Supporting Collaboration in Changing Cultural Landscapes: *operabyyou.com* as an Arena for Creativity in '*Kaleidoscopic Music*'

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Introduction

Should we have a name for this kind of music that is assembled from very diverse ingredients? 'Kaleidoscopic music' perhaps? This is certainly something that hasn't been done before in the history of music. (A member of the operabyyou.com online community)

A steadily growing curiosity about informal music learning environments (e.g., Green, 2001; Johansson, 2004; Karlsen, 2010; Veblen, Messenger, Silverman, & Elliott, 2013), conjoined with a growing interest in online music communities (e.g., Ballantyne, Barrett, Temmerman, Harrison, & Meissner, 2009; Miller, 2012; Partti, 2009; Partti & Karlsen, 2010; Salavuo, 2006; Waldron & Veblen, 2008), continues to be one of the most widespread trends within music education research. Teachers, researchers and musicians, all seek to come to terms with rapidly changing cultural landscapes of music making and learning. Indeed, one of the most striking cultural shifts of recent times has to do with people turning away from solely consuming ready-made media content offered by television, for instance, to actively participating in the user-generated culture of social media, such as online fan production and citizen journalism. Statistics reveal that in Finland – one of the top ten countries in Europe in the prevalence of Internet use – 86% of 16 to 24-year-old Finns participate in some web-based social network service(s) (Official Statistics of Finland, 2011). Similarly, a recent survey by the Pew Research Center (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010) shows that over two-thirds of American teen Internet users – that is,

93% of all American teens – reported using an online social networking site; and over a third stated that they use the Internet for sharing online media content, such as artwork, stories and videos, that they had created themselves. This emerging cultural phenomenon in new media is often referred to as *participatory culture*, and has been connected to the potential for more democratic cultural, political and civic engagement occurring largely outside of formal institutions of education (see, for example, Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robinson, & Weigel, 2006; Kann, Berry, Gant, & Zager, 2007; Schäfer, 2011).

Technologies play an important part in participatory culture in their usefulness and ability to 'create desire, joy and pleasure, through their affective integration into everyday life' (Petersen, 2008). They also facilitate ever-widening opportunities for music making, music-related social participation and learning. Music participants are no longer limited to those opportunities offered by local institutions of formal music education. Whether one desires to become skilled at playing traditional Irish tunes (Waldron & Veblen, 2008), or needs to get information on music software and hardware (Salavuo, 2006), or wishes to participate in a public remix contest (Michielse, 2012), the first choice of a forum for an increasing number of people is the one that is accessible 24/7 from practically anywhere in the world.

As has been shown (Miller, 2012; Partti & Westerlund, 2012), online music communities exemplify participatory culture with their strong emphasis on the dual aspects of ownership and active participation. By creating cultural content, people are both blurring the boundaries between consuming and producing music and other cultural artefacts, and making flexible use of technology in self-expression, socialising and learning (e.g., Gallant, Boone & Heap, 2007; Lomborg, 2009; Salavuo, 2006; Waldron, 2009). As a result, new media related cultural phenomena are creating musical landscapes that are fuelled by a continual stream of cultural influences and a constant interplay of the local and the global.

Despite the promising possibilities of utilising digital technology to facilitate more opportunities for creativity and collaboration in music making and learning, the excitement revolving around online environments is increasingly accompanied by critical questions. Is the hype about creative and social possibilities of online

communities just a much-ado-about-nothing, an empty bubble, and a clever sleight of hand? Is there *genuine collaboration* taking place within practices of new media, or is the Internet, in fact, accentuating rather than 'liquidating' (Buckingham, 2010) social barriers and inequalities, as some suggest? And, importantly, to what extent, if any, are the practices of online communities applicable in the music classroom?

In this chapter, I will address questions related to collaboration, creativity and new media through the case of Opera by You, an online project that aimed to bring people from all over the world to work together online in the making of a full-scale opera that was later performed on the main stage of *Savonlinna,* a distinguished opera festival in Finland. The examination proceeds by utilising recent literature on sociocultural learning (e.g., Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005; Viilo, Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, & Hakkarainen, 2011; Wenger, 1998) in order to explore challenges and possibilities related to facilitating and supporting a technology-enhanced collaborative inquiry in a culturally diverse context of music making. I will also discuss some implications that the findings of the research addressed in this chapter can be expected to have for formal music education.

