditional music, but I make new music for the instruments and use them in my own way. The learning of these instruments has also directly affected the way I play the instruments from my own culture. As stated by Farrell (2004):

Although ethnomusicology may appear to the outsider as the study of strangely exotic musical systems, it is primarily the study of music in culture and as culture. As such, it is often the detailed study of music learning, or to put it another way, of music education in the broadest sense of the term. (Farrell, G. 2004, 239-290)

The experience of living and working outside ones own cultural environment is extremely valuable for any artist, or indeed any person. Having the opportunity to experience another musical culture first hand, in the environment where it was created allows you real insight into that culture. You quickly realize that the music does not exist in isolation but is completely connected to the way people live their lives, the food they eat, the way they communicate and go about their daily routines. You then find yourself thinking about your own culture and reflect on your own values, traditions and the music you make. This can be a great learning opportunity, not necessarily in terms of specific musical material or techniques, but more to do with making sense of your own musical world and how you want to express yourself as an artist in the future. My personal experience is that opportunities like this have inspired new ideas and musical processes, which continue to unfold well after the project. For example:

As we boarded the plane in Banjul international airport I suddenly felt totally overwhelmed by my experiences in Africa. The three weeks we spent working with ECCO have changed my concepts and views on playing music as a total entity. It has turned around my views on life. (Guildhall School of Music student 3, 2001). (The Reflective Conservatoire, Ch. 15, Transcultural arts practice. Hendrickse, J., assisted by Thomson, N., 2005).

There is perhaps a danger, however, of falling into the trap of simply making direct comparisons, on a very surface level, between your own culture and the new culture you are experiencing. Not in terms of making value judgments about the music but perhaps being seduced by the other musical culture, to the point where you want to dedicate yourself to the new culture and disregard your own. I feel that through being aware of your own musical culture, background and traditions, in whatever form is appropriate to you, allows you to gain more insight into another musical culture. You are then more able to make sense of your experiences after the encounter, and begin to integrate these experiences into your musicianship.

As musicians, we need to question our motivations for going down the path of simply trying to emulate another musical culture and attempting to play that music as if we were born into the culture. Furthermore, if we only engage with trying to learn to play another culture's music in the way that a musician from that culture would play it, we miss out on the great wealth of knowledge and creativity gained from engaging with musical collaboration.

There is no doubt that learning some aspects of another musical culture is of benefit in terms of giving you an insight into the approaches of playing and teaching that music, but to play that music fully you would need to dedicate your life to it. However, learning from a musician outside of your own culture teaches you much more than the music itself. You are often inspired by the musician and gain new ideas about transmitting, performing, teaching,

learning and communicating music. You start to absorb these influences, both consciously and sub-consciously, and use them in your own way as a musician and educator. You may not notice this happening at the time and it may even take many years to manifest itself.

## **3 The Collaborative Process**

### **3.1 Reflections on the Collaborative Process**

Although I had a strong vision for the musical material in this project, I wanted to create a framework where there was enough space for each musician to bring their own voice to the music, and where new and unexpected things could happen through the process of working together. I provided the musical material, but it was developed and transformed through discussion and improvisation.

In many ways, this process has helped clarify and focus the concept of my own artistic identity. On reflection, one reason for this was that in order to bring the musicians inside the music, I initially had to find ways of communicating the stories and emotions behind the pieces. This forced me to dig deep, and really discover where these ideas had originated. In doing so I began to uncover the influences and stories from my homeland as well as from my travels, which were inherent in the music, but I had not always been consciously aware of. Communicating these ideas to the other musicians has helped me clarify them for myself. The key here was realising where this music had come from and why I identified with it so strongly myself. In this way, the music is 'authentic' to me. It is the music of 'my culture'.

Referring to the study of Ethnomusicology, Bruno Nettl offers the following description:

Ethnomusicology is not the study of ethnic musics. Indeed, all musics are 'ethnic' in the sense that for each music, each style, repertory or genre, there is a group of people who identify themselves with it and consider it their own. (Nettl, 1998, p. 24)

I am interested in the phrase “*there is a group of people who identify themselves with it and consider it their own*”. The notion of a group of people identifying with a musical situation and calling it their own could indeed be used as a marker for accessing an effective collaborative process. This was something I hoped to achieve through this collaboration.

In order for true collaboration to take place, a shift must occur from the music being perceived as belonging only to one person, to a sense of shared ownership, and ultimately shared meaning. This can only happen if the conditions are right. If analyzed, one could say that there is a complex web of factors involved, from certain skill sets, to subtle forms of communication and transmission. Certainly there are specific skills that come into play here, which are essential to enabling the process. I will analyze some of these in chapter 5, ‘*Culminating Collaboration leading to the Final Concerts.*’

Of course achieving a sense of shared ownership and shared meaning is not exclusive to this kind of transcultural collaboration. It could be argued that any meaningful musical situation, or indeed any activity that involves working together, will have at least a degree of these qualities.

A great orchestra, for example, can achieve a feeling of shared ownership and shared meaning even though the musicians may not be contributing directly to the creation of the music. This takes place under the guidance of a conductor who has the ability to draw the best out of the players, valuing their input on phrasing and interpretation of the music and creating an environment conducive to working together. This can also be seen within the context of completely different musical situations. For example, a master drummer in Tanzania will inspire the dancers by the way he plays, leading from behind the drums, even without any spoken words. A music workshop leader will inspire a group of people by the way he or she leads the workshop, ultimately creating shared meaning in the music making. An Imam will create shared ownership and meaning in the way he sings the Koran at a mosque.

Indeed any successful organization or business is created through collaboration and a sense of shared meaning.

The important point is that we are only able to truly engage with the process of music making, and of simply working on something together, when there is a sense of collaboration, shared ownership and shared meaning.

### **3.2 Greater Intercultural Understanding**

In my experience, if handled well, collaborative music making in any context can be a powerful catalyst for facilitating greater understanding and respect for others. In order for music to achieve this aim effectively however, we need to broaden our own musical experiences, put ourselves in musical situations that are unfamiliar to us, and be open to collaboration.

Garfias simply suggests that people should openly and sympathetically listen to each other's voices as an important means for eventually being able to understand each other's thoughts. (Saether, 2003 quoting Garfias, 1985, pp. 23-28)

There is no doubt that we need to cultivate greater awareness and respect for one another in this world. Perhaps, in a small way, collaborative projects like this can provide opportunities to cultivate this awareness. Viewed from a larger perspective, qualities such as respect, listening, openness and non-judgement, which are essential in collaborative music making, are also basic qualities needed to live peacefully with others in this world.

Frequently, writers on the subject of African music return to the subject of a concept of individuality, which is mediated through interaction with a community. This theme also occurs frequently in John Miller Chernoff's book *African rhythm and African sensibility* in reference to social interactions and musical interactions.

A musical occasion, like any other social occasion, is therefore beyond any one perspective a person can bring to it...and in a musical ensemble, single-mindedness of purpose would be equivalent to poverty of expression, and, of course, if a rhythm must be cut by another to make it meaningful or interesting, its meaning can be influenced, altered or defined by another. (Hendrickse and Thomson, 2005, quoting Chernoff 1979: 158)

I have frequently experienced that the quality of music making is directly linked to the quality of the connections between the people involved. The importance of this can be often overlooked as we focus on the technical aspects of putting music together. In my opinion, music only becomes meaningful when the process of making it has been openly shared with others.

As the Venda say: *“people are people because of their associations with others”* (Hendrickse J and Thomson N R, 2005, quoting Blacking 1995: 59)

## 4 Transcultural Collaboration

We are living at a time when people have greater access than ever before to music and musical traditions from across the globe. As musicians we borrow ideas, techniques, inspirations and even instruments from each other, and are open to what we can learn from one another. For any number of reasons we travel and re-locate from one country to another, bringing with us our own ideas about music making and its connection to community. This can create a very rich artistic environment, but also brings with it great challenges and dilemmas.

