This project drew on goal orientation mindsets, theories of transformational adult learning, and social learning theory to develop reflective improvisational rehearsal techniques developed to met the specific challenges and motivations returning flutist bring with them to the rehearsal. The narrative of this action-researched based project follows the development of the HHO, an ensemble of returning flutists, as well as the researcher as they test these rehearsal techniques and develop into a working musical community.

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Kathleen Weidenfeller

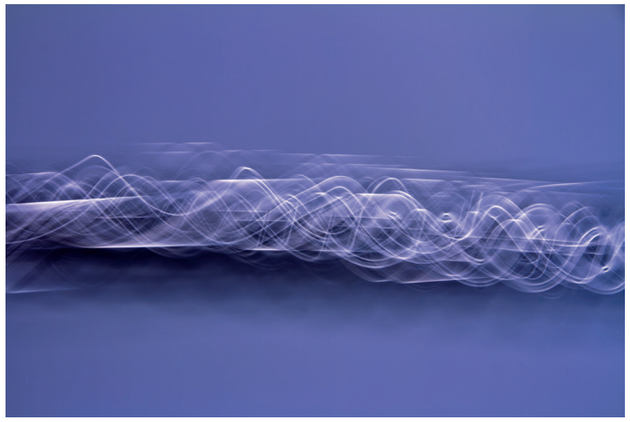
Returning Flutists

EST 67

Returning Flutists

Developing Improvisational Rehearsal Techniques for an Ensemble of Non-professional Flutists Returning to a Musical Practice

KATHLEEN WEIDENFELLER



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Sibelius Academy University of the Arts, Helsinki 2022

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Abstract

This project is presented as an Artistic Applied project in the Doctoral School of the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki University of the Arts. The purpose of this project was to develop a handbook for directors of flute ensembles of returning flutists. The handbook contains information on adults as learners, general organizational information, skills that a director should develop when working with this type of ensemble, as well as explains the improvisational exercises and the reflective way I use them in rehearsals.

In order to create an ensemble that would provide a supportive environment for the returning flutists, I looked at theories of adult education, motivation, and social learning, as outlined in the report of this project. The development of the returning flutist ensemble *Helsingin Huiluorkesteri*, my own development as director of the ensemble, and the development of the improvisational rehearsal techniques is explained in a narrative that follows my work with the ensemble over a period of six years. The improvisational exercises developed during the project were drawn from multiple sources of improvisation used as musical education or community building; including theatrical improvisation, trans-stylistic improvisation (as described by Edward Sarath) and Dalcroze Eurythmics. They were adapted and expanded during the project to meet the specific needs of this ensemble and the returning flutist members. My own development as a conductor is an important part of the journey. It not only was a vital part of the development of the actual rehearsal techniques but informs much of the material presented in the handbook, such as the importance of technical conducting skills, in addition to organizational, and social skills to the success of creating a successful ensemble.

Understanding goal orientation mindsets, theories of transformational adult learning, and social learning theory helped me understand the needs of the returning flutists and adapt the rehearsal techniques to meet those needs. Drawing on these theories, I explain in the narrative of the report how a community of learning was developed in the *Helsingin Huiluorkesteri*, and how the individual returning flutists were able to access both formal and informal learning sources during rehearsals. The effectiveness of the rehearsal techniques was also presented in the *Linnunlaulu* concert given by the Helsingin Huiluorkesteri. The concert program consisted of original works for flute orchestra containing improvisatory elements and extended flute techniques, including two new works commissioned for this concert. Data used in writing the report was gathered through a rehearsal journal containing my insights from rehearsals and

performances, as well as comments from the returning flutists. Later rehearsal-to-concert periods were also recorded on video. In addition, questionnaires were sent to the participants of the *Linnunlaulu* concert period.

Acknowledgements

I am very lucky to have grown up in a small town with an enthusiastic music director and a strong community built around the school music department. As a young musician, that community gave me the support I needed to explore my budding musical awareness and the lessons I learned from it have informed how I approach my own students to this day.

This journey has been a lesson in perseverance and patience. Thankfully I've had the honor of interacting with so many wonderful people during this project, all of whom have played an important role in its completion. All of you who have asked me along the way how this is going have played more than a small role in getting me to the finish!

One of the highlights of this project was spending time with Sophie Dufeutrelle and her lovely husband Phillipe in their home. Sophie was generous with her time and knowledge and her enthusiasm and love for music, the flute, and her students is contagious.

I want to especially thank all the flutists that participated in the HHO during this project for their trust and creative curiosity.

Anna, Emma, Henrik, Patrik, you've listened to my vents, endured long pedagogic lectures, and so much more along the way. I love that each one of you has contributed to the final physical product too. You all are a big part of this. Thank you.

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1 Introduction

1.1. Motivation for this Study

Several years ago, a few adult flutists approached the Finnish Flute Association to ask why the Association did not arrange activities for non-professional adult flutists. At the same time, I coincidentally had some space in my teaching schedule at the Northeast Helsinki Music Institute[1] that allowed me to include The Helsinki Flute Orchestra[2] as part of my teaching schedule. While the name of the ensemble has been somewhat optimistic at times – for most of this project the ensemble has had around 8 regular members – there has been a steady flow of flutists wanting to take part, sometimes for just a short time. Many of the original returning flutists remain active in the ensemble at the time of this writing. I knew from the beginning that I wanted the ensemble to be a place where adults could **return**[3] to fluting. I knew that there were many former students who had put their flutes aside to study, start families, and take care of other parts of their lives, who would be interested in finding a way to restart their musical practice.

I was myself discovering the challenges of returning to a learning environment as an adult at this time. Just before the start of this project I began taking formal conducting classes. My earlier learning experiences in conducting were limited and for the most part had happened 'on the job' working with student ensembles. Armed with the knowledge that I had some musical ability and knew a little of what was involved in studying a piece of music, and having some understanding of the actual learning process, I felt fairly confident in my limited abilities, and more exhilarated than daunted by the task I was taking on.

What I was not prepared for was the fear that rose as I walked onto the podium. This was not the same nerves that I experienced as a flutist before a performance. I slowly became aware that having a rudimentary grasp of basic conducting patterns was a far cry from having any actual control over what I was doing in front of the ensemble. It took all my energy to stay

[1] The Northeast Helsinki Music Institute is known by its Finnish name Luoteis-Helsingin Musiikkiopisto. I refer to this school as LUHMO throughout the report.

[2] The Helsinki Flute Orchestra is known by its Finnish name Helsingin Huiluorkesteri. I refer to the ensemble as HHO throughout the report.

[3] Throughout this report, I use the term returning flutist to refer to the members of the HHO. For an explanation of this term, see Chapter 3.1.

physically on the podium. The idea of being present and aware of what I was doing seemed daunting to the point of being almost impossible. Thankfully, my instructor's enthusiasm was contagious, and his supportive words were enough to allow me to grasp onto the possibility that I might be able to make progress. I left the first weekend session exhilarated and determined.

However, what surprised me as the conducting classes and my study progressed, were the basic learning mistakes I was making at every turn. My experience as musician and teacher seemed to get in my way as a learner. I placed unreasonably high expectations on myself, creating anxiety that made it difficult for me to focus on what I needed to do to adopt and develop new skills. It wasn't that I wasn't practicing enough, I did not even understand *how* to practice. I had layers of self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy that were getting in the way of my progress.

I slowly began to understand that I would have to address my fears that were getting in the way of the learning process before I could allow myself to learn. This meant I needed to be very aware of my feelings both on the podium and in the practice room. While my identity and experience as a musician and teacher gave me a lot of skills to draw on, it also made it difficult to allow myself to step out of those roles and back into the role of learner. Once I could understand that my failings on the podium did not take away from my identity in my other roles, I was slowly able to see that they did show me where I needed practice. Shifting my awareness and perspective helped to alleviate the anxiety I had been feeling and allowed me to start making progress.

My experiences in my own learning situation helped shape the way I planned the new ensemble. It became important to me to try to find a way to study how my interaction with the returning flutists could help shape their own learning experience. I wanted to develop rehearsal techniques that would help to create a safe, supportive space where returning flutists could feel comfortable in rediscovering themselves as instrumentalists. These techniques would need to help the members of the ensemble remain present and aware during rehearsals, since I believed that this would help lower anxiety. and help support the development of techniques needed to enjoy the musical experience. They would also need to support the development of social ties, so that the returning flutists could rely on each other as well as me for support and information. At the same time, I wanted to develop exercises that could help to develop the technique and skills returning flutists would need to feel confident in performance. I wanted to find a way to run rehearsals that were supportive enough to lessen anxiety, and creative enough to encourage musical development.

I have long used improvisatory exercises with my younger private students and student ensembles to introduce and develop different technical skills and musical understanding. This includes an interest in using extended techniques as a way of developing more traditional flute techniques. Since there was little material available for young students that incorporated these techniques when I began teaching, I used improvised exercises to encourage students to explore the different sounds possible on the flute. When I began working with ensembles, I found that similar improvisatory exercises could be expanded to develop ensemble skills. I found this way of working helped to quickly develop a sense of community within the ensemble I was working with. These exercises were also a good way to teach and develop listening and cooperation skills needed for a successful ensemble. Because of these successes, I was interested to see if adapting similar exercises for use with returning flutists could help in developing a safe, aware, and creative rehearsal space.

Ensembles designed for non-professional adult musicians that rehearse and perform on a regular basis can be difficult to find throughout Finland. Non-professional or semi-professional symphony orchestras exist in small numbers. Wind ensembles are slightly more plentiful, but the level of playing and instruction can be varied, meaning that this is not always an enjoyable option for returning flutists with more ensemble experience or who may have reached a higher level of technical skill. Due to the large number of existing non-professional flutists, and the small need for flutists in symphony orchestras, flutists and other wind players may have a particularly difficult time finding possibilities to participate in large-scale ensembles. As this project progressed, there has been a noticeable increase in varied musical opportunities designed for returning musicians, as well as an increase in understanding of the needs of these musicians. I still believe the work I present here provides new information and material that can be an important addition to the growing understanding of the needs of non-professional adult musicians.

Many non-professional adult ensembles that do exist in Finland are usually organized outside of the Music Institute system: wind ensembles and private flute lessons for adults are organized more often through community education centers where funding may be more limited, and teachers and directors may not be afforded the same respect or have the same access to interaction with colleagues or other material as in the Music Institute system. In addition, ensembles in these programs often attract beginning musicians, or musicians with little ensemble experience.

It is my belief that including goal-oriented opportunities for non-professional adult musicians, in particular returning musicians, can benefit the entire Music Institute system in several ways. First, returning musicians can serve as role models for younger students. They are an example to younger students of how a musical practice can be a life-long pursuit, even if the student does not continue on to professional studies. Including adults in the Music Institute system expands the community and as I will explain in more detail later, the adults become interested and invested in the development of the younger students. The non-professional adult musicians are willing and able to invest resources into their leisure activity which provides needed support to the workings of the Music Institute system. Involving returning musicians in ensembles expands musical opportunities for all students in the Music Institute by making it possible to study and perform a wider range of repertoire. Part of my motivation for this project was to start a conversation on the importance of including ensembles for returning musicians in the curricula offered at Music Institutes and other goal-oriented music educational institutions throughout Finland traditionally designed for younger students. It is beyond the scope of this project to understand and comment on the way musical instruction is organized in other countries, but the benefit of including adult learners in programs that include younger learners would be similar.

To explain the theory behind why I believe using these rehearsal techniques is beneficial for adults returning to a musical practice, I looked at research into adults as learners in general, and theories of motivation, as well as earlier studies and projects involving non-professional adult musicians and the use of trans-stylistic improvisation in music education. The techniques and exercises I developed in this project, and my abilities as a director of an adult returning flutist ensemble were tested during rehearsal-to-concert cycles of the Helsingin Huiluorkesteri, during a five-year period beginning in 2013 and culminating in the final testing cycle which ended with the *Linnunlaulu* concert. My hope is that this project will become part of the developing body of work looking at the importance of providing high-level musical performance opportunities for non-professional adult musicians.

1.2. Description of Portfolio

This project was undertaken in the Applied Studies program of the DocMus Doctoral School of the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts, Helsinki. As an artistically oriented applied study, I have presented a portfolio of work consisting of this report, a separate handbook describing the rehearsal techniques developed during the study and a website including a blog and lists of

resources for directors of returning flutist ensembles. A flute ensemble concert was presented as part of the acceptance into this project. Finally, the concert titled *Linnunlaulu* was presented on Oct. 28, 2017 at The Church of the Cross in Lahti. Two improvisatory works which helped to showcase the work done in rehearsals were commissioned from Pasi Lyytikäinen for the HHO and performed in the final concert.

This report describes the theoretical background used in developing and adapting rehearsal techniques for an ensemble of adult flutists returning to a musical practice after a break in their studies. The Helsingin Huiluorkesteri, a homogeneous flute ensemble consisting of adult flutists returning to a musical practice after a break in their musical studies, was the testing ground for the rehearsal techniques. The rehearsal techniques adapted and developed during this project were tested in rehearsals of the HHO over a five-year period from the spring of 2012 until the fall of 2017. The actual structure of this action research project, including the timeline and organization periods into three cycles is outlined in more detail in Chapter 2.1.2. Part two of this report is a narrative description of my work as director of the HHO, as well as personal reflection on my own development as director. It should be noted that throughout all the texts in this project, any translations from Finnish into English are my own.