Wrecking an Opera in the *operabyyou.com* Online Community

A 2-year-long project, Opera by You, and the related online community, *operabyou.com*[i] (hereafter abbreviated as OBY), was advertised to be the 'first ever community opera'. Launched in May 2010, the Finnish *Savonlinna Opera Festival-*initiated project was designed to invite and enable people from all over the world, independent of their educational background or stylistic preferences, to collaborate on an opera production. The OBY online community operated on the Wreckamovie[ii] web-platform, which was initially launched to facilitate online collaborative filmmaking. Since 2005, Wreckamovie has hosted several Internet communities dedicated to productions of, amongst other things, short films and full-length features, documentaries, music videos and mobile films. OBY was the first opera production that used the platform. Approximately 400 people from 43 countries[iii] registered, for free, to become members of the OBY online community. The members of the community were allowed to contribute to the creation of the opera by writing the

libretto, composing the music, and/or designing the sets and costumes in the capacity of their own choice. The process of making the opera proceeded gradually, and was guided by six professionals within the field of dramatic art, including a musical leader, appointed by the *Savonlinna Opera Festival* before the launch of the project. In July 2012, the opera festival provided professional soloists, a chorus, a symphony orchestra, and the festival's production machinery to perform the finished opera production at the *Savonlinna Opera Festival* in Finland. The opera, titled *Free Will*, was publicly performed at the main venue of the festival, while being simultaneously streamed live on the Internet.

Theoretical Starting Points

In this study, creativity is understood 'to be based on deliberately and systematically cultivated personal and collective expertise, embodied in expert cultures and networks' (Hakkarainen, 2013, p. 14) rather than as an 'individual gift' (p. 14), lying 'within the human mind' (p. 19; see also, Sawyer, 2007). The exploration thus focused, on the one hand, on the role of the musical leader in ushering the OBY composers towards – what is here understood as – 'collaborative inquiry' (Viilo et al., 2011), and, on the other hand, on the musical artefact as an object that facilitated creative collaboration beyond cultural, geographical, temporal and professional/educational boundaries. The reading of the data proceeded through a social theory of learning in general (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), and the knowledge-creation metaphor (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005; Paavola, Lipponen & Hakkarainen, 2004) in particular, as this 'trialogical' (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005) approach to knowledge construction focuses beyond both the individual mind and social interaction and enculturation by taking into account mediated activity between an individual and an environment. In the context of the OBY online community, the knowledge-creation metaphor was understood to provide a means to examine the ways in which 'the individual initiative serves the communal effort to create something new, and the social environment feeds the individual initiative and cognitive growth' (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005, p. 546). As such, questions related to collaborative musical creativity in OBY are examined not only from the point of view of an individual OBY composer or the importance of the surrounding musical

community, but also through the significance of the collaborative development of shared objects of activity and mediating cultural artefacts that are fundamental for individuals within the given cultural setting that is striving for something new. Importantly, the role of the musical leader as the most experienced composer of the OBY community was considered to be pivotal in helping the novice composers to engage in an advanced inquiry process by productively participating in knowledge work (Viilo et al., 2011).

Implementation of the Study

In order to investigate the challenges and possibilities related to facilitating and supporting a technology-enhanced inquiry in a culturally diverse context of music making a qualitative case study (Stake, 1995) methodology was adopted. Data were collected from the *operabyyou.com* online community during the entire project of making the *Free Will* opera. The research data consists of the OBY member's individual online profiles, the composing task related online discussions that appeared on the site during the making of the opera, computer-assisted interviews with five voluntary OBY composers, and two semi-structured interviews with the musical leader of the OBY community. In addition the festival organisation provided demographic statistics related to the participants of the OBY community. In previous articles arising from this project I have discussed the OBY members' experiences and the construction of music-related expertise, as well as wider technology-related cultural changes exemplified by the community (Partti, forthcoming; Partti & Westerlund, 2012, in print).