In the study *Transcultural Arts Practice (2005)*, Hendrickse and Thomson examine work in the field of transcultural collaboration and describe it in the context of national and international debates about cultural diversity in music education. I do not intend to outline the findings of the research in this document, but rather acknowledge it as work that has contributed to the thinking behind this project:

The aim of this enquiry is to discover how a contemporary practice can be informed by a wide variety of influences without compromising the integrity of that practice. It is clear that musicians have always transferred ideas, influences, techniques and even instruments from one 'tradition' to another simply because they are useful or available. This has not changed; in fact it could be argued that the cultural and ethnic diversity of modern urban life makes it even more important to understand the nature of this exchange, and to ensure that musicians are able to respond to the challenges that it presents. This enquiry is therefore not confined to a 'world music in education' focus, but is intended to point to the challenges of creating dialogue and making meaning in culturally diverse contexts. (Hendrickse, J. assisted by Thomson, N R. 2005).

Transcultural arts practice becomes more and more relevant as musicians continue to travel, collaborate and base themselves outside of their own

countries. A West African musician may be just as likely to choose live sampling as he would the kora, for example, as a chosen instrument of expression. Regardless of the musical format, the essential thing is to learn how to effectively work together, at the deepest level.

In his paper entitled *Working Together*, Peter Renshaw (2011) states:

In the context of the arts, creative collaborative learning involves processes in which artists are motivated to work together, drawing on their creative imagination, their different skills and perspectives to formulate new ideas, to explore new possibilities, to extend their ways of perceiving and thinking, their making and performing, in order to produce outcomes of originality and value in relation to the purpose and context of the activity.

In his book *Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative*, Ken Robinson (2001) examines further the ways in which creativity can be cultivated. For example:

- Creativity is not a purely personal process. Many creative processes draw from the ideas and stimulation of other people. Creativity flourishes in an atmosphere where original thinking and innovation are encouraged and stimulated. It fades in atmospheres where dialogue and interaction are stifled.”
- Creativity is a dynamic process and can involve many different areas of expertise. [...] New ideas often come from the dialogue between different disciplines, through which specialists in different fields make their ideas available to each other and create the opportunity for new interpretations and applications.
- Cultural change is not linear and smooth. [...] New ways of thinking do not simply replace the old at clear points in history. They often overlap and coexist with established ways of thinking for long periods

of time. This complex and convoluted process of change can create many tensions and unresolved problems along the way. Cultural change is like the process of personal creativity. It occurs as a series of successive approximations.” (pp.181-182)

A central point arising from these observations is recognising the power of collaboration for fostering creativity and innovation. A culture that respects dialogue and shared critical reflection is likely to encourage the process of making interconnections, of cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices, of exploring collaborative ways of learning in order to create something new and valuable. This is not achieved in isolation, in a silo of convention and predictability, but by people choosing to work together, celebrating how their different talents, perspectives and insights can create something that transforms their practice and their ways of seeing the world. As Ken Robinson (2009) points out in his most recent book, *The Element*, “creativity draws not just from our own personal resources but also from the wider world of other people’s ideas and values” (p.80). Collaboration at its best can very much enrich the creative process.” (Renshaw, *Working Together*, 2011, p11)

In this last statement, Peter Renshaw clearly outlines the core values, which I consider to be at the heart of this work.

I feel there is a danger in this area of trans-cultural music making, that we fall into the trap of only focusing on the musical elements, and where they originate from, in an attempt to label them and justify their use in a different context. Of course we need to be aware of the origins of the source material, but we must be clear that this material is purely an inspiration and launch pad for processes of working together, with the aim of generating new, contemporary pieces, as opposed to a patchwork of borrowed ideas.

It is my hope that through projects of this kind, and the GLOMAS (Global Music Masters) programme in general, we move away from the often-misunderstood concept that the work is about simply throwing different

musical cultures together into some sort of cooking pot, into an area that is focused on the art of collaboration with diverse groups of people. In this way making a shift away from focusing on the content of the music, to a focus on the ways in which we work together, and the artistic processes used, which are of far greater importance than the origins of the musical content.

Referring to his experiences of living among the Venda people, John Blacking tells us that:

Although music making enabled people to express group identities and to experience social solidarity, its ultimate aim was to help them pass beyond restricted worlds of culturally defined reality, and to develop creative imagination. (Blacking, J. 1985)

In his book *Music, Mind and Education*, Keith Swanwick makes reference to this quote by Blacking and goes on to further reflect on his statement:

What Blacking calls ‘transcendental musical experiences’ are not gained by staying within the confines of strong and socially embedded idiomatic traditions – the ‘authentic’ music of the tribe. It is by working with musical *processes* themselves as though they had a degree of autonomy that transcendence of these culturally restricted worlds becomes a possibility. Venda was one of many societies where people freely borrowed, adopted, and adapted songs, dances, ideas, and customs from others without anxiety about their cultural ‘purity’. . . (Swanwick, K. 1988, Page 106)

These quotes point clearly to the essence of transcultural arts practice, with a focus on musical processes, collaboration, sharing, borrowing and transforming of musical ideas, in order to create new identities and forms of artistic expression.

Another distinctive feature of transcultural collaboration lies in the fact that there is often great diversity amongst the people working together, in terms of the ways in which we perceive the world, the languages we speak and our different approaches to music making. There may be very little common

ground to start working from. This heightens the need for effective collaborative skills with a great deal of sensitivity, openness and awareness.

As our societies move towards increasing cultural and ethnic diversity, with more contact between cultures, we need artistic and educational models that reflect these developments. Collaborative approaches are practical ways to facilitate music making, which allow participants to focus on the process of interaction and exchange. (Hendrickse and Thomson, *Transcultural Arts Practice*, 2005, p.391)

From an ethnomusicologists perspective, Bruno Nettl (1983) states:

To work in the field is a kind of art demanding certain skills such as empathy, patience, linguistic habit, body language and creative communication. (Nettl, 1983)

If we are aware of these skills when working collaboratively with musicians from different cultures, perhaps we then have the possibility of creating new music that has shared meaning, and holds within it the essence of intercultural understanding.

I would say that these are also essential skills required by any musician / composer / educationalist, regardless of the musical form or context (e.g. dementia, prisons, homeless etc.). Developing these skills and effective collaborative approaches is crucial to transcultural work.

# 5 Culminating Collaboration Leading to the Final Concerts

## 5.1 The Participating Musicians

The musicians involved in this project were all highly skilled performing artists in their own right. However, the skills necessary for this project extended well beyond purely technical performing skills. Creative, personal, interpersonal, collaborative, and communication skills were all essential in order for the project to be successful. The participating musicians were from different musical backgrounds, including folk, jazz and traditional music, with diverse cultural heritage from Brazil, Finland, Australia, Wales and Estonia. Having such diverse backgrounds meant that we could not necessarily rely on common reference points in order to work together. We therefore had to find effective methods of collaboration, which employed the skills mentioned above.

In his book, *Engaged Passions*, Peter Renshaw (2010) includes the following qualities in his definition of interpersonal skills: “the ability to relate to other people; empathy; trust; openness; responsiveness; listening to and acting on other points of view; ability to work collaboratively in a team with interchangeable roles; having the confidence to share ones vulnerability”. He also cites the following values as the bedrock for quality artistic experiences: “respect; tolerance; honesty; compassion; integrity; sincerity; authenticity. (Renshaw, 2010, pp. 68 - 9)

During the course of this project it became clear that the defining factor, in terms of the quality of the artistic outcome, was more to do with how we interacted and related to one another as people, and less to do with the actual origins of musical content.

It follows that the qualities mentioned above are essential to any successful musical collaboration. When music making falls apart, it is likely these basic ingredients are missing. These are of course also basic, essential elements when working on anything with other people.

It is clear that being able to relate to people is the first priority and the music making follows on from that foundation. If time is spent building trust, understanding and respect, any music created will have greater meaning and be of a higher quality. With this in mind, I feel the essence of the Glomas program is really about developing tools for effective collaboration with groups from diverse cultural and musical backgrounds, who do not necessarily share a common language or musical reference points. Sharpening our ability to facilitate effective collaborations and creative processes is essential, both in the context of working with groups of musicians and non-musicians.

## **5.2 Leadership Skills**

Peter Renshaw (2010) defines artistic leadership skills in the following ways:

- Having the skill and judgement to create and frame a project that will work (e.g., making artistic decisions about the musical language and structure of the project; delineation of roles and responsibilities; managing people within a collaborative context)
- Knowing how to enable the participants to hear, see, feel and understand the connections that are integral to the creative process. Encouraging people to get on the inside of the musical experience. Engaging their aural, bodily and emotional memory in order to internalise sound, rhythm and musical structure.
- Establishing a sense of high expectation for the group and individual participants, by presenting a clear indication of the musical quality that might be achieved.