The handbook of this portfolio: *Tuning Minds and Warming-up Bodies* was created to stand alone from this report as a more easily accessible source of information for directors of ensembles of returning flutists. The ideas found in the handbook are based on the results of this project. It contains general information on beginning and organizing an ensemble for returning musicians, as well as information about adults as learners. It also includes descriptions of some of the exercises developed and used in this project, as well as general ideas of how to use improvisation as a rehearsal technique. While the handbook is meant to stand alone as a separate reference work, it also serves as a bridge between the report and website (described below), with references to the report for more in-depth information, and links to the website.

Connecting the handbook and report is a website, containing lists of resources such as repertoire, literature, and links to websites on working with returning musicians and using improvisation with non-professional ensembles. It also includes a blog explaining my ideas on using these types of rehearsal techniques, working with non-professional adult flutists, and thoughts on this process. Originally, I planned to include videos of the HHO doing reflective exploration as part of the website, but it became apparent that this was not very feasible within the parameters of this project. While I was able to use the video material I collected as part of

the data which helped me to reflect on my own work and develop the rehearsal techniques, it was not possible to use the videos as clear examples of how I worked with the ensemble. Producing suitable video material would have compromised other aspects of the project and so a decision was made to not include that in the scope of this project. There are plans to continue the work started in this project which should include creating videos which will be housed on the website.

My hope is that this report and the reflective improvisatory work that resulted from this study will become part of the conversation on the importance of providing high-level musical learning and performance opportunities for non-professional adult musicians. In particular, I hope that the rehearsal techniques I have developed here can become a useful tool for directors. My belief is that incorporating improvisation into rehearsals can be one way of creating a supportive space for returning musicians to develop confidence and skill in their new musical practice. If directors can use an understanding of adult learning theory, in particular transformational theory, and the ideas of mindfulness and goal orientation to inform the way they introduce and implement these improvisational exercises, I believe it can go a long way to creating a supportive, enjoyable, and challenging space for returning musicians to rediscover and develop their musical voice.

1.3. Overview of Present Literature and other Resources for Non-Professional Adult Musicians

According to studies in the United States, an increasing number of adults in the 21st century actively participate in a musical practice (see Bowles 1991, 191; Cole and Silver 2004, 20; Roulston, Jutras and Kim 2015, 325). In addition, many adults who previously participated in musical activities have put their practice aside due to self-reported lack of time, support, others to play with, or perceived lack of skill (Cox 2011, 13). There is a growing network of world-wide programs which cater to non-professional adult musicians who are looking for high-level coaching and performance opportunities. A good example is 'Academy Week', a program started by the Baltimore Symphony where non-professional adult musicians can sit in the orchestra with actual symphony members and participate in the performance of a full concert program (BSO website 2018). Other programs include the Associated Chamber Music Players Association which is designed to introduce non-professional adult musicians to each other and facilitate the creation of chamber music ensembles (ACMPA website 2018). New York State's 'New

Horizons' music program which is spreading throughout the U.S. and beyond provides high-level instruction and ensemble opportunities mainly for beginning level older adult musicians (New Horizons Association website 2018). There are even a number of competitions now available for amateur flutists to participate in on the international level, such as those organized by the United States National Flute Association, The British Flute Association, and the Tampere Flute Festival.

A growing number of websites and online chanels are available with information and even performance opportunities for flutists of all ages. I think it is important for directors of returning flutists to have an idea of what resources are available. Not only is it possible to discover interesting performances of most works an ensemble may perform, there is the possibility for flutists to find infomration and exercises addressing most of not all of the difficulties they will encounter returning to a musical practice. Having an idea of what information is available can help directors understand how to organize rehearsals to enhance what returners already know, or then be able to send them for further information. I've currated a list of online resources for directors and returning flutists on the website of this portfolio: https://www.kathyweidenfeller.com/resources/

Since this project took place in Finland, I believe it is important to look briefly at the opportunities presently available here for returning musicians. While there are at least 200 active community orchestras and wind ensembles presently in Finland (Suomen Puhallinorkesteriliitto[Finnish Wind Orchestra Association] website 2021), as well as a strong community choir tradition, many of the opportunities available for non-professional adult musicians at the time of this project are geared towards beginners or what Stebbins would call dabblers: non-professional adult musicians with little more involvement or knowledge in their chosen activity than the general public (Stebbins 1992, 43). Many of these ensembles exist in community or adult education centers, where funding is often limited and supportive networks for their directors are difficult to find. A notable exception to this is the Rantasalmi Wind Band Society open to wind players of all ages and levels (Rantasalmi Wind Band Society website). A recent addition is The Helsinki Metropolitan Orchestra (Helsinki Metropolitan Orchestra website), an ensemble consisting of professional musicians and teachers, professional music students and non-professional adult musicians.

Finnish Music Institutes that enjoy state funding and include a high-level of goal-oriented instruction usually have *adult* or *open* divisions, though in practice these are often used only for

vocal students. A growing number of Finnish music institutes and conservatories are opening their youth ensembles to include adult musicians to expand performance possibilities. A study that looks at adults' motivation for returning to a musical practice examines one Finnish Music Institute that created ensembles specifically for this type of learner (see Kiiski 2018). Another study examines a successful lesson program designed for parents of young students attending a Finnish conservatory which allowed them to return to lessons along with their children (see Lundsten 2008). These studies suggest that a need for such goal-oriented practice and performance opportunities for non-professional adult musicians exist in Finland. While there has been definite improvement in the past few years of the level and availability of ensembles for returning adult musicians in Finland, I believe room for improvement still exists. At the time of this project, the HHO was the only active adult homogeneous flute ensemble in Finland.

1.3.1. Studies of Adult Participation in Musical Ensembles

While many of the studies I have already mentioned consider socializing to be the main motivator for adult participation in non-professional music ensembles, studies indicate that a significant number of adults participate in musical ensembles to develop their musical skills (Lundsten 2008, 29; Pitts and Robinson 2016, 340). In a study of participants of an adult community band, P.G. Taylor found that participants who approached their musical practice as serious leisure were both very committed to the ensemble and considered music making to be the most important aspect of their participation. The study mentions how this differed from the motivations of younger students, who tended to see the social aspect of band participation as the most important factor for participation. The non-professional adult musicians considered personal practice an essential part of their participation in the ensemble and regarded the challenge of developing new skills as one of the most enjoyable parts of their participation. None of the participants in Taylor's study were beginning instrumentalists, and many had reached a high level of technical skill on their instruments. The non-professional adult musicians' participation in this ensemble led them to develop as instrumentalists and musicians in ways beyond their participation in the ensemble (P.G. Taylor 2012, 63–66). Carucci also found that adults participating in *New Horizon's* ensembles listed making music as the most important reason for joining the ensemble. While many of the New Horizon's ensembles are geared towards beginning adult musicians, in this study, over 80% of the respondents had previous musical experience on either their present or another instrument. Ensemble members questioned in this survey specifically mentioned the increased motivation for personal practice as their reason for participation. (Carucci 2011, 99–102). These studies indicate that the director of a non-

professional adult ensemble should consider how to incorporate musical development into rehearsals, rather than focusing mainly on the social elements of playing together. In chapter 4.1.1. I will explain why the social and musical skill development aspects of an ensemble should be considered together.

The skills and qualities of directors working with non-professional adult ensembles have a considerable effect on the members' participation. Directors of non-professional adult instrumental ensembles themselves cite humor, patience, and praise as important instructional techniques (Rohwer 2005, 41). The confidence of the director seems to play a major role in the confidence of the ensemble (Bonshor 2014, 87), and on the level of anxiety in performances (Ryan and Andrews 2009, 115). Conductors who do not align their own personal goals for the ensemble with those of its members risk alienating those members (Pitts and Robinson 2016, 344). In addition to mastering musical understanding, when working with a non-professional adult ensemble it is important that a director develops situational mastery: the ability to read the needs of their ensemble and to act accordingly in the moment (Jansson 2018, 36). Studies of non-professional adult musicians pointed to the importance the director's attitude had on how much enjoyment they got out of the experience. These musicians valued friendly and supportive directors and appreciated when the director's motivation for the ensemble went beyond musical achievement (D.M. Taylor, et al. 2011, 14). A director who could challenge their non-professional adult musicians while at the same time showing that they cared for them was also appreciated (Carucci 2011, 103).

In an extensive interview with directors of non-professional adult ensembles, it was found that they understood the need to consider non-professional adult ensemble rehearsals a musical journey rather than the training session they ran for younger ensembles. Still, many of the directors questioned stated that they used techniques with their non-professional adult ensembles similar to those they used with younger student ensembles. These directors said that sight reading was often a source of anxiety for adult ensembles and stated that for this reason they avoided it as much as possible, especially with beginning ensembles. (Rohwer 2005, 40–41).

There seems to be some disagreement in the present literature as to whether directors should use different material with non-professional adult musicians than they would use with younger students. One study found that directors used similar methodologies with both adult non-professional ensembles and younger students, but also incorporated more discussion with the adults on a wider range of topics during rehearsals. These directors did feel that more

material created specifically for non-professional adult musicians was needed (Bowles 2010, 51–53). Another study also found that directors tended to use familiar repertoire to help motivate the adult non-professional musicians. The directors in this study also said they programed pieces that would be easy to sight read in the belief that this would help build the adult non-professional musicians' confidence (Rohwer 2005, 39–40). As I discuss in chapter 1.3.2., method books designed for individual non-professional adult flutists often follow these same guidelines, using familiar material to motivate practice as well as exercises similar to those used with younger students, with the addition of extensive instruction.

Many of the present studies that focus on adult non-professional musicians participating in a musical practice center beginning instrumentalists or vocalists. Of course, beginning adult musicians may face challenges that are similar to those faced by returning musicians. I do believe however, that returning instrumental musicians do bring unique challenges to the new learning environment. They have a history of musical learning experiences both good and bad, that will affect the present learning experience. In addition to the knowledge that earlier experiences provide, prior participation in formal music education can sometimes hinder the ability of returning musicians to become self-directed in their present learning situation (Schmidt-Jones 2017, 627–628). In chapter 4.1. I will look at the ways that transformational and social learning theory can help returning musicians reflect on these earlier learning experiences, and how directors can adapt their teaching style to support the returning musicians' musical development and encourage self-directed practice.

1.3.2. Studies and Resources centering Flute Ensembles

Since this project focused on the workings of a homogenous flute ensemble, I was interested particularly in material created specifically for this type of ensemble. I was able to find two books of warm-ups for flute choir: one was part of a doctoral project by A.T. Mosello on the use of flute choir as a teaching tool in a university setting. The exercises in this project are based on chords and scales, similar to classical exercises designed for personal practice (1989). A second book of exercises: *The Flute Choir Warm Up Book* (Rice-Young 1997), contains similar exercises to those in Mosello's book, including written out scale patterns, rhythmic patterns, and simple arrangements of hymns for use as warm-ups for a homogenous flute ensemble. One study describing the experience of non-professional adult flutists in two flute choirs considers the motivation of the participating flutists, the challenges they faced in the ensemble, and the traits they appreciated in directors (D.M. Taylor, et al. 2011). Two studies looked at original repertoire

for homogeneous flute ensembles. Kim listed and discussed original repertoire for flute ensembles commissioned or premiered by the National Flute Association (2013). A second study provides an annotated catalogue of important original works for flute ensemble from 1727 to 1997. In addition, this study includes a musical analysis of three of the important pieces in this catalogue (Sadilek 1998).

Most individual method books I found that were designed specifically to aid non-professional adult flute students in their personal practice were repertoire books containing pieces that would be familiar to older flutists. There are noticeable exceptions. *The Adult Flute Student*, written by British flute teacher Trevor Wye consists of exercises similar to those found in his other extensive selection of practice books for flutists of all ages. The difference between this volume and Wye's other method books is that this one includes a smaller selection of exercises and a lot of text on how to incorporate the exercises into personal practice. In addition, there is extensive discussion about the history of the flute (Wye 1988). *Flute Reboot*, by Clare Southworth seems more specifically designed for adults returning to a flute practice. There is a lot of clear, practical information on what to take into consideration when returning to a flute practice, and reflective questions to help guide the returning flutists' awareness during practice. The exercises are presented with detailed information on how to approach them. The book also includes detailed ideas on how to break down and practice repertoire. Southworth mentions using improvisation and extended technique as rehearsal tools and includes exercises using *overblown harmonics* (described in more detail in chapter 3.4.5.) (Southworth, 2019).

I believe that this project fills a gap in the body of literature focusing on adults as music learners and ensemble participants. In chapter 4, I provide an overview of social and transformational learning theories can help directors create a supportive rehearsal space to encourage exploration and reflective learning. The specific improvisational exercises and rehearsal techniques developed in this study provide material which is created specifically for returning musicians and designed to support the challenges they bring with them to an ensemble. I also hope that the narrative of this study will encourage directors to look beyond traditional and familiar repertoire when working with non-professional adult musicians. It is my belief that the support these musicians need can be created in such a way that encourages exploration and discovery, making it possible to encourage these musicians to enjoy moving beyond the familiar.