In this chapter, I concentrate on the two interviews with the musical leader. Both interviews were approximately 60 minutes in duration, and were carried out by the author – the first one in June 2011, almost halfway through the opera project, and the second one in September 2012, after the completion and performance of the *Free Will* opera.[iv]

The interviews with the musical leader were understood as narratives through which the (specific) life events, choices and happenings of the interviewee were organised

into stories (e.g., Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Craib, 2004; Kelchtermans, 1994; Webster & Mertova, 2007), and, consequently, through which the interviewee aimed to make sense of his experiences (Josselson & Lieblich, 2002, p. 259). These narratives provide a source for depictions of experiences that provide insight 'into the characters, events, and happenings central to those experiences' (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 68). Thus, by 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data,' as well as interpreting 'various aspects of the research topic' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79), the aim of the analysis was to examine issues related to facilitating collective musical creativity within an emerging community of practice that collaborates in a culturally diverse context of music making.

Organising an Online Community Towards Collaboration: The Twofold Role of the Musical Leader

The composing of the music for the *Free Will* opera was led by Markus Fagerudd, a Finnish professional composer, whose versatile portfolio includes compositions for solo instruments, chamber ensemble, symphony orchestra and choir. Among his most widely known works are three operas for children. In the OBY project, Markus's most visible role consisted of management elements, including designing, allocating and explaining the composing tasks to be undertaken by the community members.

The composing work began 4 months after the launch of the OBY project – as soon as the synopsis for the opera had been finished and there was enough clarity on the overall idea of the production. The musical leader, Markus, broke down the overall composing assignment into smaller pieces (referred to as *Tasks* in OBY), and the participants would compose music for particular parts of the score at a given time, as commissioned by him. In September 2010, Markus presented the first composing task with a posting on the notice board of the OBY online community. In the posting he explained the task (a dialogue of the first scene), assigned voice types to the characters, and gave some practical guidelines for submitting the compositions.

From this point on, Markus would present a new task for the community every few weeks. After a task had been presented, any registered member of the community

could contribute their musical ideas – whether they consisted of a single bar or lengthy passages. The composers were asked to compose to a piano score that would only later be orchestrated, and submit the musical snippets as notated versions. They were free to compose within any musical style, as neither Markus nor the other leaders provided any stylistic direction or limitations. In the first interview, Markus highlighted that this was a very deliberate choice to encourage the music to genuinely reflect the community of the collaborators.

I didn't set any aesthetic requirements for the music … How could I? If I did, I would be commissioning an opera that I'd like to make, while this project is about what kind of an opera we will get when a community makes it. So, from the very beginning, I resigned from any discussion on aesthetics or anything like that, and from leading the composers in that sense … the starting point [for the composing] needs to be in what any given person [who is composing] has to contribute. (Markus, Interview 1)

According to Markus, the lack of predetermined stylistic guidelines was not wholeheartedly welcomed among the community members, as many of the composers were hoping to receive clear stylistic directions from him. When he didn't provide them, the community was compelled to negotiate their ideas about style amongst themselves: what does 'opera' mean, in general? And more specifically: what kind of an opera is *this* community hoping to accomplish?

… then they began to discuss with each other, which I found much more fun. I didn't participate in that discussion at all, but thought: 'Okay, go ahead!' There was some 'To the barricades!' type of things going on – people saying to each other: 'That's a stupid idea! It should be done like this!' I thought: 'Good! Go ahead and get it all out now'. (Markus, Interview 1)

Despite the pressure to provide clearer guidelines – and some rather intensive discussions amongst the participants – Markus abstained from taking stronger leadership in guiding the composers in a given direction.

In the end, I feel it was worthwhile to not set any stylistic limitations, as it could have scared people off if I had said 'Please remember that this is a post-serialist piece …'. (Markus, Interview 1)

The musical leader's role in the emerging community was thus twofold. On the one hand, Markus used scaffolding strategies by setting enough parameters to arrange and

structure the extensive task of composing a full-scale opera so that novice composers could work on it successfully. On the other hand, Markus intentionally left the aesthetic framework as wide as possible. His avoidance of an overly tight structure could be viewed as an intention to promote an emergence of practices through which the composers could pursue the advancement of their own ideas and strengthen their own community (see, for example, Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2005; Viilo et al., 2011).