- Creating a balance of ‘pace’ that allows time and space for artistic development and creative momentum.

(Renshaw, 2010, pp. 68-9)

These definitions resonate particularly strongly in the analysis of this project, and I am aware that without these skills and values, a project of this type would simply not succeed.

### **5.3 Leadership Approaches**

A variety of approaches were used to facilitate the collaboration, including:

- Pre-composed material
- Improvisation
- ‘Backbone’ scores<sup>1</sup>
- Graphic scores
- Warm-up exercises and work away from instruments
- Discussions

My initial approach to introducing the material was to communicate the stories and imagery behind the music to the musicians. I wanted each musician to have this non-musical imagery in mind and then be free to interpret the stories in their own ways. Having this non-musical foundation gave us a common starting point, free from specific musical material connected to any particular style or culture.

The rehearsal process was led using a workshop based model. The term ‘workshop’ may be interpreted in many different ways and I refer to it here in an attempt to describe the techniques I have used to facilitate the

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<sup>1</sup> The term *Backbone scores* refers to a composition that is only partly composed, with the intention of developing the material in real time with the musicians.

collaborative process. In the chapter *Transcultural Arts Practice*, Jan Hendrickse outlines three broad categories of workshops.

The term ‘workshop’ is used to apply to a wide range of different activities, and although there appears to be an infinite number of subtle modifications there are just a few basic workshop types. These categories frequently overlap, and two or three may be used in one workshop successively or even simultaneously. Some workshops appear to resemble performances, others more similar to rehearsals and some appear to resemble improvisation sessions or devising processes. Following this line of thinking further allows us to identify the three very broad categories, or techniques, that are used in workshops. (Hendrickse, J. assisted by Thomson, N. R., 2005, p. 400).

Table 1. Workshop Models

<b>Workshop Model One</b>	<b>Workshop Model Two</b>	<b>Workshop Model Three</b>
All musical material is provided, and is not transformed or augmented	Some musical material or information is provided, and will be transformed or augmented.	No musical material or music agenda is provided.
Participants produce a realisation of the music under direction. Their role is as interpreters.	Participants contribute to the development of the final realisation, through discussion and/or improvisation.	Participants are creating the music from the beginning. They are acting as composers.
The leader takes responsibility for transmitting the music to the participants.	The leader shares the responsibility for developing the music to varying degrees.	There may be no leader, or the leader may shape the material that emerges from the interactions that take place.

The technique used to facilitate this transcultural collaboration was workshop model two. It should be made clear, however, that these are not exclusive categories and will naturally be used in various combinations. There were

times in this project, for example, when I provided all of the musical material and the musicians were acting more like interpreters (workshop model one), as well as moments when no material was provided (workshop model three). However, the majority of the music was created using the techniques described in workshop model two.

#### **5.4 Improvisation as a Tool for Collaboration**

Improvisation was used as a way to establish common ground, and to get to know the musicians, their instruments, and their individual forms of expression. Two main improvisation approaches were used:

1. Free form improvisation or working from graphic scores as warm up exercises.
2. Improvising around given musical material in order to create new things, resulting in a collective composition.

Both of these approaches were essential to the collaboration. The free improvisations gave us the opportunity to connect as musicians, free from notation or given musical material. This also increased the level of listening and gave me new ideas about how to later use the instruments and the individual players within the context of my own compositions. Likewise, improvising around the material of my compositions created new ideas, and shifted the ownership of the material into a feeling of shared ownership. This resulted in the ensemble really playing the music from the inside, as opposed to just replicating a pre-composed composition. The amount of time possible to allocate to improvising was limited however, and this is something I would like to develop further in future projects.

The piece entitled *Postcard 1 (underwater)* was created in the studio with an improvisation between myself and Dylan Fowler. We improvised three takes using the visual image of travelling under over and under water. Take two

appears on the CD. This piece remained improvised in performance, with the addition of Timo Väänänen on kantele.

## 5.5 Challenges

One of the challenges of this musical context was bringing together instruments from different contexts, all with different types of limitations. The folk wind instruments, for example, were limited in terms of the notes they could play. Tuning could also be difficult along side instruments like guitar and kantele, with fixed, tempered tuning systems. The kantele is also limited to a certain amount of notes, and quick chromatic changes are not practical. These limitations forced us to seek creative solutions to playing together, increasing the need for real dialogue and collaboration. This also resulted in new, unexpected things within the music. For example:

In the piece entitled *The Next Dala Dala*, Kristiina Ilmonen was struggling to find a flute in the right key. None of her flutes ‘worked’ within the key of the piece, so we began discussing the idea of changing the key. The music somehow didn’t sound right in a different key however. In the end, we decided to keep the music in its original key and enjoy the bi-tonality created by Kristiina’s flute, which was in a totally different key. This created a tension in the music that caused us all to play differently. This tension became the foundation for building a whole section of music, which was about frantic conversations on an African bus, playing with the concept of tension and release.

This was a good example and reminder for me about how diversity can spark creativity. This musical event occurred because of the challenges of working with unconventional instrumentation, as well as working with musicians who are creative enough to constantly search for new musical solutions. Interestingly, when this challenge arose, our initial reaction was just to continue searching for an instrument in the right key. When Kristiina suggested simply trying different instruments, regardless of the key they were

in, I wasn't convinced this was the right approach. By being open to this suggestion however, we discovered something new in the music, which became a central element. On reflection, the music would not have developed in this way if I had blocked this suggestion as a leader. These actions ultimately had the affect of creating shared ownership and shared meaning in the music making.

Another challenge for me was how to maintain my artistic identity and vision for these compositions, whilst remaining open to others musical input. There were moments in the process where musicians suggested ideas that I initially felt were not right for the direction the music. However, I made the conscious decision to try each idea that was offered, even if my instinct told me otherwise. At times the whole group agreed that a particular tried idea had not worked, but at other times these experiments resulted in the creation of new musical elements I could not have imaged if I had sat down to write them alone. At other times there was a process of trying and gradually refining ideas. In all cases I took the role of shaping the ideas and integrating them into my own vision, but this always happened through open dialogue with the group. In this way my vision gradually became a shared vision, and as the process went on it became more and more important to me that the whole group felt completely satisfied with the musical results.



Photograph 1. Timo Väänänen, Adriano Adewale, Nathan Riki Thomson, Kristiina Ilmonen. Vuotalo Concert, 11.05.2013. Photograph by Kaisa-Leena Halinen

## 6 Analysis of the Pieces

In this chapter I have chosen to give a brief analysis of four of the pieces, in order to highlight certain moments from the collaborative process. A description of the complete concert programme can be found in appendix 4, page 57.

### 6.1 Analysis of ‘The Next Dala Dala’

*The Next Dala Dala* was inspired by my experiences of travelling on the local buses in Tanzania. The local buses or, Dala Dala, are packed full of people and perhaps even some animals too. The conversation is lively as it travels around the bus. There are bags on the roof, and maybe some people up there too. It’s hot and there is no room to move. The road is bumpy, but the atmosphere is good!

This was the description I first gave to the musicians during rehearsals. Picking up on the idea of the conversations, I suggested the singers and flute player improvised as if they were talking to each other on the bus. As this concept developed, one of the singers suggested that they take on the role of specific characters and stay in character as they joined in the conversation. After a lot of improvising, we also decided on specific entrance points for each character.

The first task in terms of learning the structure of the piece was to understand how it worked rhythmically. This was a complex rhythm, and in order to feel it in the body I chose to introduce the rhythmic pattern by using a body percussion exercise, rather than notating it. (This can be seen on the DVD, appendix 1, chapter 2, learning the rhythm of *The Next Dala Dala*). This exercise helped the musicians internalize the rhythm and understand how the bass line related to it.

After working on it for some time, however, one of the musicians realized that he had learnt it the ‘wrong way’ around. In other words, he heard the first beat in a different place. We discussed this and others also realized that they were

hearing the beat in different places. A conclusion was made that it didn't actually matter which way around you heard the rhythm, as long as you understood it in your own way, and could feel the rhythm and relate it to the bass line, rather than analyze it theoretically.

Brazilian percussionist Adriano Adewale came in to the rehearsals at this point, after the first stage of working on the core material with the Finnish musicians. Adriano knew the rhythmic material from phase one of the project, so was able to immediately integrate himself into what we had started.