1.4. Flute Ensemble Repertoire

With the growth in popularity of flute orchestras, more compositions written specifically for this type of ensemble have become available alongside transcriptions of orchestral or other ensemble works. The National Flute Association in the United States has included flute choirs in their conventions since the early 1980s, including professional and high school flute choirs put together specifically for each convention through auditions. In addition, they have commissioned a large number of works for these ensembles. The auditioned ensembles perform works chosen through composition competitions held each year to encourage new compositions for large flute ensembles (Kim 2013, 3).

Many of the arrangements available for flute ensembles are based on well-known orchestral and smaller ensemble works that would be easily recognizable to returning flutists. Original works for larger flute ensemble do not often include improvisational sections or extended flute technique. There is a growing body of pedagogical repertoire that does include extended techniques. My ensemble found some of these works difficult to accept because either the titles or the presentation made it clear that the composition was originally designed for very young flutists. Even though the material may have been interesting, and pedagogically useful for returning musicians, because of the presentation, the members of the HHO did not enjoy working on these pieces as I will explain in chapter 5.2.3.

During this project, I had the opportunity to perform and later conduct some of the flute ensemble works composed by Sophie Dufeutrelle and to observe her teaching. Most of Dufeutrelle's works for flute ensemble were composed as pedagogical tools. They include elements of improvisation and require the flutists to use extended flute techniques. Dufeutrelle's philosophy in her pedagogic material is to compose pieces that use simple musical ideas that are repeated throughout the work, to teach specific musical ideas or technical skills. These works were originally composed with younger students in mind, but Dufeutrelle explained in our conversation in 2016 that they have been performed by ensembles of all ages, and I was able to participate in one such performance during that visit. In the early developmental cycles of this project, I used two of her pieces with the HHO: *Temps Variables (Inclement Weather)* (Dufeutrelle 1986) and *La Voliere Du Puy (Aviaries)* (Dufeutrelle 1994) to help introduce extended technique and performed improvisation. I explain in more detail how I used these works with the HHO in Chapters 5.2.3 and 5.2.5.

Professional level flute ensembles such as the *Netherlands Flute Orchestra* and *rarescale,* an ensemble of low flutes located in Britain, help to expand pieces available for flute ensembles,

through composing and commissioning new works. While the works commissioned by these ensembles are often outside of the technical skill range of most non-professional adult ensembles, they do help to expand the idea of what sort of repertoire is possible for a large flute ensemble. In addition, Tetractys Publishing is dedicated to commissioning and publishing new compositions and arrangements for flute ensembles, with an emphasis on ensembles consisting of lower flutes. Their catalogue also includes pieces accessible to non-professional adult ensembles (see Tetractys website).

As I mentioned above, the instrumentation of a flute ensemble has expanded as lower flutes become more readily available and easier to play. It was interesting to note as I programmed the *Linnunlaulu* concert, which contained music written by Finnish composers, that only the two pieces I commissioned for the concert from Pasi Lyytikäinen: *Rituale* and *Lume,* included bass flute in their orchestration. A few of the older pieces included piccolo or alto flute, but most were written for C-flute choir. This is probably because most of the works programmed in the concert were originally composed as pedagogic works for use with young student ensembles which would make the use of anything larger than an alto flute difficult due to physical limitations. In addition, until recently, alto and bass flutes were not readily available in Finland, and at the time of this writing, sub-and contra-bass flutes are still not easily available in Finland. For the *Linnunlaulu* concert the returning flutists decided to add bass flute to those pieces that did not include it in the original instrumentation, to bring more depth to the sound of the ensemble.

A list of repertoire and other print and online resources for directors of flute ensembles is available on the website of this project: www.kathyweidenfeller.com/resources/

Part One

2 Methods and Research Design

The purpose of this project has been to develop and adapt improvisational rehearsal methods for a homogeneous flute ensemble to support the musical development and confidence of the returning flutists participating in the ensemble. The project has also followed my development as a director of this type of ensemble. The project has resulted in a handbook designed for directors of homogeneous flute ensembles based on the findings from this study, including the rehearsal techniques developed during the project. Since this project has followed the development of rehearsal techniques and how they affected the working of the returning flute ensemble, as well as the development of my skills as director, the logical choice of method for this study was action research. In addition to the cyclical design of the action research study, a questionnaire was used at the end of the final cycle to assess the effectiveness of the rehearsal techniques from the participants' point of view.

2.1. Values and Questions

Adult musicians returning to a musical practice deserve to be considered as a unique group of learners, and an important part of the musical community. All too often, they are not considered as a separate group of learners, and their participation in music education, or opportunities for performance, are a somewhat neglected part of the conversation about musical education. As I will discuss further in the theoretical section of this report, returning musicians hold an important space in the musical community between the general public and professional musicians. I also believe it is important to consider their role in the music education community, for example as role models for younger students.

As I discussed in chapter 1.3.3. material specifically designed for returning musicians and their directors is presently lacking. There are a growing number of exercise and practice books, and online resources that include discussion or explanation to help a self-directed learner. After looking at theories of adult learning and motivation, that I describe in chapter 4, I believe what may be missing is instruction that can help teachers and directors help returning musicians reflect on the beliefs they bring with them to the present learning situation and become more

self-directed. I believe that helping directors understand how to create supportive spaces in goal-oriented ensembles allows returning musicians to reflect on their musical identity, and discover new ways to develop technically, while providing satisfying musical experiences.

Since improvisation provides a space for musicians to take chances without fear of 'playing wrong notes', I believe it can help returning musicians develop new ways of approaching technical challenges. Improvisation also requires returning flutists to think about musical structure, and the need to be aware of, and interact with fellow ensemble members. These are all important skills for an ensemble musician to develop in order to feel more confident in performance. Since I have used improvisation in my pedagogy with young students for many years and know the benefits that it provides these younger students, I believed it would be possible to adapt this way of working to provide similar benefits to returning flutists.

I have considered the following questions in this project:

- Do returning flutists have unique characteristics and needs that should be considered in the learning/rehearsal space?
- How can reflective teaching help to develop mindfulness and self-direction in returning flutists?
- What role does the director play in creating a safe space for adult flutists to return to and develop in their musical practice?
    - What skills do directors of returning flutists need to develop that will help to create a safe space for learning within rehearsals?
- Can using improvisation as a rehearsal technique help to develop trust in the ensemble community and promote self-directed, mindful learning?
    - What does a director need to keep in mind to introduce and use improvisation effectively in a rehearsal with returning flutists?

2.1.1. Action Research

Action research involves deciding on a particular focus for study, planning to implement activities or other interventions, implementing these activities, observing the outcome, reflecting on that outcome, and planning a further series of activities if necessary (Costello 2003, 7). Participatory action research is the only research model that allows practitioners to understand and develop the way practices are conducted from within that practice. It allows the researcher to both participate in and develop the way the practice is conducted. Participatory action research ensures that the researcher speaks the same language as the subjects of the study and allows them to transform their practice to meet changing needs. The point of participatory action research is to develop through self-reflection during the developmental process, rather than to present an objective picture (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon 2014, 34–38).

The cyclical design of planning, observation and reflection found in action research is very similar to the pattern of a learning situation, and perhaps especially a musical practice of rehearsal-to-performance. In both action research and a musical practice there is a focus on practical problems to which there are no single correct answers. Both types of practices hold a view of knowledge that goes beyond statements of fact. (Cain 2010, 160). The cyclical nature of a rehearsal-to-concert period that happens naturally when working with a musical ensemble easily fits into the structure of an action research design: each period includes a planning phase leading to the action of rehearsing, observation during rehearsals, reflection on each rehearsal leading to further action, a concert at the end that provides feedback on the effectiveness of the rehearsal techniques used, and reflection after the concert leading to planning for the next cycle. The analysis and planning sections of the action research model also helped develop and strengthened my work as director of this ensemble. During these reflective sections I looked critically at my interactions with the ensemble, and the effectiveness of my rehearsal techniques and conducting skills to try to determine the effect my technique had on the enjoyment, motivation and development of the ensemble and its individual members.

Action research is a value-laden research method, and it should begin with the researcher identifying their values and thinking about how they can act in direction of those values (McNiff and Whitehead 2010, 19–20). I began the project by assessing my values concerning returning flutists and the beliefs I held that introducing improvisational techniques into rehearsals could help returning musicians gain confidence in their performance while developing technical and ensemble skills. I believed that adults could continue to learn and develop skills beyond what popular culture can sometimes lead us to understand. I believed that returning musicians were a group that had specific needs and were not well-represented in present literature. I believed that

by developing and adapting improvisational exercises to use during rehearsals, I could help these returning flutists rediscover their musical voice and develop the skills and techniques they would need to enjoy their musical experience in the ensemble. I also believed that in order to make these rehearsal techniques effective, I would need to understand how to present them to the returning flutists, and how my interaction with this ensemble would be different than with ensembles of younger students. These values and beliefs helped to define the research questions I explained above.

In practice, action research, like a learning situation, does not hold to a neat spiral of self-contained cycles of planning, acting and observation, and reflection. It is much more fluid, with stages overlapping and initial plans becoming obsolete after considering the learning that comes from experience (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon 2014, 76). While the questions I identified at the start of the project defined and shaped the entire project, the way I approached these questions, the emphasis placed on different aspects of rehearsal technique used to create a supportive space, and my own development changed throughout the project as a result of my critical reflection on the workings of the HHO and my interaction with the ensemble.

Reflective journaling can help to create transparency during the research process. This may be especially important in participatory action research since the researcher in this case is not able to be an objective observer. Journaling allows the researcher to be transparent as to the amount and type of influence they have on the actions taking place during the research (Ortlipp 2008, 697). The data I used to analyze my work consisted of a journal where I kept notes on my observations during rehearsals, video recordings of rehearsals, and, after the final testing cycle, two separate questionnaires: one given to the returning player participants and a second to the teacher participants. Discussions with flutist, teacher and composer Sophie Dufeutrelle, my own participation in the summer flute ensemble festival at the New England Conservatory, observation of other non-professional adult ensemble rehearsals, participation in conducting classes with conductors of other non-professional ensembles, as well as conversations with the professional teachers that participated in the HHO for the *Linnunlaulu* concert project, provided me with outside perspectives on the work I was doing.

2.1.2. Narrative of the action research cycles

Action research has a narrative style that allows the researcher to reflect not only on the outcome of the research, but also on the process itself (Herr and Anderson 2005, 1). Chapter 4 of this

report is a narrative account of the action research cycles of this project. The narrative of an action research project should be reflexive: analyzing and interpreting experience, to create tentative patterns of meaning (Toledano and Anderson 2020). It also needs also to have a logical and coherent progression of events. The narrative should present the voices of the different participants in addition to that of the researcher, and it should show how the researcher's insight was developed in dialogue with the other participants. The research and its narrative should provoke discussion and encourage new practices by allowing the reader to believe in their own capabilities to act.

The narrative of an action research project should be evocative, touching the reader in an emotional way, to stir action (Heikkinen, et al. 2012, 8–10). The narrative contextualizes personal experience in time, not just as a succession, but as change over time. It is the way in which the researcher chooses to connect events that can make them meaningful to others, what is left out of the narrative is just as important as what is left in. The narrative allows for the development of the living knowledge with which action research is concerned (Toledano and Anderson 2020, 309–312).

The rehearsal-to-concert cycle naturally lends itself to the cyclical nature of planning – action and observation – reflection found in action research (Pulman 2012, 213–214). This made it easy to structure this project according to the rehearsal-to-concert periods. The periods were combined into three main cycles according to common themes that arose during the adjacent periods. The first two cycles consisted of several periods, while the third cycle looks only at the final concert period, since this served as the main testing period for the rehearsal techniques being developed. The structure of the project and the way the rehearsal-to-concert periods were divided into cycles is depicted in Figure 1. Cycle one centered around assessing of the needs of the ensemble and the skills I would need to develop as a director to work successfully with this type of ensemble. It was during this first cycle that I clarified the structure and central research questions of this study. Cycle two was the developmental phase of the project, during which I adapted and developed the rehearsal techniques and my own technical and communicative skills. The final rehearsal-to-concert period was the open testing of the rehearsal techniques through collaborations with other teachers and adjudicators.