As emphasised by sociocultural theorists (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), learning happens through 'legitimate peripheral participation': by the integration of novices within an expert culture, and their participation in its activities. In such communities, the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills are interrelated and overlapping. In other words, in OBY, learning to compose an opera took place for each community member when he/she *became* an opera composer and put into practice the know-how possessed at any given moment. The OBY composers were welcomed to become active participants in the practices of the OBY community, without the pressure of having to take responsibility for the entire composing project. As for Markus, his role as the most experienced member of the community was to provide support and guidance to benefit the community in its creative efforts.

Throughout the process of composing the opera, Markus sought to help the composers come to terms increasingly with the specific requirements for musical expression set by opera as a large-scale performative artform. He encouraged the composers to consider the nature of a melody line and the use of repetition in relation to the sense of space at the festival main stage, for example.

I have tried to open issues like this – but in a very subtle way – as there is [a danger] that the composers start to think: 'I wonder, what Markus would want?' (Markus, Interview 1)

After Markus had set a task for the community to work with, those who were willing to compose would send their notated musical snippets to Markus. He would then bind all the ideas together by placing his chosen musical snippets into the piano score, and then he would present a new task. In weaving the material together, Markus had to balance the aim of making equal use of all the ideas and contributions he had received

– regardless of how big or small that contribution was – and the goal of creating a coherent score with 'one mind'.

The biggest challenge [for me] is how to make one complete piece of work out of this material … what matters here is the possibilities that I can see in the material made by someone else … to think as organic[ly] as possible, and aim to make it work with as few manipulations as possible … (Markus, Interview 1)

Limitations for 'Collaborative Conversation'

Despite the overall aim of OBY to produce 'a community opera' the clear tasks and instructions given by Markus could be viewed as central to helping the beginning opera composers to get to work, focus on relevant issues and prevent cognitive overload. In many ways, Markus was also providing a model of '"ways of being" a composer' (Barrett, 2006, p. 210) by, for example, using special terminology and providing guidelines or pointers related to methods of composing. However, due to the nature of the OBY online community, the opportunities for modelling were limited. The Wreckamovie platform did not afford, for example, the use of an open source pool of musical ideas, and the predetermined and tight time frame of the project (2 years) prevented members from sharing their reflections on the entire process (Partti & Westerlund, in print). As such, opportunities for the OBY composers to observe and participate in Markus's work were not realised in an ideal way. The limitations of the environment in contributing to the emergence of 'collaborative conversation' (Renshaw, 2013, p. 238) prevented Markus from fully 'adopting a style of leadership that [was] genuinely open and facilitatory' (p. 239) and that would have enabled greater opportunities for collective responsibility. Furthermore, the scarcity of chances to share critical reflection between the composers discouraged – at least to some extent – 'the process of making inter-connections, of cross-fertilization of ideas and practices, of exploring collaborative ways of learning in order to promote creativity and innovation' (Renshaw, 2013, p. 238). The importance of designing suitable technologies and the significance of thorough preparation in future enterprises is certainly one of the issues Markus emphasised while reflecting on the project:

That's also something that I would have liked to see … that all of us composers would have been working on the same server and writing into the same score and that [I] could record different editing phases so that everyone would see that 'Do you notice that now I'm doing something about the melody?' And maybe even that it would have been possible to leave a voice comment there: 'Can you see now? This melody line doesn't actually fit because of …', and this sort of things. (Markus, Interview 2)

Under *'the Banner'* of Opera: A Musical Artefact as a Facilitator of Creative Collaboration

The OBY members' participation in the community's practices resulted in a wide range of both tangible and intangible outcomes, such as stories, concepts and documents, as well as implicit relations and, indeed, musical ideas for an opera score. Using Wenger's (1998) terminology, this process of members giving form to their experiences of participation in OBY is here referred to as *reification.* Forms of reification capture something of the practice of the community, and enable sharing of that practice with newcomers and outsiders. The forms of reification can become, what Wenger (1998) refers to as, *boundary objects* that have an ability to 'cross boundaries and enter different practices' (p. 105).