Although all of the musicians knew the material at that point, it was interesting to observe the affect Adriano had on the way we played together. I observed the following changes after our first rehearsal:

**a) Increased eye contact**

Adriano naturally plays with a lot of eye contact and actively seeks for this connection with other musicians. This was a new element in the group, and something that had only been there in small amounts up to this point. With Adriano's presence, I could immediately feel the affect the increased eye contact was having, in terms of bringing the group closer together.

**b) The rhythmic playing became more relaxed**

Adriano's approach to playing the rhythm had the affect of making everyone play in a more relaxed way, and the rhythm became more playful. It felt at that point like we were beginning to internalize and feel the rhythm, rather than counting it.

**c) Increased amounts of laughter in the room!**

Because of our long-term friendship and working relationship, Adriano and I tend to joke a lot with each other. Other members of the group started to join in, and laughter became a feature of the rehearsals. This seemed to have a positive affect on the music with everybody feeling more relaxed. Interestingly, rehearsals were more productive as a result. I later realized that this form of humor is also a natural part of my own culture as an Australian.

These influences were not only happening one way however. Knowing Adriano well, I could see that he was also being influenced by the way the other musicians were approaching the piece, and their general approach to music making. There were also instruments in the band that Adriano had not worked with before (kantele, Nordic wind instruments) and he commented on finding these new sounds inspiring. This new environment was also having a direct affect on the way Adriano was playing.

Reflecting on this, I realized that a common thread in this collaboration was the fact that for each musician involved, there were both familiar and unfamiliar musical and non-musical elements present. In other words, each participant had known or familiar elements to work with, but equally they were dealing with unfamiliar elements and adapting themselves accordingly. This fact appeared to stimulate creativity.

This was also the case from my perspective. Even though I had written the music and chosen the musicians to put together, the way that each musician responded to the music and the situation changed the way I heard the music, gave me new ideas, and had an effect on the way I played.

### **Developing the Rhythmic Break for ‘*The Next Dala Dala*’.**

I had the idea of developing some kind of unison rhythmic break for the piece, to be played by bass and percussion. Rather than writing the break myself, I wanted to use it as an opportunity to develop the material together. The process began with percussionist Adriano Adewale and myself cycling the bass line and groove. We then took it in turns to improvise stops in the rhythm. When we heard something we liked, we memorized it and moved on to improvising the next stop. This process went on for some time until we had a complete rhythmic break we were happy with.

This process can be heard in audio examples one and two contained on the DVD, appendix 1, chapter 3, developing the rhythmic break for *The Next Dala Dala*.



Photograph 2. Adriano Adewale and Nathan Riki Thomson.

Vuotalo Concert, 11.05.2013. Photograph by Kaisa-Leena Halinen

## 6.2 Analysis of ‘Shaped by the Sea’

The melody for *Shaped by the Sea* came to me whilst walking on the frozen sea for the first time during winter in Helsinki. *Shaped by the Sea* became the title track of the album, taking further inspiration from growing up by the sea, travels to distant shores, and a constant longing to be close to the ocean. The movement of the sea shapes the land, and it can shape the personalities of the people who live close to it.

I began again by giving this description to the musicians and I asked Mari Kalkun to write lyrics to the melody in Estonian:

Jää see kannab mind	The ice is carrying me
üle laia välja	over a large field,
kostab minu hääl.	my voice resonates.
Las ma siis kõnningi nüüd	Let me walk then now,
tuulte pääl,	on the winds,
vete pääl.	on the waters.

Although the melody was intended to be sung rhythmically in the middle section of the piece, I later decided to record a rubato (rhythmically free) version of it as the introduction to the piece. This became the first track of the CD, taking the title *Vetelkõnd*. When the two other vocalists were added to the piece, I wanted to find a way to use the voices rhythmically, without words. With this in mind, the vocalists began exploring Sami Yoik techniques and developed their own parts based on these techniques.

I later decided to create a prelude to the piece, drawing on memories of the coastal birds I heard as a child in Australia and New Zealand. I collected recording of these birds and used them as a foundation to work with. Mikko Hassinen triggered these recordings in performance, and manipulated them using a live sampling programme. I then interacted with these recordings by improvising on a Maori flute (kauau) from New Zealand, on an instrument that had been made for me by my Father. Somehow the act of improvising with birdsong that was so familiar to me, on a flute from my parents homeland, gave me a strong sense of identity and connection to home.

These were good examples of the collaborative process generating new musical elements. Although the skeleton of the composition remained, it had been fleshed out with new ideas and developed in ways that were a direct result of working together.



Photograph 3. Mari Kalkun, Vuotalo Concert, 11.05.2013.

Photograph by Kaisa-Leena Halinen

### **6.3 Analysis of Gaia (Kasper's Theme)**

I had the idea of asking each of the three singers to interpret the melody of *Gaia (Kasper's Theme)* in their own ways, and to write lyrics for the melody in different languages. Once again I began by introducing the theme of the piece, which was dedicated to my last-born son, and reflects on the cycle of life. In the final version of the piece we hear the melody sung three times, once without words, a second time in Finnish, and the third time in Estonian. Each singer interpreted and phrased the melody differently.

The first time Mari Kalkun heard the melody and the idea behind the piece, she immediately had an idea for lyrics. This happened to be a poem she had written in her notebook, inspired by listening to a concert. For some reason

the theme and rhythmic phrasing of this poem worked perfectly with my melody and theme of the piece. The whole thing happened spontaneously and very naturally, within the space of about 10 minutes. I later interviewed Mari about this process. (This can be seen on the DVD, Appendix 1, Chapter 6, *Interview with Mari Kalkun*).

#### **6.4 Analysis of Roots (solo bass)**

During my studies I began exploring solo playing for the first time as a double bass player and decided to work on a piece for the concert, as a contrast to the large ensemble collaborations. For this piece I wanted to work with rhythmic cycles, exploring the rhythmic possibilities of the body of the bass. Taking inspiration from various varieties of African thumb pianos, I experimented with attachments for the bass to create a buzzing sound, including the wire from a snare drum, which I cut and stuck on to the bridge of the bass. I also used an ankle shaker and stomp box to create other rhythmic elements. It took a lot of practice to integrate these elements to the point where I was able to execute the rhythm in an unforced, natural way.

I then began experimenting with using my voice as another rhythmic element, and at that point I had two lessons with Kimmo Pohjonen. Kimmo encouraged me to try different approaches to using the voice and to delve deeper into the emotions behind the piece. With Kimmo's support, I began to uncover the foundation of the piece, which again led me back to images of the earth and sea from my homeland, and the feeling of being rooted to the land you have grown up in. These images and emotions from home were mixed with influence from Africa.

I performed this piece solo during the UK tour, but for the concerts in Finland I asked Mari Kalkun to join me for the last section of the piece. This was a natural collaboration, which we left mostly improvised. (See DVD, Appendix 1, Chapter 4, *Roots*).

## 6.5 The Concerts

The project culminated with two concerts in Helsinki and three concerts in the UK. Although I had provided the musical material and led the process, on stage the music had the feeling of belonging to everyone. It was clear that every musician had contributed in many different ways to the development of the pieces and the creation of the concerts, and the performances were an important part of celebrating our work together. At that stage, even though the pieces were set for the performances, new musical developments continued to happen throughout the five concerts. This was the greatest affirmation for me that real collaboration had taken place.

One example of this was in the piece *Bus to Bagamoyo*. This piece initially had improvised vocal percussion sections by Adriano Adewale and Kristiina Ilmonen. In rehearsal, these improvisations took place in different sections of the piece. During one of the UK performances a spontaneous duet emerged by Adriano and Kristiina, which continued to develop in subsequent performances into an extended improvised conversation. This then became a feature of the piece and was commented on by numerous audience members.