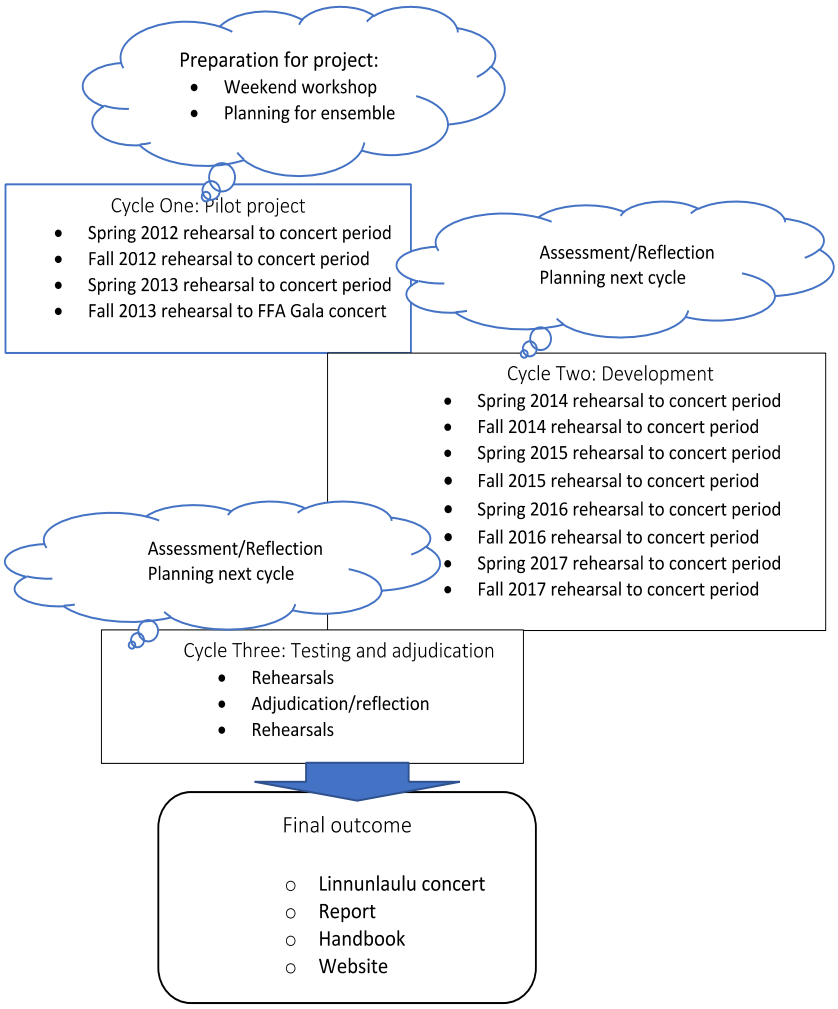

Fig.1 Explanation of action research cycles in this project

Research data was collected during these three cycles through reflective journaling of my work with the HHO. All quotes from rehearsals and other conversations were translated by me from the original Finnish. These journals also contain writings on my own development as a director. This development was also measured in the conducting seminars and classes that I participated in during the project. In addition, during the last two cycles, there was a video camera present in many of the rehearsals that enabled me to notice my interaction with the ensemble. The first cycle took place from fall 2012 to spring 2014 and included four rehearsal-to-concert periods. The second cycle took place from fall 2014 to spring 2017 with six rehearsal-to-concert periods. The final cycle consisted of one rehearsal period in the fall of 2017 that

ended with the *Linnunlaulu* concert, which was presented as part of the portfolio of work for this project.

The first period of the first cycle was a short workshop where I assessed the need for starting a returning flutist ensemble and this project. Following this short period, I planned and advertised the ensemble. The remaining rehearsal-to-concert periods in this cycle helped me to assess the needs of returning flutists, understand the skills I would need to develop, and allow me to practice integrating the improvisational exercises into rehearsals. Other organizational challenges arose during this cycle that also determined how I would work in future cycles.

The second cycle which was the longest of the three cycles, was a developmental cycle consisting of six rehearsal-to-concert periods. After analyzing and reflecting on the first pilot cycle, I had a better idea of what questions I wanted to focus on during this project. During this cycle, the ensemble began to develop into a community of practice, and the personalities of individual members of the ensemble affected how the work progressed. My own technical development continued in this cycle through participation in conducting classes and observations made during rehearsals. In this cycle, I began using video as another means of collecting data in addition to continued journaling.

The final cycle consisted of the one rehearsal period in the fall of 2017 that ended with the *Linnunlaulu* concert presented as part of the portfolio for this project. This cycle was the formal testing of the rehearsal techniques including the improvisational exercises that had been developed during earlier cycles. During this cycle, six professional flutist/teachers participated in the rehearsals and concert along with the other members of the HHO. These professionals also gave me feedback on their experience during rehearsals as well as through a questionnaire answered after the concert. A second questionnaire was given to the returning flutists following the concert to ask for their perception on the effectiveness of the rehearsal techniques and how they enjoyed participation in this project.

2.1.3. Position of researcher

In a practitioner action research study, the researcher may hold several different positions during the same research. Due to the nature of practitioner action research, the researcher is necessarily an insider in the community being studied. They are using the research to develop their own practice at the same time as they are creating new knowledge. They may simultaneously be outsiders overseeing the entire process. It is especially important in participatory action research

for the researcher to understand these multiple positions and the effect they may have on the collection of data. For example, allowing participants to comment anonymously on the project may make it easier for them to raise positions that differ from that of the researcher (Herr and Anderson 2005, 37–42). In participatory action research, community members participating in the study are also research collaborators, and their voices should be included in the narrative. While the researcher may decide what is to be studied, they should also be open to input from the other participants in the project and consider the consequences the participants experience as a result of the study (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon 2014, 66).

From the start of this study, its designed purpose was to develop rehearsal techniques and exercises that would allow returning musicians to develop musically and gain enjoyment and confidence in their musical practice. As researcher, I designed the study, developed the questions that were tested, and developed or adapted the material produced during this study based on the theories outlined in chapter 4 of this report. The development and adaptation of the exercises and rehearsal techniques was done in collaboration with the members of the HHO, based on their comments and my observations of their reactions during rehearsals. In my role of director, I was a member of the ensemble, but I often took an observational view of the exercises during rehearsals. By observing the returning flutists rather than participating with them in the exercises, I was able to develop guided questions that would help them focus their attention during the progression of each exercise to help them gain the most possible benefit. In addition, being the observer helped me to learn how to read my ensemble, by comparing their body movement to the verbal reflection they gave during discussions. This observation gave me information to aid in the development of the improvisational exercises. Here, I took on the role of collaborative observer: I removed myself from the actual exercises, while also participating through questions and other interactions with the ensemble. I was also studying my own development in implementing these exercises and directing the ensemble in general throughout the project. Many of my journal entries focus on self-reflection regarding this development. This points to another role I played during this study of insider researcher using self-reflection to develop my own practice.

2.1.4. Helsingin Huiluorkesteri

The HHO was started in 2013 for adult flutists returning to a musical practice (see chapter 3.1. for a more in-depth explanation of returning flutist) as part of the course offering in the 'open'

department of the Northwest Helsinki Music Institute[4]. As I explained in chapter 2.2.2., the rehearsal-to-concert periods of the ensemble provided data for this project and served as a testing ground for the development of the rehearsal techniques. The narrative account of this project found in chapter 5 includes the voices of the members of the HHO. Their musical histories, internalized beliefs and reactions to the rehearsal techniques make up an important part of the development of the results of this project.

During this project the number of participants in the ensemble varied from 6 to 15 returning flutists. In the first development cycle of this project the ensemble had weekly 90-minute rehearsals on Thursday evenings throughout the entire Fall and Spring terms of LUHMO. A longer, 4-hour weekend session was added during the second year of the project, that replaced a few of the weekly rehearsals. In subsequent rehearsal-to-concert periods, the ensemble switched to a shorter, more intense rehearsal schedule. Each period lasted about 6 weeks, included a fewer number of 90-minute weeknight evening rehearsals, and two or three 4-hour weekend rehearsal sessions.

Since the HHO operated within LUHMO's course offerings during the time of this project, many of the concerts naturally took place within the concert schedule arranged by LUHMO. In the earliest periods of this project, the HHO performed at concerts that also included other student ensembles. In later rehearsal-to-concert periods, HHO performed their own concerts within the LUHMO rehearsal schedule in collaboration with younger student flutists, in addition to performing on the general concerts. The HHO also performed on the Finnish Flute Association's gala concert in the autumn of 2016, and the *Linnunlaulu* concert in the Church of the Cross in Lahti, Finland in the fall of 2018. For these two concerts, the regular 'returner' members of the ensemble were joined by both professional and non-professional members of the Finnish Flute Association in the first case, and professional flutists for the *Linnunlaulu* concert.

2.1.5. Flutist Participants

As mentioned earlier, the idea for the HHO began when several flutists asked the Finnish Flute Association to develop activities for non-professional adults. I continued to advertise for members throughout the project. LUHMO did some advertising, but most of the members

heard about the ensemble through their private flute teachers, social media, or the Finnish Flute Association.

I made a decision at the very beginning of the project to not hold auditions for the HHO. I did ask each interested flutist to briefly describe their musical background and experience as flutists. This allowed me to determine that they were all returning flutists with some previous experience in formal musical training, and there had been a break in those studies. All the interested flutists were invited to join the ensemble. My decision not to audition ensemble members was based on my own belief that not having auditions would encourage more people to seek participation in the ensemble. I also wanted to have a group that was varied in terms of experience and technique, because I believed the rehearsal techniques I was developing would be beneficial to varying skill levels. I was interested in how these techniques could help an ensemble with varied skills work effectively together. All of the flutists who remained in the HHO through to the final *Linnunlaulu* concert fit the description of returning musician that I will explain in chapter 3.1. Not holding auditions did mean that I did not hear the returning flutists perform before the first rehearsal to assess their actual technical skill level.

At different points during the project, several older students from the youth department of LUHMO took part in some of the rehearsal-to-concert periods as part of their studies. I also occasionally included beginning students in performances of a few single large-scale improvisatory works composed for ensembles of varying skills. Including younger students in the HHO allowed me to program larger works than would have been possible with just the returner members of the ensemble. It also provided opportunities for my younger students to participate in a large-scale ensemble, which otherwise would not have happened at a school the size of LUHMO.

Each returning flutist was given an informed consent form to sign at the start of their participation in this project. The parents of younger students who took part in any of the rehearsal-to-concert periods were also given consent forms. I do not include any quotes from these younger students in this report, and comment only occasionally on how their presence affected the working of the ensemble. The professional flutists participating in the final Linnunlaulu concert cycle were also given informed consent forms to sign. I have removed any identifying elements from quotes and other data to protect the anonymity of all those participating in this project. Consent was given by the participants for any pictures or videos appearing on the website.

No one who asked to join the ensemble was turned away. As explained in chapter 5, my decision to not hold auditions meant that the participating returning flutists had a wide variety of musical and technical skills. In some of the earlier cycles of testing there were one or two flutists who spent a short time with the ensemble that did not quite fit the description of returning flutist, but none of the ensemble members during the project were beginners on the flute when they joined the HHO. Two of the participants in the project were parents of younger LUHMO students. One of the returning musicians began playing the flute as an adult but had been actively playing flute for several decades before joining the HHO. In addition to private lessons, this flutist also performed with several other ensembles and took part in classes for non-professional adult flutists throughout Europe. Another HHO member had seriously considered continuing musical studies on a professional level before their break in studies. One participant who took part in some of the earlier cycles of this project had received most of their instrumental training in a wind band situation with little private instruction. Some of the returning flutists who played with the HHO during this study were retired, others were working parents and a few were non-music major college-aged students.

2.1.6. Questionnaire

In addition to the rehearsal journal I kept and the analysis I wrote during each cycle, after the final testing cycle, a questionnaire was created and distributed to all of the flutists that took part in the *Linnunlaulu* concert. There were two separate questionnaires: one for the returning flutist members of the ensemble, and one for the professional flutists who joined the ensemble for that performance. The questionnaire was designed using the *Surveypal* questionnaire designing application, in consultation with my advisors. Two professional flutist/teachers tested the questionnaire before it was distributed to the participants. Both surveys were conducted anonymously though the participants had the option of including their email addresses at the end. Both questionnaires were written in Finnish, and I have translated all data to English from the original Finnish. Both questionnaires (translated into English) are included as appendix 1 and 2 of this report.

The questions for the returning flutists focused on their history as flutists and musicians. It also asked questions about how they felt the rehearsal techniques affected their own practice and enjoyment of the rehearsal/performance cycle and the challenges they encountered during

the cycle. The questionnaire for the professional participants focused more on their own experience with non-professional adult flute students, their assessment of the effectiveness of the techniques, and how likely they were to adopt these techniques in their own teaching. 67% of the returning flutists that participated in this cycle and 57% of the professional participants answered the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire as of December 12, 2021 are analyzed in Chapter 5.4.

3 Explanation of Terms and Ideas used throughout this Report

3.1. Returning Flutists

I have already explained that my interest during this study was to understand how to best support flutists who were returning to a musical practice after a break in formal music studies. Throughout this report, I use the terms **returning flutists or returning musicians** to define these non-professional adult musicians[5]. While the members of the HHO had varied musical histories and technical ability on the flute, they all had formal musical instruction in their youth, and all had taken a break in their musical practice at some point. It is my belief that this group of musicians have needs that differ from adults beginning a musical practice or younger musical students. I also believe that these needs are not always well understood by ensemble directors. Much of the background material I found centered on beginning adult musicians. For these reasons, I decided to focus on returning musicians and their unique challenges and strengths in this study.