The opera composition of OBY can be viewed as a boundary object that belonged to multiple practices simultaneously (Wenger, 1998, p. 107), and worked as a link between the different communities of which the participants of OBY were members. This was particularly apparent in the culturally diverse context of OBY. Markus described this:

People have collaborated on compositions throughout the ages, but not in this way, of course. The fact that we have a real-time connection to Peru and America, and the paths are continuously open so we can communicate at that very moment … is something very interesting …. It becomes very clear that music is a common thing. That, in the end, it has no address. (Markus, Interview 1)

When asked about the ways in which cultural diversity has brought about challenges in terms of reconciling cultural and aesthetic differences, he answered:

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Actually, much less than I thought … the concept of 'opera' is, in a way, a banner … it informs people about a particular space. And ... as we gather under it [the banner], the thought forms clearly that we are making an opera. (Markus, Interview 1)

Thus, the opera composition brought people together and provided them with a platform for shared creative expression. Yet, conversely, it also set boundaries for the interests of the OBY members. During the process of composing the opera score, Markus stated:

If we were making a ballet or something else for the stage, say, a musical, we would probably receive a variety of different kinds of contributions …. Let's say we would be making a rock opera, for instance – even that would indicate something about the work we are doing. But now we are making an opera. (Markus, Interview 1)

Thus, reification refers not only to artefacts – such as the end product of the opera composition – but also to the *process of collaborating* on the score (see Wenger, 1998, p. 60). The understanding of *what an opera is* does not carry its own meaning, but is 'open to reinterpretation and to multiple interpretations' (p. 88). The OBY members' definitions of what it means to compose an opera score were, in themselves, reified forms of their understandings on the question. In the opening citation of this article – drawn from one of the online discussions in OBY – a member of the community suggested that, due to the manifold influences, methods and cultural backgrounds of the opera, the genre of *Free Will* should be called 'kaleidoscopic music'.

The metaphor of a kaleidoscope is, indeed, an appropriate one to highlight not only the end product (the *Free Will* opera score) but also the whole process of making the opera in OBY. A kaleidoscope is, by definition, a complex pattern of constantly changing colours and shapes. The kaleidoscope of the OBY members' collaboratively created opera composition did not represent the view of an individual alone – not even that of the musical leader – but was a *hybrid*, a product of a process that drew from multiple and heterogeneous sources of reifications, practices and identities.

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As pointed out by Markus, participation in the social enterprise of OBY thus required of the composers the willingness to embrace the idea of shared ownership as a resource rather than a constraint.

The basic idea of doing things together brings about the same problems that are familiar in theatre, for example …. The person who is capable of collaboration sees the project from the community's point of view – not from their own point of view alone. (Markus, Interview 1)

At its best, collaboration could be seen to open up possibilities for achieving something that no individual OBY composer would have been able to attain alone. These possibilities were related to the musical style, as multiple voices potentially generate a variety of new and unexpected musical twists and turns. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, only through collaboration were the individual composers able to provide musical ideas for a production that was publicly performed at an eminent opera festival – an achievement generally attainable by extremely few composers.

One can always ask if it's such a terrible thing for an amateur composer to get their fragments to the Savonlinna stage? What are you willing to let go of to hear your fragments there? [In my opinion,] it wasn't such a bad deal at all for the creators [of the *Free Will* opera] to appear on the main festival stage in the [Savonlinna] castle! (Markus, Interview 2)

Conclusion: Kaleidoscopic Processes of Music Making in Educational Settings

The OBY project may be a unique experiment of its kind, but it nevertheless shares many similarities with situations within modern music education. Technology enabled collaborative composing takes place not only in various online communities, but also increasingly often in music classrooms (see, for example, King, 2008; Ruthmann, 2007; Seddon, 2006). Moreover, schools and other institutions of music education are continually becoming more diverse in terms of musical influences and students' cultural backgrounds. As seen in the case of OBY, a musical artefact as a boundary object might be a powerful facilitator of creative collaboration, working as a link between different communities in culturally diverse contexts of music making and learning. Furthermore, the influence of the musical leader, Markus, in the process of

organising the activities toward collaboration appears to be crucial, and his constitutive role could be understood as analogical with the role of the teacher in the music classroom.