*The gigs were nice; it was good to be able to play more gigs in UK. We had some good moments with Adriano, developing the dual solo (in the Bus to B.) further in the UK gigs. (Kristiina Ilmonen 2013)*

Live performance can spark these kinds of new musical moments, but only if there is sufficient trust between the musicians. I was aware that this trust had been built through the collaborative process. The music had also reached a place where the composed elements were fixed but connected by large amounts of improvisation. The balance between these elements was exciting on stage because it meant that each performance was different. I sensed that the audience was reacting to this and were engaged by witnessing spontaneous moments happening live on stage. As guitarist Dylan Fowler commented in his feedback:

*...throughout the process there was a feeling of deep listening to what each person was doing and as the music was so open there were real dialogues going on within the ensemble. A friend who was in the audience in Abergavenny said it had been many years since he'd heard a concert where he was so aware of how much listening was going on amongst the musicians.*

## **6.6 Unexpected Turn of Events**

After our first concert on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at Vuotalo in Helsinki, Adriano Adewale decided to fly back to London to be with his wife, who was then eight months pregnant. He had planned to return to Helsinki on May 16<sup>th</sup> for the second concert. Late in the evening of May 15<sup>th</sup>, Adriano's wife was unexpectedly rushed to hospital with suspected meningitis. With no other family around, Adriano understandably needed to stay with his wife and was unable to take his flight the next morning. This unexpected turn of events caused an initial state of panic amongst the group, or at least in the groups leader! I went through various stages of thought including, *'should I cancel the concert?'* And *'is it possible to represent this collaboration with one member of the group missing?'*

After the initial shock, and of course sadness for Adriano's situation, I received an overwhelmingly positive response from the group, who all encouraged me to carry on. Thinking back, the interesting thing was that even though Adriano was not with us for this concert, the work we had done together, and his personality and 'spirit' was still present in the music and in the performance that night.



Photograph 4. Adriano Adewale, Vuotalo Concert, 11.05.2013.

Photograph by Kaisa-Leena Halinen



Photograph 5. Mikko Hassinen and Adriano Adewale, Vuotalo Concert, 11.05.2013.

Photograph by Kaisa-Leena Halinen



Photograph 6. Maija Kauhanen, Nora Vaura and Mari Kalkun.

Vuotalo Concert, 11.05.2013. Photograph by Kaisa-Leena Halinen



Photograph 7. Nathan Riki Thomson, Dylan Fowler and Timo Väänänen.

Vuotalo Concert, 11.05.2013. Photograph by Kaisa-Leena Halinen



Photograph 8. Kristiina Ilmonen, Vuotalo Concert, 11.05.2013.

Photograph by Kaisa-Leena Halinen

## 7 Feedback

This section contains excerpts from a written feedback form that was sent out to the participants after the project. The full feedback forms can be read in the appendix. Of course much of the feedback has happened informally through discussions with the musicians and audience members, which is undocumented.

### 7.1 Feedback from Audience Members

*Thank you Nathan Riki Thomson and Subsonic Ensemble...One of the best concert experiences for a long time. The meaning of music and life. Sharing joy and emotions. Thank you*

*Hi Nathan,  
Thanks for a wonderful performance last night. I had to run away afterwards but wanted to say thanks to you and the whole ensemble - a really powerful listening experience in a relaxed atmosphere. The selfless and joyous grouping of such great musicians made the performance the most exhilarating listening experience I have had for a long time - it touched the transcendental! Keep it up!*

### 7.2 Participants Feedback

*“It was an excellent experience, which drew on musicians natural curiosity about each others work and influences.”*

*“Overall experience was great. The musicians chosen to the group were all very open-minded and therefore it was easy to be part of the process and even to hop into the rehearsals, even though I was not part of the longer and intensive preparation. Because of Nathan's music I didn't feel there are barriers between musical and cultural backgrounds – your music was uniting us into one.”*

*“The project was extremely successful because we were playing music that we all felt involved in and the rehearsal period was very well planned which enabled all of us to really connect with the music in performance. The compositions really gave something to everyone also.”*

*Music wise, definitely successful, because everybody had her/his own important role in the project and Nathan managed to bring everything together. Is this ensemble successful as a group, the future will show :)*

*“The experience was very positive and inspiring as well as enriching. I did learn new things (musical and dynamic/expressive) and enjoyed playing with all the people.”*

*Moi to you all!! Hello from Wales!*

*Just to say it was such a pleasure to work with you all on such a beautiful project. For me it had everything - great music, lovely people, wonderful musicianship, emotion, passion and fun!*

*I really hope we get to do it again - but if not, it will still remain a special experience for me. Good luck with all your musical journeys.....*

*“Thoroughly enjoyed it! My favourite moment began when I arrived for the rehearsals and lasted until the last moment of the last concert.”*

*“...it validated it and helped me focus on music that I really want to be involved in.”*

*“It was successful. The music created was beautiful and rewarding and the project did create some challenges for myself, which were great as a means to develop my own playing and improvising skills and expression.”*

**Did the bandleader give you clear guidelines? How was this done?**

*“Very clear indeed. Always listening to everyone’s viewpoint while at the same time having a very clear idea of how the music should sound.”*

*“Yes, the bandleader gave very clear guidelines, in my opinion. Through compositions and through the way Nathan worked in the rehearsal process giving guidelines, telling ideas but sometimes also negotiating and taking into consideration suggestions from band members.”*

**Can you describe your experience of what happened when the visiting musicians arrived, both musically and in terms of the group dynamic?**

*Incorporating musicians from different cultures does give some diversity to playing the music because of different energies involved. Especially interesting was to see the so-called Nordic laid-back playing style mixing up with the flaming temperament when Adriano came into the group.*

**Are there any particular moments that you remember during the rehearsal process that illustrate the way we worked together?**

*I liked the balance between your composed material and still having openness to make some changes during the rehearsal process.*

**Did you notice any changes in the way you normally work as a result of this context?**

*One great thing was you ordering lyrics from the singers and taking it as something very natural. That opened up new potential in me (and I believe also in Nora) and gave opportunity to try a different role – instead of creating music, creating new words to ready musical material.*

**Did you feel able to contribute musically to the rehearsal process?  
Any examples?**

*“Yes, suggesting some minor changes in song structures (Gaia) and also being one puzzle piece in the singer's choir. Also in the improvisatory parts and adding my energy to the group.”*

**Did you enjoy this project and would you like to do it again? Do you have any favorite moments?**

*“Yes! :-) My favourite moments were playing rehearsals in Kunkkula and listening to “Waiting for Rain” from outside rehearsal house with first spring weather.*

*I enjoyed very much the more “introvert” and soundscape pieces like Underwater and Waiting for Rain, SOTS, where seemingly not much is happening but actually... These kinds of pieces somehow go under the skin. For winning audience it's good to have both sides in music – also more outgoing and rhythmical, but I'd encourage you to keep working on that “darker and deeper” side of your music too :)”*

## 8 Conclusions

Whilst analysing the documentation I have tried to identify specific core elements, which were essential to making the collaborative process successful. The following key skills have re-occurred throughout the project:

1. An open, non-judgmental attitude
2. Mutual respect for one another
3. Patience
4. Deep listening
5. Tolerance; honesty; compassion; integrity; sincerity; authenticity
6. Focusing on the collaboration and how to work together, rather than on the origins of the musical material
7. Interpersonal skills: ability to relate to other people; trust; openness; responsiveness; listening to and acting on other points of view; ability to work collaboratively in a team with interchangeable roles; having the confidence to share ones vulnerability (Renshaw, 2010, pp. 68-9).
8. Leadership and collaborative skills appropriate to the trans-cultural context
9. Cultivating shared ownership and shared meaning

I am also aware that the quality of any collaboration relies heavily on putting the right combination of people together. In this project, the musicians were chosen primarily for who they are as people, rather than because of the instruments they play. However, even with the right combination of people, it

is clear that any collaborative process requires very focussed effort from each individual, and the key elements mentioned above must always be present.

I suspect that these conclusions are not dissimilar to conclusions made about numerous types of creative collaborative processes, both within and outside of the context of music making. The unique aspect of transcultural collaboration, however, is that we are always dealing with the complexities of cultural differences, and the fact that we may not be starting from common reference points in terms of musical training, styles of communication, body language, spoken language, or even simple things like humour. Therefore we must enter into any transcultural collaboration with awareness of these factors, and without preconceived ideas about the people we are working with.

Greater openness and understanding of the fact that people live in and respond the world in many different ways is essential. This understanding is greatly enhanced, in my experience, by putting yourself in unfamiliar cultural situations through travelling, as well as by simply meeting and interacting with people from different cultures, who may be living on your doorstep.

On a personal note, this project has been very rewarding for me, both in terms of the artistic outcome and the collaborative processes. In many ways it will serve as an example of a successful collaborative process and a reference point for my future work. I feel this process has also strengthened my own artistic identity and vision, and given me a strong foundation to continue building upon. Reflecting on the research questions from page seven, I realise that the answers to these questions will be slightly different with each collaborative process. There is no one formula that will work in any given situation, but there are certainly specific skills, qualities and techniques that are essential, and transferable in trans-cultural work.