All the members of the HHO during the time of this project were at least 18 years old, which means they were legally recognized as adults in Finland. The idea of adulthood is a social construct, one that is both self-recognizing and recognized by others. Adulthood in most societies includes the traits of maturity, perspective, and autonomy (Rogers and Horrock 2011, 44–45). The self-awareness aspect of this definition of adultness may play a role in the learning experience, as I will address later in this report. There was a wide variety in musical skills and backgrounds among the ensemble members during this project, ranging from one player who had completed a teaching exam on flute at one of the Finnish vocational colleges, to other returning flutists who had never taken formal musical exams. All of the ensemble members taking part in this project had previous private instruction on flute, and the majority of them had ensemble experience prior to joining the HHO.

While there are indications that certain musical and aural skills are more quickly and efficiently learned at a young age, it is not certain whether there are critical periods for any part

[5] I do not make any attempt to define the length of break in studies that would identify an adult as a returning musician. In general, the members of the HHO during this project had set aside musical activities for several years. What was more important to me in identifying these flutists as 'returning musicians' was the fact that 1. The flutists had taken part in formal music education in their youth. 2. They had decided to put aside that musical practice. 3. A noticeable amount of time had passed before they took up their musical practice again.

of musical development (Flohr and Hodges 2006, 20). This was not my real reason for focusing on returning musicians however, especially because of the uncertainly of the effect early exposure has on later musical learning. It was, rather the anxiety and beliefs about learning brought from earlier learning experiences that I believed play a role in the later musical practices of returning musicians. Bigdeli states that anxiety plays a critical role in adult education, and it is critical that leaders working with adult learners find ways of handling it (2010, 674). Schmidt-Jones found that some adult learners who had taken part in formal music education when younger had difficulty becoming self-directed in their present musical practice, because their belief that there was only one correct way of learning music made it difficult for them to make progress (2017, 628). One study even found that choir members who had earlier experiences of instrumental instruction showed higher levels of anxiety during their participation in choir activities than their peers who did not (Ryan and Andrews 2009, 112).

It was interesting to see two Finnish studies that looked at self-reported reasons for returning to a musical practice point to the motivations and mindsets of returning musicians. In the first study of an ensemble program in a Finnish music Institute designed for returning musicians, participants were asked why they had stopped their musical practice. The responses varied from having trouble finding time or motivation to practice in their teenage years, to a feeling that playing was no longer providing positive feelings. The study found that as these same former musicians grew older, they put music aside because of family and work obligations that limited the amount of time available to participate in musical activities (Kiiski 2018, 41–42). The members of HHO had stories similar to those of the adults interviewed in Kiiski's study.

> For about 20 years I played rarely, sometimes for my own pleasure, or for family gatherings. There were many reasons for this. In the beginning I had just lost interest in playing, but later it was a lack of time and possibilities that prevented me from playing. There aren't many possibilities available to practice music in a relaxed manner. (HHO member from questionnaire)

While Kiiski found it was not possible to pinpoint a particular point in life when most of the participating adults wanted to return to a musical practice, they did say that finding a musical practice flexible enough to fit into their lifestyle, one that also allowed them some independence in their personal practice did seem to be a very important motivating factor to returning (Kiiski 2018, 60–61). A similar study, focusing on another Finnish program for returning musicians taking private lessons in a conservatory setting, found that the musicians involved were returning to their musical practice as their own children began instrumental studies, to serve as inspiration for the young musicians (Lundsten 2008, 27). The difference in findings may have to do with the

structure of the two different programs. The first program was widely advertised as a way for returning musicians to participate in an ensemble within the music institute system, while the second was a program advertised to parents of younger students studying at one particular music school. A similar study that looked at a community band program for high-level non-professional adult musicians in the U.S. found that musical identity and development were the most important motivating factors for their participation in the program (P.G. Taylor 2012, 116).

In addition to being returning musicians, the members of the Helsingin Huiluorkesteri could also be called **amateur musicians**. The Oxford English Dictionary's first definition of amateur is "one who loves or is fond of", and this ties in with the etymology of the word, from the Latin "amator-em= of agent", and "amare = to love"; while the second definition is "one who cultivates anything as a pastime, as distinguished from one who prosecutes it professionally" (Oxford University Press website, 2019). It was clear that the members of the HHO had a love for the flute and music that they displayed through the amount of time and other resources they were willing to invest in participation, and none of the flutists fit the criteria for being professional musicians. However, I felt it was important to use a term other than **amateur** to define the flutists that participated in the HHO during this project, for several reasons.

Robert Stebbins wrote several texts in the mid 20th century about the important role amateurs play in any community. He felt that the use of the word 'amateur' had become too diffuse, since it was used to describe "[…] too many people with too little in common, such as practitioners, consumers (audiences, spectators, and so on), nonpracticing experts, and critics" (1979, 28). Stebbins felt that a better term, or at least a better definition for the term amateur was needed to describe a more specific group of individuals. While he didn't go so far in his writings as to suggest another word, Stebbins does separate the modern amateur from one he refers to as a dabbler: someone who takes part in an activity without seriousness or commitment. He also separates amateurs from novices: adults who are beginners in their chosen activity (1979, 20).

In later writings, Stebbins refers to this type of serious, committed participation in any given activity as **serious leisure**. He points out that practitioners who undertake their craft in this way hold an important position between professionals and dabblers or the general public. He felt that from their position of serious leisure, the practitioners were able to challenge the level of professionals by their own continuous striving for development, which in turn pushes professionals to develop even further. Those who take part in an activity at the level of serious

leisure can also act as a guide to the general public (Stebbins 1992, 55). The participation of most if not all of the members of the HHO during this project could be described as serious leisure. The returning flutists who participated in at least one full rehearsal-to-concert period invested a large amount of time and energy towards this project, and many of the returning flutists took part in more than one period. In particular, those returning flutists who took part in the final concert cycle learned a large amount of material that included techniques and notations they had never before encountered. In addition to participation in the HHO, many of the returning flutists take private lessons and/or play in other ensembles. Some of the members play other instruments in addition to flute. A few of the returning flutists in the HHO also have season tickets to local symphony concerts, and several make a point of attending any flute recital in the area together as a group.

One other reason for using the term **returning musician** rather than amateur to refer to the members of the HHO was to avoid certain negative connotations associated with the word amateur. In their definition of 'amateur', Oxford English Dictionary also includes its use as an adjective. Included are references from at least as early as 1814 to the term's use to refer to a lack of professionalism, or even ineptitude (Oxford University Press website 2019).

The use of the term 'amateur' to qualify or critique a performance was one I wanted to avoid. Audiences may even draw conclusions about a performance before it even begins just because of the use of the term 'amateur' to define an ensemble. This, even though in fairly recent history, it may have been more difficult to draw a line between amateur and professional musicians than it is at present. Before the mid 1800s, it was rare to find a musician with a professional degree in music. The 'amateur' musician would have been better educated, more well-traveled, and most likely even had a wider range of musical experiences than a musician who earned their living by performing. Professional musicians would have learned their skills as an apprentice and continued their career in the same environment, without much exposure to other musical ideas (Kalisch 1932, 507).

Of course, today it is rare to find a professional musician who does not have a university degree and/or a vast repertoire of different types of musical experiences. In addition, most professional Symphony Orchestras have become so competitive that it is only a small fraction of musicians who call themselves professional that will even qualify to participate. This requires that professional musicians must, out of necessity, have a wider education and world view. Just as the role of professional musician has changed and expanded, affordable musical instruments have

risen in quality, and there is wider access to musical instruction and information than at any time previously. This means that adult amateurs may have more opportunities to improve their skills and take part in more varied musical experiences than at any earlier point in history. Still, the stigma associated with the word **amateur** seems to remain. While it was not my intention to create performances that would rival those given by professional ensembles, I also did not want to place any limiting labels on the ensemble or its members.

My goal in this project is to help flutists returning to a musical practice gain confidence in their performances, so I felt it was important to find a term other than amateur to define the returning flutists participating in this project, one that would lessen the possibility that outsiders would define their performance even before they began playing. I also felt that the above use of the term 'amateur' does continue to have enough weight that it could affect the way the returning flutists themselves felt about their performances. It became obvious to me that my choice to use a different term during this project was the right one when one of the members of the HHO told me of an interaction after one of our concerts:

> A friend of mine who was sitting in the audience came up to me after our performance and said, "I thought you told me this was an amateur group – you don't sound like amateurs!" (HHO member after concert Nov. 2017)

3.1.1. Young Flutists and Non-Professional Flutists

Throughout the text, I refer to young flutists and young ensembles in contrast to the returning flutists. I use the terms young flutists and young ensembles to refer to school-aged students. I use the term non-professional flutists when referring generally to flutists who are not working as performers or music educators. This term may include college-level flutists who are not music majors. This term also includes Returning Flutists, as I use it in the text when referring generally to above school-aged flute students or ensemble members.

3.2. Improvisation

Briefly, in this project I drew on the idea of trans-stylistic improvisation (see Sarath, 2010), as well as theatrical improvisation, to adapt and develop the non-written exercises I use in the rehearsals of the HHO. I feel this term and the way I use it throughout the project deserves a more in-depth explanation, so there is a chapter on improvisation in the section on Background Theories chapter 4.2. where I define the term generally and specifically in the way I use it throughout this project.

3.3. Flute Choir/Orchestra

While ensembles of flutes, or flutes paired with percussion instruments have existed in many cultures throughout history (see Thrasher 1996; Baumann 1985; Koetting 1980; Cooke 1996) the type of flute ensemble known interchangeably as a flute choir or flute orchestra may be most closely related to recorder consorts from the 15th and 16th centuries. Joseph Boismortier wrote several concertos with 5 parts for transverse flutes that would have been performed with several flutists on each part. This type of ensemble can also trace its roots to the flute and drum ensembles found in England, Ireland, and Switzerland. Homegeneous flute ensembles have been used in flute education in the United States since the 1930s. (Toff 1996, 76–77). The National Flute Association has included flute choirs in performances during their conventions since the first convention was held in 1973 (Kim 2013, 1).

Instrumentation for a flute orchestra usually consists of piccolo, concert C-flute, Alto and Bass flute, with contra-bass and sub-contra-bass flutes recently becoming more common. Today there are also double contrabass flutes included in the instrumentation[6]. Before the increase in production and development of lower flutes, other bass instruments such as bassoon or string bass would have been included in the instrumentation of flute orchestras. Along with increased demand and production, the quality of lower flutes has increased as well. Newer models of low flutes have better scales, and are lighter and easier to play. Increased production also makes these instruments more affordable. Earlier, it would have been common to include Eb flutes[7] in the instrumentation of a flute choir, but as it is becoming increasingly difficult to find these instruments, few newer compositions or transcriptions include them.

Flute choirs have not traditionally existed in Finland to the extent they are found in other parts of the world. Previous to the HHO, one active adult flute ensemble in Turku, Finland made up mainly of teachers and former students from the area music schools performed on a regular basis and commissioned new works for performance. In addition, the Finnish Flute Association has arranged occasional festivals which have included performances given by large flute ensembles made up of members of the association. These ensembles came together specifically for these events and did not rehearse on a regular basis. Student flute ensembles that

[6] Alto flutes are pitched in G, a 4th below the Concert flute. Bass flute sounds one octave below. The contra-bass flute is pitched an octave below the alto flute. Contra-bass flutes sound two octaves below the Concert flute (Montagu, et al. 2001). Sub-contra bass flute is pitched two octaves below alto flutes, in G. Double contrabass flutes sound three octaves below the C-concert flute (Long, 2018).

[7] Eb flutes, also known as soprano flutes, are pitched a minor third above the concert C-flute (Toff 1996, 64).

rehearse and perform on a regular basis do exist in many music schools throughout Finland, and the majority of flute orchestra repertoire written by Finnish flutist-composers are composed with these student ensembles in mind.

3.4. Extended Flute Technique

In 1975, Robert Dick published a catalog of flute techniques not ordinarily found in traditional repertoire titled *The Other Flute* (1975). Around the same time, Pierre-Yves Artaud published a similar book, *Flûtes au Présent/Present Day Flutes* (1980). Both books contain similar lists of techniques, including fingerings for micro-intervals, multiphonics, unusual tone qualities, percussive articulation, and other types of sound production that fall outside of the traditional technique expected from concert flutists. Later, in the narrative section of this report, I discuss how differences in notating these techniques presented a challenge to the returning flutists. These two treatises may have contributed to this problem, because they notate the various techniques in different ways. One of the main differences is in how they describe alternative fingerings. Artaud uses numbers to correspond to individual keys, while Robert Dick uses a pictorial representation of the flute mechanism, since the tradition of numbering keys or fingers did not really exist in flute circles outside of France. These differences are apparent in the notation of flute music written in the late 20th century, and in some cases continue to this day.

These techniques have been collectively titled 'Modern' or 'Extended' to separate them from more traditional techniques, although these sounds were created by flutists long before they were used in compositions. For example, Tchaikovsky calls for flutter tonguing (often considered an 'extended' technique) in his *Nutcracker suite*. Robert Dick specifically states that his reason for creating the catalog was to move these techniques out of the category of 'special techniques' and into the realm of valid musical material (1975, v). Still, while 100% of the professional flutists who took part in my questionnaire said that they had included improvisation in their teaching prior to participation in this project, only 66% had included extended techniques. Only two of the professionals who said that they had worked previously with non-professional adult flute students used extended techniques in their lessons.