However, while studies on music practices outside music education institutions bring forth essential aspects of our society's community life, and investigations of experienced musicians' ways of working might offer inspiring ideas and principles for classroom music teachers, it is important to note that online music communities and other informal music practices rarely represent ideal *models* for the music classroom, as they are not necessarily designed primarily as pedagogical settings (Partti & Westerlund, in print). Building on the analysis reported in this article and lessons learnt from the OBY community, I conclude by suggesting some ways the music classroom could be organised towards creative collaboration and student-driven inquiry.

Despite its limitations in facilitating open collaboration, the OBY project exemplifies an enterprise in which the participants were not only aiming to acquire knowledge or socialise themselves into stable cultural practices, but were deliberately striving for something new through the development of shared objects of their activity. In other words, the participants were not primarily rehearsing musical skills for a distant future. Instead, through reification processes they were participating in the generation of novel ideas and the production of cultural artefacts to be distributed for an actual audience.

As pointed out by Paavola and Hakkarainen (2005), (re)structuring educational practices 'on the basis of the knowledge-creation models' (p. 555) entails the learning of 'basic skills and practices related to knowledge advancement' (p. 555). Students must learn 'to understand and explain the issues they are dealing with as well as transform their prevailing social practices and culture of working with knowledge' (p. 555). Ideally, as Viilo and colleagues (2011) emphasise, the students engage themselves in solving complex problems, which are essential to their surrounding community, and publish their results for an authentic audience rather than only for the teacher. Indeed, digital technology affords various simple and inexpensive means not only for collaborative creative music making inside the classroom, but also for

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participation in, for instance, online remix collaborations and for making the students' artwork available to wider audiences outside the classroom walls. These kinds of processes, through which students collaboratively create and develop 'conceptual and material artifacts and related practices for a subsequent use' (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005, p. 543), can be viewed as encouraging the students to see themselves as musicians – instead of 'just students' – who participate in authentic socio-cultural activities to advance their 'collaborative inquiry and shared knowledge rather than merely pursue their own learning agendas' (p. 554).

As for the educator, organising the collaborative processes of developing common objects of activity requires the capacity to see the possibilities of the community and help the students to tap into those possibilities by encouraging them to 'relate their personal ideas with one another' (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005, p. 554) in order to create or elaborate their *shared* ideas and thoughts, and to even make them 'available for others to work on and further articulate' (p. 550). Renshaw's (2013) concept of collaborative conversation can thus be understood to refer to the whole process of collaborating on an artefact (e.g., an opera score) as a shared goal, including the negotiations related to, and reified forms of the participants' understandings of, what the shared goal is and how to attain it. In other words, the creation of collaborative artworks also requires learning so-called 'non-musical' skills of collaboration that cannot be taken for granted.

Putting students into groups and organising the music classroom toward collaboration cannot, however, be expected to automatically result in creativity and collective responsibility (e.g., Sawyer, 2007; Viilo et al., 2011). Participatory learning does not entail a *laissez-faire* stance to education in which the teacher is made redundant by reducing her role to that of a bystander. On the contrary, as seen in the case of OBY and emphasised by various sociocultural theorists (e.g., Roth, 1998), the desired educational culture 'with collaborative learning practices would not … appear without intensive practical work of the teacher' (Viilo et al., 2011, p. 54). Supporting students' growth into *epistemic agency* (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005) – the ability to deliberately pursue 'epistemic goals' by relating one's personal ideas with those of others', monitoring 'advancement of collective activities, and [overcoming] challenges emerging in the process' (p. 554) – entails active guidance and facilitation