As a leader, I feel I was able to harness these qualities at times, and not at others. In moments when I struggled, other members of the group saved the

momentum, sensing the need to come forward with suggestions at the right time and assume the role of leader, even for brief moments. This is perhaps the defining factor of collaboration, with everyone in the room working together for the common good, without it needing to be verbalised.

The total amount of data collected for this project is far too vast to analyse within the structure of one master's thesis. I have chosen to highlight specific events from the project, with the hope that they give some insights into the process and outcomes of the project. A project of this kind relies heavily on working with others, and I am very grateful to all of the musicians, tutors family and friends, who have contributed so much to this process. It is also my hope that others may benefit from this research and find inspiration to carry out further research into transcultural collaboration. The Glomas programme is well placed to become a centre for the future development of this research, which I believe to be of great value.

Looking ahead, transcultural collaboration is an area that I personally intend to continue researching and developing. Through future research I would aim to flesh out key concepts from this thesis, such as collaborative learning, shared meaning within a transcultural context, leadership, engagement, and tacit knowledge. This work may well form part of my further doctoral studies.

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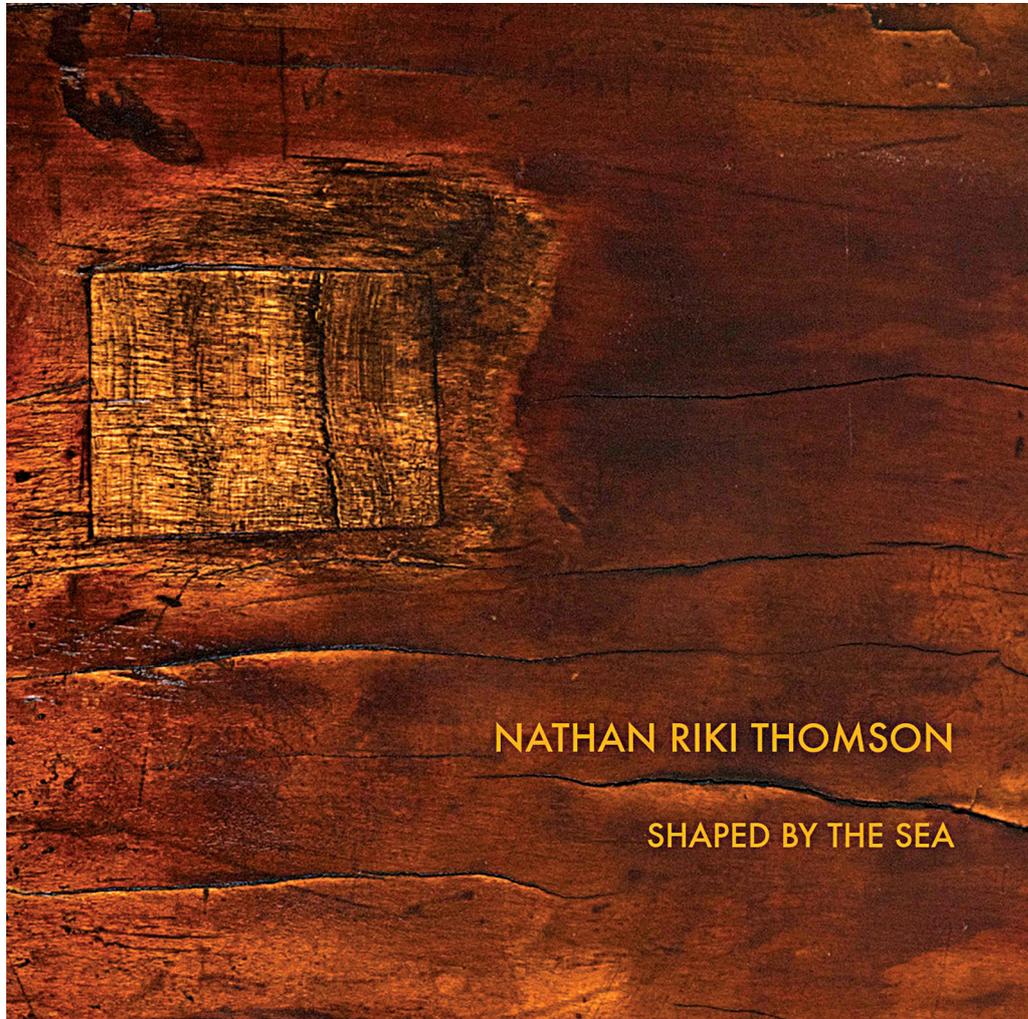
# Appendix

## **Appendix 1: DVD containing video of the rehearsal process, excerpts from performances and photographs**

DVD contents:

1. Learning the rhythm of *Shaped by the Sea*
2. Learning the rhythm of *The Next Dala Dala*
3. Developing the rhythmic break for *The Next Dala Dala*
  - a) Audio example 1
  - b) Audio example 2
  - c) Video: Rehearsing the rhythmic break for *The Next DalaDala*
4. Excerpts of the *Black Box* concert, Helsinki 16.05.2013.
5. Excerpts of the *St Ethelburgas* concert, London 24.05.2013.
6. Interview with Mari Kalkun
7. Photographs from rehearsals and performances

**Appendix 2: CD 'Shaped by the Sea' (Sibelius Academy Folk Music Department series recording 124, 2013)**



## Appendix 3: Concert Programme, Black Box, Helsinki Music Centre, 16.05.2013



### Nathan Riki Thomson ja Subsonic Ensemble

Shaped by the Sea

torstaina 16.5.2013 klo 19  
Black Box, Musiikkitalo

Thursday, May 16th, 2013 at 7 pm  
Black Box, Helsinki Music Centre

#### Shaped by the Sea

Konsertissa julkaistaan Nathan Riki Thomsonin uusi levy 'Shaped by the Sea', joka on osa kansanmusiikin osaston CD-julkaisusarjaa. Musiikin teemoina on ollut identiteetti, kotimaa sekä siirtymät ja matkat kaukaisille rannoille.

This concert celebrates the release of Nathan's new album, 'Shaped by the Sea', as part of the folk music department CD series. Featuring original music inspired by the themes of identity, homeland, displacement and travels to distant shores.

**Adriano Adewale** (Brazil), lyömäsoittimet / percussion

**Dylan Fowler** (Wales), kitara / guitar, lap steel

**Kristiina Ilmonen** (Finland), puhaltimek, lyömäsoittimet /  
Nordic wind instruments, percussion

**Mikko Hassinen** (Finland), lyömäsoittimet, elektroniikka / percussion, electronics

**Maija Kauhanen** (Finland), harmoni, laulu / harmonium, vocals

**Nathan Riki Thomson** (Australia), kontrabasso, huulut, sormipiano (kalimba) /  
double bass, flutes, kalimba

**Timo Väinänen** (Finland), kantele, pyngyr

**Nora Vaura** (Finland), laulu, sormipiano (ilimba) / vocals, ilimba

**Ilkka Heinonen** (Finland), jousihikko

**Mari Kalkun** (Estonia), laulu / vocals

Mikko Ingman, salilääni / sound

Jukka Kolimaa, valot / lights

Päivi Koivuola, tuottaja / producer

#### Ohjelma / Program

1. Homeland
2. Vetelkönd
3. Shaped by the Sea
4. Postcard 1 (underwater)
5. The Next Dala Dala
6. For Johanna
7. Mzuka

#### Väliaika / Intermission

1. Roots
2. Under Ubi's Tree
3. Waiting for Rain
4. Bus to Bagamoyo
5. Kapiti Island
6. Gaia (Kasper's Theme)

Sävellykset / All music composed by Nathan Riki Thomson, paitsi / except Under Ubi's Tree (trad Tanzania ja Estonian, sovittanut / arranged by Nathan, Kristiina, Timo). Waiting for Rain by Katja ja Nathan Thomson. Sanat / Lyrics by Mari Kalkun ja Nora Vaura.

Kiitos: Adriano, Dylan, Ilkka, Kristiina, Maija, Mari, Mikko, Nora, Timo, Katja, Kasper, Kai, Oso, Mum. Kiitos myös / Also thanks to Hannu Saha, Juhani Näreharju, Vilma Timonen, Sinikka Kontio, Eeva-Leena Pokela, Kaisaleena Halinen, Antti Tanttu ja Kunkkulan henkilökunta / and all of the staff in Kunkkula.