In this project, I do refer to these techniques as *extended techniques*. I have chosen to do this because, even though they have become a more integral part of the body of flute technique then they were when the two treatises were written, they are still somewhat at the edge of what would be considered standard flute technique. I felt it was reasonable to expect that the returning

flutists participating in this project would have had little to no experience with these techniques. In 1993, Micheal Jerome Davis wrote:

> Though recently, much literature requiring the use of extended techniques has been written for the flute, the [...] main interest in pedagogical strategies is still centered around music prior to the twentieth century [...] The less experienced flutist currently lacks the materials to begin studying extended flute techniques. (1993, 13)

Prior to the twentieth century, western classical music required instrumentalists to produce single sounds with maximum timbrical homogeneity throughout the range of the instrument, so there was no need for wind players to explore all the sonic possibilities of their instruments (Bartolozzi 1974, 5). Even at the time of this writing, most works considered central to the pedagogy of flutists were written prior to Edgar Varèse's *Density 21.5*. Composed in 1936, *Density* is the work that is often considered the beginning of the *advent-garde* age of writing for flute (Larson 1990, ii). For this reason, I am fairly certain that most if not all of the returning flutists participating in the HHO would not have used these techniques previous to their participation in this project. It made sense, therefore, for me to use the term 'extended' to refer to these techniques throughout this project, as they would be an extension of the flute technique that the returning flutists had learned in their earlier studies.

I was first formally exposed to these techniques as an undergraduate performance major, not very long after the above-mentioned treatises were published. Thus began my fascination with how this way of playing expanded the tonal range of the flute and also how it strengthened more traditional flute techniques. Since practicing these techniques helps to develop a greater aural sensitivity to different timbral possibilities and greater control and flexibility of overall technique (Brokaw 1980, 34), I used them in my teaching practice with younger students. My belief is that using these techniques with returning flutists adds another element of novelty to the learning situation, as well as the benefits that come from the focus needed to produce them. Robert Dick also published a workbook, *Tone Development Through Extended Techniques* (1987) to explain how practicing these techniques could develop traditional flute playing. Following are explanations for the different techniques that were used with the HHO during this project along with a description of what aspect of traditional playing technique they affect.

3.4.1. Airy tones/wind sounds

The player is asked to produce a flute sound less focused than a more traditional tone. These sounds can be produced by using a much larger embouchure than normal, or by voicing syllables

such as 'shh' 'chh' or 'ffff' over the flute embouchure hole. A flutist can also create slightly different tonal colors by inhaling, again using different syllables, over the embouchure hole. To produce this type of tone color, the flutist needs to be aware of the steadiness and speed of their air stream. This steady air pressure also has beneficial effects on a more traditional flute sound so that ironically, intentionally producing an airy sound can help the flutist create a more focused traditional sound.

3.4.2. Bending

Changing the intonation of a pitch by moving the headjoint in relationship to the embouchure, sometimes enhanced by slight movements of the lips, jaw, tongue, and mouth cavity. While this technique has always been used by flutists to correct intonation, it is used by composers to create non-traditional intervals or tone colors. I describe later how I use this technique in different exercises to help develop awareness of intonation. Turning the flute in towards the chin lowers the pitch and increases the strength of the upper partials of tone while weakening the fundamental. Conversely, turning the flute out raises the pitch and creates first a brilliant, then breathy tone, as the embouchure moves further away from the lips (Dick 1975, 46).

3.4.3. Percussive articulations

There are several different types of articulations involving various ways of combing the tongue and air speed to create more forceful articulations than are usually called for in traditional playing. These techniques require the flutist to be aware of how they use their tongue and require strong support muscles to produce. For these reasons, they help to strengthen traditional articulation.

a. **'pizzicato' tonguing** The flutist places their tongue between the lips and forcibly pulls it back into the mouth, while keeping the back of the throat closed, so that no air is released. Or similarly, the player pulls the tongue forcibly from the roof of the mouth, again keeping the back of the throat closed. Both methods produce a strong pitched articulation without an actual tone. Sometimes this term is used to mean sharp articulation produced along with a tradtional flute sound.

b. '**In' tongue ram** The flutist turns the embouchure plate towards the mouth and covers it with their lips. The tongue is forcibly thrust into the embouchure hole, in a similar

manner to the above pizzicato. The resulting tone is a maj 7th lower than the fingered tone.

c. **'Out' tongue ram** The flute is held in the same way as for 'in' tongue ram, but the player now draws the tongue back, sort of sucking the tongue so that it hits the roof of the mouth. The resulting tone is an octave lower than the fingered tone.

d. **Flutter tongue** produced by using the tongue in the same way as when rolling the letter 'r'. It requires the player to keep the tongue flexible and focus on continuing a good air speed in order to create a pitch through the articulation. For this reason, it is often used to help relax the tongue and help students understand the importance of being aware of air speed while articulating.

3.4.4. Jet Whistle

The flute is held in its normal position, but the player covers the tone hole with their lips so that no air escapes and blows directly into the embouchure hole, directing the air towards the outer edge of embouchure hole. The pitch of this effect can be controlled somewhat through fingering, air pressure, angle of the embouchure hole and shape of the mouth (Dick 1975, 133–134).

It's also possible to create a more pitched jet whistle by holding the flute in a manner similar to 'out' tongue ram, but even further back into the mouth so that the flutist can use the middle section of the tongue to direct the air into the embouchure hole. As in the first jet whistle, the flutist forces a short burst of air into the embouchure hole this time directed by the tongue. With this technique, it is possible to create pitched jet whistles by using different fingerings. And since this requires less air that the first type of jet whistle, it is possible to produce multiple pitched jet whistles at a time.

Producing these sounds requires forceful air pressure. That helps to develop the support muscles needed to produce a focused, flexible tone. Flutists also need to be aware of the shape of the mouth and movement of the tongue when producing these effects.

3.4.5. Harmonics/overtones

Woodwind instruments create different pitches by using fundamental tones for the lower registers and various natural harmonics for the upper registers (Bartolozzi 1974, 12). This means,

that by overblowing[8] the fingerings for the notes of the first octave, the flutist can produce the natural overtone series of a pipe open at both ends (Dick 1975, 12). Producing these overtones requires the flutist to control the air pressure in order to produce the specific overtone asked for.

It should be noted that producing overtones at different partials using the same fingerings can be difficult, and asking flutists to change both the partial they are producing and the fingering they are using does take some practice. Producing overtones at the same partial, even between different fingerings, is much easier. For example, producing an overtone at the third partial (a fifth above the fundamental tone) in succession from the fundaments (fingered notes) F^1, A^1 (produced pitches would be C^2, E^2), uses the same air speed, so it just requires the flutist to hear the partial and move between the two fingerings. Asking the flutist to produce the third and fourth partial of F^1 in succession (sounding C^2 to F^2) requires hearing the pitches and using a different air speed for each pitch, which requires more understanding, flexibility, and control of airspeed. Asking the flutist to produce the 3rd partial on F^1, and the 5th partial on C^1 in succession (sounding C^2 and E^2 just as in the first example) requires both a change of fingering and of airspeed. This would require the most practice to produce well.

3.4.6. Multiphonics

In addition to being able to isolate the individual partials of a given fundamental, woodwinds are able to produce a number of frequency vibrations in the single air column of an instrument and move between producing one sound and multiple sounds (Bartolozzi 1974, 35). The technique for playing multiphonics on the flute is similar to that for producing harmonics, but here the flutist needs to use a broader air stream mediated between the speed needed to create the individual pitches (Dick 1987, 35). The amount of attention to the speed and size of air column that a flutist needs to create multiphonics helps to develop more flexible tone production in general.

3.4.7. Singing and Playing together

It is also possible to produce a vocal sound while simultaneously producing a sound on the flute. While it is not too difficult for the flutist to produce a flute sound and sing at an octave (or octaves, depending on the range of the flutist's voice) apart, other intervals are more difficult, as

[8] Overblowing refers to using a stronger air pressure than required to produce any particular pitch on the flute, though in practice, it is only possible to produce overtones in the first two octaves of the concert C-flute's range.

is moving the flute sound and voice separately to different pitches. The control of air speed and width of the air column needed is similar to that needed for producing multiphonics. The control of airspeed, support, and openness of the throat, as well as the listening required to produce an interesting sound can have a noticeable effect on the focus and color of the traditional flute sound. In addition, if a flutist practices singing and playing simultaneously to the point where they are able to move the two voices independently, this is an excellent exercise for intonation.

3.5. Reflective exploration

The way of working developed during this project, outlined in the handbook and explained through the narrative in Chapter 5 of this report, needs time and space to be effective. It involves using improvisational exercises and reflective discussions to help develop the technical skills, musical understanding, and general confidence of the returning flutists. Sometimes the work is just a reflective discussion that happens when a challenge arises during rehearsal, often an exploratory exercise is also involved. It is a way of working that moves away from formal telling instruction towards guiding the returning flutists to draw on and expand their own knowledge. The exercises in this project were designed to create a space where the returning flutists could explore their musicality and technical skills at whatever level they presently found themselves and discover new ways to develop them further. This type of reflective exploration takes time. There are of course natural time limits due to the length of rehearsals and the need to balance different ways of working in any one rehearsal. The exercises and reflective explorations are used to rehearse written material, not completely replace it. One of the challenges in working in this way was to find a balance between keeping rehearsals moving and interesting while allowing time for the improvised exercises and reflective discussions to unfold naturally.

Conductors rightly plan rehearsals to keep the pace moving and make the most efficient use of time, playing through pieces and relying on the musicians to take full responsibility for understanding how to provide what is being asked for. This is where I feel rehearsals of returning musicians can vary most from other ensembles. While returning flutists have a more developed skill set than beginning adult musicians would and are often looking to challenge themselves musically, they also have limits on the amount of time they can spend developing their skills. I plan rehearsals as if it is one of the few chances the ensemble members have to play during the week. While that is not always the case, thinking that way while planning helps me to consider where the returning flutists might have challenges with the repertoire that they might

not have the resources to deal with. By including reflective improvisational work in rehearsals, I hoped to give the returning flutists new information on how to develop the skills they needed to feel comfortable in rehearsals and performances. It will be possible to see in the narrative in Chapter 5 how this reflective exploratory work helped the returning flutists expand old beliefs they held about themselves as musicians and allowed me to move more quickly through pieces when we rehearsed in a more formal, faster-paced way.

As I discuss in Chapter 4.1, adult learners tend to learn best in an environment where they can draw on both formal and informal sources of information in novel settings. This helps them to become self-directed in their learning. Building the community needed to allow the ensemble members to trust each other enough to use each other as sources of information takes time. Understanding concepts like intonation, listening to and interacting with other ensemble members, balance, technical skills, and becoming confident with improvisation cannot be taught quickly. Also, part of the reason that the exercises do take time is because reflection needs to be involved in the learning process. I go into more detail in Chapters 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 on the importance of reflection in adult learning.

As I will explain in the narrative in Part Two of this report, taking the time to work slowly on essential skills allowed me to move faster in other parts of rehearsals. Once the returning flutists had gained more confidence in their abilities during the reflective explorations, we were able to play through pieces more easily and often rehearse the written music at a faster pace than I believe we would have been able to if I had left skill building entirely to the returning flutists themselves. Finding a balance between the amount of reflective exploration and faster paced rehearsal sections was one of the largest challenges I faced while developing these rehearsal techniques. It will be possible to see in the narrative in chapter 5 that I became better at reading the needs of the ensemble and individual members in the moment and gained more flexibility in my rehearsal technique, balancing the different rehearsal styles became easier.

In her work on the importance of awareness in learning, Ellen Langer warns that overlearned skills can lead to mindless actions if the learner applies the overlearned skill without responding to the specific situation at hand. This is situational awareness: an understanding of when and how to apply a specific skill. It involves being open to novelty and being aware of the different possible perspectives of any given learning task. Langer's belief is that greater mastery can be gained through inventive ways of transforming the routine (1997, 15–24). The reflective improvisational work that I developed during this project is always novel since it is not possible

to plan exactly what will happen during any of the exercises. I also tried to create exercises that approach challenges from perspectives different than the traditional manner of approaching that particular challenge. The opportunity to approach a challenge from multiple perspective should allow for new ways of learning that support the development of important performance skills.

Langer believes that viewing the same information through different perspectives allows us to become more open to that information (1997, 133). During the sections of rehearsals using reflective exploration, I had the opportunity to present different ways of approaching technical and ensemble challenges, and because of the nature of the explorations, helped to build trust and cooperation between ensemble members. The improvisational nature of the reflective exploration meant that there was no pressure to play the 'right notes' or perform in a specific manner. Instead, the returning flutists learned to be present during the improvised explorations, aware of what was going on, and how they were playing.

When a learner has no need to evaluate themselves negatively for not accomplishing a task, they may be able to see that they actually did accomplish something, even if it was not the task they originally planned (Langer 1997, 137). When learning during a rehearsal is happenting in a formal manner – the director telling ensemble members what needs to be corrected without discussion – it can easily happen that there is no space for the returning flutists to understand that they may have accomplished something different. The only thing that is communicated instead is that there is a specific mistake that needs correction. If a returning flutist lacks the understanding or practice reime that could help correct the problem, this corrective statement could cause anxiety and shut down learning rather than lead to the learning that could help to correct the mistake. When correction is neccessary during rehearsals, the conductor could continue by also praising another task that was succesful. This allows the learner to understand that something was accomplished. One step further would be to explain (best done through exercises rather than words) how the skills that were performed successfully could help in solving the problem, or how the returning flutsist could redirect their attention while playing to solve the original problem.