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by the teacher. The teacher as 'the most mature member' (Dewey, 1938/1998, p. 58) of – what Dewey (MW 1, p. 20) refers to as – the 'little community' of the school classroom cannot exclude herself from membership in that community, but is, instead, called to take on her role as a moral and intellectual leader (Woodford, 2004) of the community and its activities. This kind of leadership widens the teacher's role from that of a manager who ensures that tasks are finished by planning, organising and supervising (Webb, 2005) to that of a more-experienced old-timer of the community, or a *responsive guide* (Viilo et al., 2011, p. 54), who offers 'supportive and procedural information or practical examples' (p. 55) without undermining students' own ideas with 'too-strong structuring' (p. 55). Although the role of the teacher can be crucial in offering students assistance in understanding, reflecting and organising their practices and processes, the teacher should also afford the conditions for learning through which students are encouraged to make use of peer scaffolding by instructing, posing questions, and providing feedback to each other (Viilo et al., 2011).

In addition to epistemic and intellectual matters, working at the edge of one's competence and pursuing collective creativity is demanding also socio-emotionally, as creative collaboration often produces feelings of vulnerability among the participants (Hakkarainen, 2013). An important aspect of the teacher's role in facilitating collaborative efforts has to do with developing collectives that are free of fear of failure (Hakkarainen, 2013) and judgment, and where the quality and importance of communication between students is taken into account and supported. As discussed earlier, frameworks and conditions for creative efforts in OBY allowed only sparse opportunities for the development of collaborative conversation (Renshaw, 2013) between the participants. In OBY, the successful completion of the opera score was considered the end to collaboration and the purpose of the community's existence. Attaining the goal of finishing the task in OBY did not require long-term interaction and building trust between the participants. Conversely, a community striving for the emergence of collective responsibility and epistemic agency is dependent on trust (Haythornthwaite, 2006; Renshaw, 2013). Thus, the quality of collaborative efforts in music education cannot be completely determined by the quality of musical end products, such as performances or compositions, but also by the quality of the process, including the practices and the ways they facilitate

'shared motivation, shared purpose, [and] solidarity based on shared values'
(Renshaw, 2013, p. 239) between the participants.

Creating and sustaining 'safety zones' (Hakkarainen, 2013, p. 23) within which
differences and conflicts are understood as resources for learning (Partti &
Westerlund, in print) and where 'feelings of fear, vulnerability, self-doubt and
marginality can also be shared' (Renshaw, 2013, p. 239) requires time and deliberate
efforts to transform the social practices of the music classroom. Although teachers are
increasingly committing themselves to advocating and establishing music education
practice that embraces collaboration, this change is not simple and does not always
lead to the intended collaborative inquiry learning (see, for example, Roth, 2002;
Viilo et al., 2011). Building a culture that encourages students to co-construct
knowledge 'through dialogue, risk-taking and the shared exploration of ideas and
meaning within the group' (Renshaw, 2013, p. 238) is therefore an invitation not only
for individual teachers, but also for teacher educators and policy makers to equip
teachers with the tools and secure the conditions that enable them to empower their
students to take the responsibility of their own learning and advancement of collective
creativity. Here, the teacher is neither acting as 'the initiator and verifier' of
classroom activities (Westerlund, 2006, p. 120) nor simply stepping back from the
activities; rather she strives to promote music education that is based on 'cooperative
engagement between teachers and students' and learning that is 'experimental,
mutual, historically engaged, socially responsible, and forward-looking' (Allsup,
2010, p. 10). Here, the music classroom becomes a place in which collaborative work
is orchestrated to promote a 'kaleidoscopic' process of making music. At its best,
such a classroom results in a learning culture that creates multivoiced, ethically-
oriented unity that nurtures individual diversity, and leads to artistically complex
patterns of constantly changing colours and shapes with the potential for both local
and global significance.

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[i] Opera by You: http://www.operabyyou.com

[ii] Wreckamovie: http://www.wreckamovie.com

iii The vast majority of the participants were from Finland (193). Other fairly widely represented countries were Italy (35), USA (31), UK (16) and Spain (11). Other represented countries had a range of one to ten participants. There were altogether approximately 10 to 15 members involved with actively composing the music in the OBY community.

iv The interviews were conducted in Finnish; translated into English by the author; cross–checked by an external reader fluent in both Finnish and English; and accepted by the interviewee.