#### **Appendix 4: Process analysis. The Stories Behind the Music**

The following descriptions were sent to the examining jury before the Black Box performance on 16.05.2013.

##### **1. Homeland** (music by Nathan R Thomson)

The concert begins with field recordings of bird song from my hometown in Australia, as well as from my parents' hometown in New Zealand. I improvise with this bird song on a solo Maori flute, which was hand made for me by my Father. I feel strongly connected to these sounds, and have realized through this process that these sounds are part of my musical heritage.

##### **2. Vetelkõnd** (music by Nathan R Thomson, lyrics by Mari Kalkun)

This melody came to me whilst walking on the frozen sea for the first time in Helsinki. Mari wrote lyrics to the melody about the voice being carried by the frozen sea.

##### **3. Shaped by the Sea** (music by Nathan R Thomson, lyrics by Mari Kalkun)

This is the title track of the album inspired by growing up by the sea, travels to distant shores, and a constant longing to be close to the ocean. The movement of the sea shapes the land, and it can shape the personalities of the people who live close to it.

##### **4. Postcard 1 (underwater).** (music by Nathan R Thomson and Dylan Fowler)

This piece is like a picture postcard. I had an image of travelling underwater with my eyes open. The sea is green and blue. In my dream I can dive under the water and fly above it, looking down at the waves.

##### **5. The Next Dala Dala** (music by Nathan R Thomson)

This piece is inspired by bus journeys in Tanzania. The local buses or, dala dala, are packed full of people and maybe some animals too. The conversation is lively and it travels around the bus. There are bags on the roof, and maybe some people up there too. It's hot and there is no room to move. The road is

bumpy, but the atmosphere is good!

## **6. For Johanna** (music by Nathan R Thomson)

This piece was written for my Finnish wife. We met in London, had 3 sons, and moved to Finland in the summer of 2011.

## **7. Mzuka** (music by Nathan R Thomson)

Mzuka is a Swahili word, which translates as 'ghost' or 'spirit'. If you talk about the mzuka in the music, you are referring to when the music has spirit and reaches a high energy level. The musicians may be channeling an ancestral spirit to achieve this in performance.

## **Interval**

### **Second Half**

#### **1. Roots** (music by Nathan R Thomson)

During my studies I began exploring solo playing for the first time as a double bass player. For this piece I wanted to work with rhythmic cycles and explore all the rhythmic possibilities of the bass. As part of the piece I also experiment with attachments for the bass, including the wire from a snare drum, which I have cut and stuck on to the bridge of the bass. An ankle shaker and stomp box is used to create other rhythmic elements.

#### **2. Under Ubi's Tree** (trad Tanzania and Estonian, arranged by Nathan, Kristiina and Timo)

As part of my studies I took some lessons with Kristiina Ilmonen. I was particularly interested in exploring the connections between the Finnish pitkä huilu and the Tanzanian filimbi, or overtone flute. These two instruments naturally produce the same notes from the harmonic series, but the technique of playing them is very different. They also traditionally play very different types music. This piece is partly improvised and partly based on a traditional melody from Tanzania, and a polska from Estonia. We wanted to see what would happen if we threw them together and used them as source material to

improvise with. Timo Väänänen is playing an ancient Siberian instrument called pyngyr, which was another interesting colour to add to the cross-cultural mix.

### **3. Waiting for Rain** (music by Nathan and Katja Thomson)

This piece takes inspiration from my time living in Zambia. I also crossed the border many times into Zimbabwe. At this time there was a drought in the country and life was hard, but somehow the people kept smiling. These people inspire the title of the piece. A Zimbabwean sculptor I met had made a sculpture of a man looking up at the sky, waiting for rain.

### **4. Bus to Bagamoyo** (music by Nathan R Thomson)

This piece is inspired by another one of my African bus rides. But this time we take a diversion to Wales, and hear a Welsh slip jig part way down the road.

### **5. Kapiti Island** (music by Nathan R Thomson)

Kapiti Island draws on memories of time spent with my grandparents in New Zealand as a child. They lived by the beach and I spent many hours walking on the beach collecting driftwood with my grandfather. Kapiti Island is a small island just off the coast. When my grandmother died I had a dream that she sailed off onto the island. The emotion is mixed between happy memories and sorrow.

### **6. Gaia** (kasper's theme) (music by Nathan R Thomson, lyrics by Mari Kalkun and Nora Vaura)

This theme was written for my last-born son. It reflects on the realization that we love, nurture and care for our children, but ultimately they do not belong to us. We guide them through childhood, but we must also set them free.

## **Appendix 5: Complete feedback forms from the musicians**

### **1. What was your overall experience of working in an ensemble made up of musicians from diverse musical and cultural backgrounds?**

*It was an excellent experience, which drew on musician's natural curiosity about each other's work and influences.*

*The experience was very positive and inspiring as well as enriching. I did learn new things (musical and dynamic/expressive) and enjoyed playing with all the people.*

*Working with musicians from diverse backgrounds was again very nice and inspiring. Along with the making, designing and talking one gets new ideas. I often reflect on what are the connecting things we have, as they seem to be a surprising amount of them. Perhaps we are from cultures that are similar enough in order to do music successfully. I have experienced the opposite in some projects. The musicians were from a very distant cultures and it was hard to know what is important to them in music. In the Subsonic it was not hard to know what the music is all about.*

*In the Subsonic – like usually in this kind of projects – I have been questioning myself what is essential to my playing. What kind of a sound of the kantele and energy I want to bring out?*

*Overall experience was great. The musicians chosen to the group were all very open-minded and therefore it was easy to be part of the process and even to hop into the rehearsals, even though I was not part of the longer and intensive preparation. Because of Nathan's music I didn't feel there are barriers between musical and cultural backgrounds – your music was uniting us into one.*

*-It was easy and inspiring even though finally we didn't have too many times together*

*It is great to discover various viewpoints of the same subject(musical situations) and different music traditions.*

**2. Do you feel this project was successful or unsuccessful? Can you give some specific reasons why?**

*The project was extremely successful because we were playing music that we all felt involved in and the rehearsal period was very well planned which enabled all of us to really connect with the music in performance. The compositions really gave something to everyone also.*

*It was successful. The music created was beautiful and rewarding and the project did create some challenges for myself, which were great as a means to develop my own playing and improvising skills and expression.*

*I think the project was a success - the goal was to create two sets of music for a concert, and that was done well. The assortment of musical colors, timbres, and different influences was versatile.*

*In addition to the concert there was also a surprisingly well-functioning large band.*

*There was no extra focus on developing the ensemble work, because the concerts were the main target. Because of the schedule and the number of the players in the band, it was natural that Nathan was the band leader, composer, and in the central role. The band found its shape very well, despite of the tight schedule.*

*It was successful. We did a very good concert and I had some new friends as well.*

*Successful. The combination of musicians worked really well.*

*Music wise, definitely successful, because everybody had her/his own important role in the project and Nathan managed to bring everything together. Is this ensemble successful as a group, the future will show :)*

**3. Can you describe your experience of what happened when the visiting musicians arrived, both musically and in terms of the group dynamic?**

*The arrival of the visiting musicians changed the musical environment somewhat drastically, on the other hand allowing me (and others) to rely on a more solid groove (as they were partly responsible of that area) and on the other hand, creating a need to alter/adjust our playing to accommodate more players. In general, it generated more energy to the ensemble.*

*During the winter we had the 2-4 person rehearsals. At these meetings we tried out several things that were useful later in the larger group. We also found some timbres, textures and ideas, of which some could be used when there were more musicians. For me it was both inspiring to get new players that, especially when they are so interesting and exciting musicians, but also challenging to adapt to the search for new ways to find your own place in the growing sound of the band. Group work, however, was very encouraging, so it was good to search new ways.*

*Naturally I changed a bit my approach to songs after we started to play them with two percussionists. That didn't bother me at all.*

*Incorporating musicians from different cultures does give some diversity to playing the music because of different energies involved. Especially interesting was to see the so-called Nordic laid-back playing style mixing up with the flaming temperament when Adriano came into the group*

**4. Are there any particular moments that you remember during the rehearsal process that illustrate the way we worked together?**