In Chapters 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 I further discuss mindsets, learning motivations, and the problems that relying on formal 'telling' instruction can cause in adult learning. The exercises that make up the reflective exploration of my rehearsals were designed to allow returning flutists to accomplish something in their playing, even if what is finally accomplished is not what we set out to do originally. As the returning flutists gain confidence through the development that

comes from participating in these reflectice explorations, they should be more open to corrections that need to happen in faster-paced rehearsal sections. It is especially helpful when I am able to offer those corrections by referencing back to the learning that happened during the earlier reflective exploration. This way, the returning flutists gain confidence in their ability to develop and understand that learning can transfer between different situations. Evidence of this type of learning can be seen throughout the narrative of this report, particularly in Chapter 5.2.4.

4 Background Theories

In order to develop the rehearsal techniques I used with the HHO, I drew on theories of adult learning including social theories of learning and communities of practice, transformational theories of learning, and motivational mindsets. These theories helped me better understand the specific needs of adult learners and in particular, those of returning musicians. The creation of the rehearsal plans for the HHO developed during this project, including the reflective improvisation and the balance between that work and faster-paced sections was informed by these theories. Sample rehearsal plans can be found in Chapter 5 of the handbook. In addition to explaining these theories, in this chapter I will also give a detailed definition of improvisation as I have understood and used it during this project. Finally, I explain the theories of ensemble conducting on which I based my own development during this project.

4.1. Theories of adult learning

In developing the rehearsal techniques and other practices used to create a supportive environment for the HHO, I needed to consider the returning flutists as learners, and the ensemble as a learning environment. It is becoming increasingly aware that musical skills do not have to be cultivated early in order to develop and that humans can continue to develop musically throughout their lives (Veblen 2012, 243). In fact, it is very possible that the process of learning anything from novel situations probably remains the same throughout a lifetime and it is the only in the number of novel experiences children have compared to adults that makes it seem as though there is a difference. According to Jarvis, learning is a lifelong process. A person experiences social situations with their entire being, both physically and mentally in a way that includes their biology, senses, knowledge, experience, and beliefs. Learning happens when one can transform these experiences cognitively, emotionally, or practically, and integrate them into their own identity. This learning is necessarily influenced by the social context within which it occurs (Jarvis 2009, 25–27).

Looking at the ensemble as a community of social learning allowed me to consider the importance of the interaction among the members of the ensemble during the learning process. As I will explain later in the narrative of this report, it was only when I understood the importance of helping the ensemble to come together as a community of social learning by encouraging the relationships among the individual members that I was able to successfully implement the exercises that further supported social learning. Understanding the needs of the

individual learners helped me to develop rehearsal techniques that encouraged social activity and then helped develop musical skills and techniques. This social activity helped the individual learners draw on each other's experiences and knowledge to create new methods of working that suited the ensemble as a whole.

4.1The ensemble as a social learning environment

I have already showed, in my overview of literature that non-professional adult musicians consider the possibility to continue their musical development one of the main motivating factors for their participation in a musical ensemble (D.M. Taylor, et al. 2011, 11; Darrough 1992, 27). The social aspect of participation in a musical ensemble is also one of the top motivating factors mentioned by these adults (see Roulston, Jutras and Kim 2015, 326; Tsugawa 2009, 2; P. G. Taylor 2012; D.M. Taylor, et al. 2011; Rohwer 2005). If we consider that learning happens in a social setting then it would perhaps make more sense to consider the social aspect and musical development of a musical ensemble as two parts of the same question, especially when working with adults who have experience in this type of learning. For an ensemble member to be prepared for a performance, not only do they need instruction on the specific tasks they need to perform, but they also need to feel confident about their own ability to contribute to the performance (Jansson 2018, 63). I would argue that this confidence comes in large part from the feeling of belonging to a community that can successfully work together to create knowledge.

Non-professional adult musicians appreciate a director with a positive nurturing attitude who takes a genuine interest in each ensemble member individually, with the motivation to go beyond musical achievement towards creating a community spirit, including shared power and support. Building this sense of community allows the adult musicians to learn from each other as well as from the director (D.M. Taylor et al., 2011, 14). As social beings, we gain knowledge through engaging with other people and the world around us. Because of that, we are drawn to find and create communities where we can engage in activities we enjoy and where our competence in those activities can be measured (Wenger 2009, 211). For these reasons, it is easy to draw the conclusion that adults who enjoy making music and want to develop their musical skills would seek out ensembles that would aid them in that development.

Thinking of an ensemble as a community that comes together to create meaning allows us to consider participation in the group (ensemble) as a form of learning (Lave and Wenger 1991, 95). This allows us to talk about the learning that happens during the interaction of

individual ensemble members and the group learning that involves the entire ensemble as part of the process of creating knowledge rather than having to focus on the development of individual members in order to see evidence of knowledge creation. The activities and tasks carried out in the community are only one part of the creation of knowledge that takes place. These activities happen within the social context of relationships amongst the people taking part in the community. Therefore, the social interactions themselves are an important part of the learning process (Lave and Wenger 1991, 49–53).

This means that practices an ensemble puts in place to promote belonging are as much a part of the act of creating knowledge as the practices that a particular ensemble creates to support musical development. Again, in the narrative of this report, there is evidence that development in the HHO happened through the establishment of social connections and the ensemble became stronger as it developed ways to welcome newcomers. The knowledge addressed in this project is not a group of facts meant to be internalized, but a practice of learning that grew from the combined efforts of all members of the ensemble. The learning curriculum that develops from the social interactions within a group becomes a shared practice, developed from the interaction between members. As each member brings different experiences and viewpoints with them to the community, they add to the richness of the knowledge created (Lave and Wenger 1991, 97). When an ensemble as community creates knowledge through their own social interaction, a practice evolves that serves that particular ensemble's needs better than a prescribed set of learning rules adapted from elsewhere would.

In his study of musical ensembles as communities of practice, Ailbhe looked at the way successful leaders fostered a sense of belonging through challenging and nurturing their ensemble members. This nurturing helped individual members to feel loyal towards, and responsible for, the ensemble as a community (2016, 113). As in the other studies of leaders of adult musical ensembles mentioned earlier, leaders in Ailbhe's study often used humor as a way of creating community and as a tool for learning. The individual ensemble members used the shared musical knowledge that they brought with them from their other musical identities to build a sense of community within this ensemble. Each community-ensemble developed different ways of sharing information, and had slightly different ways of working with, and responding to leadership. Each ensemble created a unique way of sharing knowledge, organizing rehearsals and other activities, and creating practices, built on the interactions between the individuals in that ensemble (Ailbhe 2016, 79–83).

Adult learners when joining a new ensemble may have some fear about their ability to be successful within the group (Roulston, Jutras and Kim, 2015). Newcomers to an ensemble not only have to take part in the activities already established by the group, but they also have to work on establishing interpersonal relationships within the group at the same time (Lave 2009, 205). Another study found that it could be especially difficult for new members to create social bonds within established ensembles when they felt their personal goals did not meet those of the ensemble (Pitts and Robinson 2016, 338–339). Other studies have found that fear amongst new members may be more of a problem in newer ensembles, since more established groups have older members who are able to provide support for less confident newer members (Einarsdottir, 2014), or are better at creating a sense of camaraderie that enhances motivation (Tsugawa, 2009, 2; Pitts and Robinson 2016, 340). It is important to take the challenges of welcoming newcomers into an established ensemble seriously, since joining a new community is one area where the most learning takes place (Wenger 2009, 213).

Learners in all the ensembles Ailbhe studied used similar practices in the collective collaboration of knowledge building, not just in their musical activities, but also in organizational practices such as the way rehearsals began and ended, the type and amount of social interaction during rehearsals, and the way the different roles within the ensemble – leader, 'old-timer' and 'newcomer'– were defined (Ailbhe 2016, 1–20). Similarly, a study of a choir in Sweden using exercises based on Jaques Dalcroze's *Eurhythmics*[9] as rehearsal techniques found that similar practices to those of the ensembles in Ailbhe's study were used in creating community. The choir members felt that the kinesthetic exercises used in rehearsals helped to ground them during rehearsals and performances, improved their understanding of musical form, and helped them feel more connected to each other and to the audience during performances. While this choir had no conductor, and the singers strived to make each ensemble member feel equally important, the more senior members of the choir were responsible for making sure that the newcomers felt comfortable. The choir members felt that they came together as a community through the exercises they used to rehearse (Pretorius and van der Merwe 2019, 585–588).

Since adults have long-term experience in group participation, they have most likely developed multiple learning strategies that allow them to take advantage of both the formal learning given by a director to ensemble musicians in a traditional rehearsal setting, and the less structured, non-formal learning that happens between group members (Veblen 2012, 6–8). This

[9] Émile Jaques-Dalcroze was a Swiss composer and music educator who developed a method of learning and experiencing music through movement (that he called eurythmics), solfege, and improvisation (Sadler 1915, 1).

is probably why most theories on adult learning, beginning with Knowles in the mid-20th century, state that group learning, with a leader as facilitator rather than a more formal teacher of facts, is the most effective way to organize adult learning (Knowles 1975, 34). While learning is a social activity that happens throughout life, earlier interactive experiences will affect how the new experience is formed and understood (Alheit 2009, 125–126).

4.1.1. Adults as learners: Past experience

> *As adult learners, we are caught in our own histories. However good we are at making sense of our experiences, we all have to start with what we have been given and operate within horizons set by ways of seeing and understanding that we have acquired through prior learning.* (Mezirow 1991, 1)

Returning musicians bring a musical identity formed from past performance and learning experiences with them to their new practice. As the adult brain is particularly good at drawing on past experiences when faced with new challenges, these prior experiences can provide a firm base for learning and development in the new practice. They also give returning musicians a way to develop community, through sharing these past experiences with other ensemble members. These past experiences have also helped to create a brain ready to develop musically. The adult brain, particularly in adults participating in musical activity, continue to show growth of neurons, and neuroplasticity. Long term musical training not only enhances short-term neuroplasticity but seems to enhance motor performance and coordination of complex manual tasks. Older musicians have larger working memory capacities and perceive speech better than their peers with no musical training. In addition, it seems that music, especially when paired with movement, also reduces age-related declines in non-verbal memory and executive functions (Herholz and Zatorre 2012, 493–496).

Challenging learning experiences, such as learning to play a musical instrument, can lead to the development of brain tissue just as physical exercise can lead to the development of muscle tissue, even in older adults. This may come about as the result of the physical activity involved in playing an instrument, or the mental practice involved in thinking about performing (Garland and Howard 2009, 3). Still, adults themselves participating in musical instruction have reported that while they felt more mature and less resistant to instruction than they had been as younger students, they found challenges such as manual dexterity, hand-eye coordination and the

cognitive processes involved in learning music more challenging (Roulston, Jutras and Kim, 2015).

Past experiences can also create challenges in the present learning situation. Directors of adult musical ensembles mentioned changing earlier learned habits or preconceived ideas about the musical learning situation as one of the main challenges of working with adults (Bowles 2010, 54). Adults may at times be overly eager to apply knowledge that is immediately available to them from past learning situations, rather than first reflecting on the continued usefulness of those ideas in the present learning environment. These theories and beliefs easily persist even in the presence of evidence that should invalidate their usefulness (Mezirow 1991, 122–123). For example, Schmidt-Jones found that some returning musicians had internalized the idea from earlier learning experiences that there was only one right way to develop musical skills and concepts. These adult learners continued to believe that the concepts were beyond their reach, because they were unable to develop in that 'one right way'. Since these adults brought these beliefs with them to their present learning environment, they were unwilling to try new solutions and even developed anxiety that hindered their progress (2017).

Part of becoming socialized always involves internalizing the definitions and assumptions communicated to us by people who have had a significant presence in our life, such as teachers and parents. Remembering the lessons taught to us by these people in a new context is an inherent function of cognition. How the lesson was originally learned and how often it has been called upon will affect how well it can be later recalled. For learning to happen in the present, it is important that the adult is able to reflect on those past lessons and expand or adapt them to fit the present situation. When an adult can reflect on these earlier, remembered experiences, and understand how well – or not – they serve the new context, new learning can happen. Development could be described as improving the way we reflect on these old lessons and knowing when simply strengthening the earlier learned information serves us best in the present situation, or when expanding it, or even transforming it is necessary (Mezirow 1991, 2–7).

When a memory provokes anxiety, it will be difficult to recall (Mezirow 1991, 6). Anxious learners have difficulty concentrating and are both hypervigilant to non-verbal cues, as well as more likely to misinterpret those cues. When anxious, adults may not hear directions correctly, which can cause further frustration not only for them, but for the leader as well. With learners like these, it is especially important to create a structured, supportive space before learning can happen (Perry 2006, 21–27). The earlier review of literature on adult learners in a

musical setting shows evidence of anxiety being very common in adult learners, and the following section will look at this in more depth.