*I can't think of one specific moment but throughout the process there was a feeling of deep listening to what each person was doing and as the music was so open there were real dialogues going on within the ensemble. A friend who was in the audience in Abergavenny said it had been many years since he'd heard a concert where he was so aware of how much listening was going on amongst the musicians.*

*Maybe the moment during the BB gig interval, when you asked me if I would do a vocal perc. solo in Bus to Bagamoyo – because of the rehearsals process this was possible (also because of my own past experiences, of course).*

*There were some great humor between us : )*

*Overall there was a great atmosphere throughout the rehearsals.*

*I liked the balance between your composed material and still having openness to make some changes during the rehearsal process.*

**5. Did you notice any changes in the way you normally work as a result of this context?**

*It didn't really change my approach but it validated it and helped me focus on music that I really want to be involved in.*

*Not really, as I work with improvised and more arranged/structured music creating styles normally also.*

*It was great to see how things were resolved.*

*One great thing was you ordering lyrics from the singers and taking it as something very natural. That opened up new potential in me (and I believe also in Nora) and gave opportunity to try a different role – instead of creating music, creating new words to ready musical material.*

*Did you discover anything new in terms of the way you played and your approach to the music during this project?*

*Yes. I developed my drum set to fit to acoustic music. That was a huge personal improvement.*

*Yes there are certain percussive techniques which I used that could be developed. Also using the lap steel in the context of this group was a new experience for me and improvising over some of the harmonic changes was a challenge for me.*

*Not particularly, because we already worked together for long time.*

*Hmm, that's a good question. Being only a singer in this project (usually I also play song instrument while singing) was a new experience for me and it*

*proved to be a very nice one. I could only focus on singing and I believe it gets more out of my voice this way.*

**6. Did the band leader give you clear guidelines? How was this done?**

*Very clear indeed. Always listening to everyones viewpoint while at the same time having a very clear idea of how the music should sound.*

*Yes, the band leader gave me guidelines in a very constructive and encouraging way.*

*Nathan was very clear and safe leader of the band. It was very clear what we are looking for and that we can also suggest things.*

*Yes. He was very clear showing all those rhythms and breaks. Atmospheres too.*

*Yep, but mostly left me free and comfortable to create and explore new ideas.*

*Yes, the band leader gave very clear guidelines, in my opinion. Through compositions and through the way Nathan worked in the rehearsal process giving guidelines, telling ideas but sometimes also negotiating and taking into consideration suggestions from band members.*

**7. Did you have enough freedom as a musician and did this context allow you to express yourself in the way you had hoped?**

*More than enough!*

Yes.

*The atmosphere of the work and the music was free. However, I started to reflect on the relationship between composed music, precise arrangements, vision and improvisation. I have got used to very improvisatory music lately, and I just as improvisation in solo parts, but also in how music is created and built - either in a rehearsal or in performance. In such music I feel most free. It was interesting to be a part of such a carefully constructed music, but the challenge for me was to get the space for the kantele and its specially designed scales for improvisation and timbre, when a mixture of sounds and instruments was getting denser and richer in the band, and at the same time the music was getting rehearsed into set structures.*

Yes.

*Yes, very much.*

*Considering the size and time of this project, I think there was freedom in playing together the result. But of course, with more time there could be more freedom and more of these impro spots for soulful free playing around. With such a big group it's quite difficult to use the maximum potential of everyone and show the individual skills of every band member. But I think you managed quite well to show the strengths of every member.*

**8. Did you feel able to contribute musically to the rehearsal process? Any examples?**

*Yes. There was a relaxed atmosphere, which allowed expressing of ideas from all of the players. For example the choice of instrumentation (in percussion and winds) was open to explore ideas.*

*Yes, it goes back to before we recorded the Cd as Nathan and I worked closely on some of the harmonic language and developed some of the inner melodic lines that worked well particularly with the three singers.*

*Yes. By listening and understanding the way all musicians worked together.*

*Yes, suggesting some minor changes in song structures (Gaia) and also being one puzzle piece in the singer's choir. Also in the improvisatory parts and adding my energy to the group.*

**9. Can you describe the process you went through to learn the rhythmic elements of the music?**

*I listened to the CD and recordings from Dropbox. We did a bit of body percussion/dance exercises at rehearsals. For me, important is to get the understanding of where the first beat lies, and after this I can relate everything to that. The band leader also helped in describing of how he understands the rhythmic elements.*

*Well rhythmic understanding is a constant process and in this context you get to be able to perform the music at one level but ultimately it needs a lot more work to become completely fluent in the kind of rhythmic language that inspires Nathan's compositions.*

*Dancing of the rhythm patterns was very efficient and fun. It helped to understand the rhythms. We had also played during the winter rhythms together, so they had become familiar over a longer period.*

*I tried to memorize everything to make them easily payable in live situation.*

*I was involved from the beginning, and was there when things were created. So it was pretty much a listening and creative process.*

*I remember learning Standing on the Sea for the first time in master's band rehearsal – it seemed quite difficult and took time. With Subsonic, it didn't feel it being difficult anymore. With other pieces rhythms I didn't feel many difficulties either, also maybe because of the strong percussion support (except for maybe bass solo piece, that where is the stress really :) ) It's really interesting the way you bring the African rhythms world into your music and I think the rhythmic thinking is one of the most coolest experiences in this project. Western classical music based rhythm world seems to be clearly too limited for folk music.*

**10. Did you enjoy this project and would you like to do it again? Do you have any favorite moments?**

*Yes ☺! The gigs were nice, it was good to be able to play more gigs in UK. We had some good moments with Adriano, developing the dual solo (in the Bus to B.) further in the UK gigs.*

*Of course I would like to be re-involved in the project. Training phase was a lot of great moments, but some of the finest moments were in the concerts anyway.*

*The most thrilling was the Helsinki Music Centre concert when Kristiina took part in the second Bus. I did not play in the piece but I was in the music very much, because it was so much about improvisation and randomness – which is very important to me in music.*

*It was also great to continue on to England and Wales. There I got to seek my own sound in relation to the changed band. Underwater Postcard was for me finest experience of improvisation and communication between the musicians and timbres - as well as the presence in a moment. I enjoy the impossibility of the errors, when there is no exact map – we know what kind of a path there is to follow but we do not know every curve and bend.*

*Thoroughly enjoyed it! My favourite moment began when I arrived for the rehearsals and lasted until the last moment of the last concert.*

*The period was very enjoyable for me. I'm looking forward to do it again.*

*Yes, enjoyed it! Favorite moment was the bass solo piece.*

*Yes! :-) My favourite moments were playing rehearsals in Kunkkula and listening to "Waiting for Rain" from outside rehearsal house with first spring weather.*

*I enjoyed very much the more "introvert" and soundscape pieces like Underwater and Waiting for Rain, SOTS, where seemingly not much is happening but actually... This kind of pieces somehow go under the skin. For winning audience it's good to have both sides in music – also more outgoing and rhythmical, but I'd encourage you to keep working on that "darker and deeper" side of your music too :)*

## **11. Is there anything you would change or develop next time?**

*It would be great if all the band members could attend most of the rehearsals.*

*The band at its largest is quite big and does not leave very much room for each player, but does produce an interesting sound.*

*It would be great to start developing new tunes together, taking into account the typicalities of the different instruments, as to get the best out of them and the players. Now my instrumentation was a bit limited because of the tunings/keys of the pieces, and the melodies were not extremely well suited for all of the winds I played. Although this was also fun, to try to find ways to play just these tunes :-).*

*I think it would be good to consider the relationship between the composing and improvisation in order let the musician try different things with each other. Dialogue with the compositions is also very exciting, especially when the compositions are so great, as in this project are. Through improvisation, however, it might be possible to explore more of the means of expressions and nuances, as well as personalities of the musicians.*

*-Kallio Kuninkaala has always been bit difficult for me. Transportation issue :)*

*There is always room to improve, but I would not point out any particular moment/tune.*

*I would take a couple of less composed pieces into the concert programme and give more room for developing something together, try some different improvisation methods with the group to develop the ability inside the group to listen to each other more carefully and to really get impulses from each other while playing.*

*I would love to hear Nia Lynne sing with Mari, Nora and Maija*

## 12. Any other comments.

*Thanks Nipsu for all your great work!*

*Excellent job, Nathan!!! Thanks so much for inviting me to the project, I really feel I've made new musical friendships and your music is really warm. It was great experience to see you working with the group and bringing it all together. AITÄH!!!*