4.1.2. Adults as learners: Developing self-direction

> If someone is doing something to meet the extrinsic values of others, without holding those values themselves, it's not learning, but following. (Kegan 2009, 49)

While a group that comes together as a community creates a social environment for learning to happen, each individual within the group is responsible for their own participation in that community. It is not enough for us to be socialized; we need to be able to reflect on the expectations being made on us in that social space (Kegan 2009, 52). Transformational learning theory holds that aging brings about changes in awareness and critical reflectivity that results in an enhanced capacity to reflect on past learning experiences and use the reflections to act in the present (Mezirow 1991, 7). While this implies that adults should have the ability to use past experiences in the present learning situation, if they do not have the ability or space to reflect on how those facts relate to their present needs, no learning will take place. For an adult learner to benefit from the present learning environment, they need to become critically reflective of old beliefs created from earlier learning experiences and cultural norms. Through reflective discussion, the learner can come to understand which ideas will serve them in the present, and which need to be expanded, abandoned, or transformed (Mezirow, 197).

Becoming self-directed in learning is not just a matter of building confidence or reaching a certain skill level. It's a matter of learning how we understand ourselves, the world, and the interaction of the two. When an adult learner can critically reflect on the interaction between themselves and the world around them, they are ready to become self-directed (Jarvis 2009, 51). Malcolm Knowles, who wrote extensively about adult learners in the mid-20th century implies in many of writings that self-direction was an innate quality in adults, and one way that adults could be distinguished from younger learners (1975, 565–566). In his later writings, Knowles did come to understand that self-direction was not a given for adult learners and that they may need help developing this skill (1988, 111).

Hung-Ling's study of adult, non-music major piano students is a good example of how adults need support to become self-directed in their musical practice. Although the participating adult learners had a great deal of internal motivation and understood the benefit of being self-

directed in their practice, a majority of the group self-censored their own ideas of problem-solving and relied instead on their instructor's approval for validation of their musical achievements (Hung-Ling 1996, 2). These same students, however, were able to discuss in detail aspects of piano playing that clearly indicated they understood what they needed to learn but were either not willing or able to come up with their own strategies for solving the difficulties they encountered in their personal practice.

The study also found that the teachers, while committed to teaching these non-professional adult students in a way that encouraged self-direction, often fell into corrective forms of teaching – telling without discussion. Without discussion, personal problems the student might have had that would hinder the learning process often went unrecognized, making the teaching ineffective. A majority of the students studied were aware of the type of teaching being used and they also labeled their teachers as corrective (Hung-Ling, 73–83). In these cases, reflection on and discussion of ideas internalized from earlier learning environments did not take place. The adult students had no possibility to assess the usefulness of those previous lessons to the present situation. This study points out the importance of reflection not only for the learner, but maybe even more importantly for the teacher or director working with adult learners. If a director changes their teaching method without critically reflecting on their own mindsets towards learning, it is very easy to fall back into old, practiced styles of teaching.

Dweck and Legget coined the phrase 'performance goal orientation' or mindset to refer to learners who hold the belief that learning attributes such as 'talent' or 'ability' are fixed. A performance goal orientation implies that the learner has a need to 'perform' for authority figures to continually prove their fixed abilities. Learners holding this learning orientation easily become frustrated with tasks just beyond their perceived ability and have little motivation to improve their skill set. They tend to avoid taking chances that may 'prove' their limitations. Learners holding a performance mindset tend to attribute any difficulties they have during the learning process to their own personal inadequacy and often refer to their abilities in other areas after a failure, to divert attention from their perceived poor performance in the present task. These researchers found that level of problem-solving strategies used by these learners actually declined with each successive failure (Dweck and Legget 1988, 256–258). Just as with the adult piano students in the previous study I referred to, students in these studies saw the learning situation as a way to prove their ability to follow directions. Their interaction in the learning situation was passive, taking what was given by the teacher without reflection or discussion.

On the other hand, learners who held what Dweck and Legget refer to as a 'mastery goal orientation' or mindset saw the learning situation as a challenge and understood that improvement comes through greater effort after making mistakes. Learners holding this type of goal orientation enjoyed the learning situation more than the previous group and eagerly took on new challenges to improve their ability. They understood that failing was only a sign that they needed to put more effort into the task and did so willingly (Dweck and Legget 1988, 258). A learner with a mastery mindset who is continually seeking new challenges to further their learning could certainly be considered self-directed. Rather than defining themselves through limiting beliefs created in earlier learning situations, they willingly seek out new challenges that challenge those old failures and further develop their skills and knowledge. While these motivation studies focused mostly on children and young adults, Dweck's own writing later refers to the importance of adult awareness of motivation orientation and mindset both in their roles as teachers and learners (Dweck 2006).

Studies by Dweck and her colleagues also found that educators and other authority figures influenced the goal orientation of the learners they interacted with through their own internalized mindsets. Even when educators communicated a mastery mindset to the learners they interacted with through their behavior and language, the mindset orientation they held internally was much more influential on the learners than their words were. The authorities who held a performance mindset set more limits on the learners they interacted with than authorities with an internal mastery mindset, even if they tried to communicate otherwise. Learning environments where a cultural norm of mastery mindset was present were most likely to pass that mastery mindset on to the learners (See Heimhovitz and Dweck, 2017). Again, even though the piano teachers in Hung-Ling's study may have understood the importance of self-direction in adult learning situations, their teaching, based on their long-held, internalized beliefs, held these students back.

Another study of adult piano students found that by drawing on the ideas of transformational learning theory, a teacher could help them become more self-directed in their musical practice. These learners were most successful and enjoyed the learning experience the most with a 'guided discovery' learning situation that actively involved the learners in their construction of meaning. In addition to involving the adult piano students in their own choice of repertoire, Coutts modeled non-judgmental ways of finding solutions to challenges, used specific questions that directed the learners' attention to important information, and helped to break down the learning process into smaller understandable parts. Coutts also helped learners set

short- and long-term goals and encouraged discussion of their challenges and successes (Coutts 2015). This same type of learning environment including modeling and high amounts of specific feedback and discussion, was found to encourage and reduce the anxiety of adults taking part in a creative writing class (see Cleary 2012).

For an adult to be able to fully participate in and benefit from a learning situation, they must have complete information about the situation and be able to participate equally in the learning environment. They should have the ability to accept outside perspectives that differ from their own and be able to critically reflect on these perspectives. The adult learner should be able to accept an informed, rational consensus as a legitimate test of validity of the perceptions they are reflecting on. The educator should help the learner define their needs, help them understand how to use the resources available in the learning environment to meet those needs, and help the learner organize what they should to learn in relationship to those needs and current levels of understanding. The educator should foster a reflexive approach to learning by creating a supportive environment including non-judgmental feedback. An experiential environment that expands the range of options for learning available and helps the learner understand the perspective of others who have alternative ways of understanding, help to decrease the student's dependency on the educator and become self-directed (Mezirow 1991, 198–200).

The theories can be seen in studies looking at the non-professional adult musicians taking part in ensembles. As I have previously mentioned, many studies show that non-professional adult participants appreciate a director with a positive nurturing attitude who takes a genuine interest in each ensemble member individually. It was important that their directors' motivations went beyond musical achievement towards creating a community spirit through shared power and support. This allowed them to learn from each other as well as from the director (D.M. Taylor et al. 2011, 14). Developing this sense of community seems to be an important motivating factor for adults participating in non-professional musical ensembles (see Tsugawa 2009, 2; P. G. Taylor 2012; D.M. Taylor, et al. 2011; Rohwer 2005).

4.2. Improvisation

Even if we are to limit the word improvisation to the way it is used within a musical context, the number of different definitions available is tremendous. Since I use the term throughout this report, it is important that I define how I have used the term in this project. The Oxford

Dictionary of Music defines improvisation as "A performance according to the inventive whim of the moment, i.e., without a written or printed score and not from memory" (Oxford music online). The Grove Dictionary of Music defines improvisation in this way:

> Improvisation is the creation of a musical work, or the final form of a musical work, as it is being performed. It may involve the work's immediate composition by its performers, or the elaboration or adjustment of an existing framework, or anything in between. To some extent every performance involves elements of improvisation…and to some extent every improvisation rests on a series of conventions or implicit rules. (Nettl et al. 2016)

Most, if not all, musical cultures contain some form of improvised music. Each culture contains variations in the social and musical value placed on improvised music and its performers, the amount of preparation used beforehand to create improvised performances, and in the material used as a base for the improvisations (Nettl et al. 2016, 1). This makes it difficult to create one definition for musical improvisation that would cover all of these different cultures. One thing that is common to all improvised works is that they always have a point of departure that is used as a base for performance (Nettl et al. 2001).

Christopher Azzara defines improvisation as spontaneously expressing musical thoughts, making music within certain understood guidelines, and engaging in musical conversation (Azzara 2002, 172). Stephen Davies defines improvisation in a similar vein, as spontaneous, unregulated music-making within a cultural or stylistic framework that draws on the performer's own repertoire of phrases and figures. Davies does not consider an improvised performance an actual musical work, in part because it is not meant for repetition (2001, 11–14).

The variations between these definitions seems to imply that the term improvisation may be overused to describe a large number of different musical activities. All of the definitions above come from within the Western Art Music tradition, and with the exception of Nettl's definition, uphold the idea which seems to originate in the Western Art Music tradition from the Romantic era, that written music is the highest form of musical expression. It is not within the scope of this project to discuss the artistic value of improvised or oral traditions vs written musical traditions. However, this attitude seems to explain the disappearance of improvisation from the performance and instruction of Western Art Music beginning at the same time. In the next chapter I go into more detail on the changing roles improvisation has played in the Western Art Music tradition.

For this project, I am using the term improvisation similarly to how Christopher Azzara defines it – as a spontanious expression of musical thought, and engaging in musical

conversation. The guidelines that define the improvisation that I use as the base for the rehearsal techniques I develop fit within Edwarth Sarath's theory of 'trans-stylistic' improvisation. In this type of improvisation, which I describe in more detail in the next section, the musician draws on the musical styles and ideas that they already have internalized and uses improvisation to build on those ideas. This means there is no need to learn and inernalize a possibly new set of rules before beginging to improvise.

4.2.1. Improvisation as an educational tool

> You don't have to practice boring exercises, but you do have to practice something. If you find the practice boring, don't run away from it, but don't tolerate it either. Transform it into something that suits you. If you are bored playing a scale, play the same eight tones but change the order. Then change the rhythm. Then change the tone color. Presto, you have just improvised. (Nachmanovitz 1990, 68)

Well into the 19th century, improvisation was considered an important skill for any working musician within the Western Art Music tradition. Several treatises on improvisation were written at this time, including Czerny's work on improvisation at the pianoforte (Moore, 1992, 63). As music performance shifted away from the courts into middle class households, music, and the ability to create music, became more accessible to a wider variety of people. An increase in written scores, and accessible instruments meant that there was less of a need for career musicians, who would have studied music as an improvised tradition. Non-professional musicians now had the information, instruments, and time needed to pursuit music as a leisure activity.

By the late 1800's, we see important musicians emerging not from the families associated with royal courts as was previously the case, but from working class families, Debussy and Bartok being good examples of this. The development of conservatory education in the early 19th century further helped move Western Art Music out of the courts and more into the public eye. It also meant a less intimate relationship between musicians and a growing audience. A wider audience meant that listeners were not always familiar with the works of the composers they were hearing, meaning that improvisations on these works were less effective (Moore, 1992, 67–75). Western Art music of the past two hundred years may be unique in how strongly it is based on notation. The aural tradition, originally a close partner to written scores, had died out almost completely, so that by the 20th century, church organists are about the only classical musicians still improvising on a regular basis. This could also be due to the rise in systematic musical

education for musicians, where exact standard ways of teaching and adjudicating are easier to control than the 'messier' creativity that improvising involves (Agrell 2014).

With the development of audio recording and broadcasting, we see a renewed interest in improvisation. Music traditions outside of the Western Art tradition became readily available for study by any interested musician, and vice versa (Gillon 2018, 782). The newest version of the National curriculum of Finnish Music Institutes, gives a great deal more autonomy to individual schools than previous versions. It also specifically includes improvisation as one of the four main goals of the foundation studies in music, along with performing and expression, learning to learn, and listening and understanding music (Opetus Hallitus 2017, 40). A growing body of pedagogical work incorporating improvisation also points to this increased interest in reintroducing improvisation as a teaching tool.

One of my motivations for using improvisation as a tool for helping returning musicians reconnect with their musical and technical skills grows out of my experience in using similar exercises with younger students. In addition, I discovered during my own student years, I came to understand that practicing extended flute techniques could strengthen my traditional flute technique. Playing whistle tones, harmonics, or singing and playing at the same time, involved being aware of airstream and support muscles in novel ways. In addition to widening my range of repertoire and colors, the new strength and understanding that grew out of exploring and using these techniques helped to develop and strengthen more traditional aspects of flute playing.

When I began teaching, there was very little or no material available that included extended techniques for young students, so I needed to develop my own way of incorporating them into lessons. It was much easier to introduce these techniques without written music, through 'ping-pong' style improvisation, and encouraging students to compose their own pieces. These exercises spilled into my work with ensembles, where I found that in addition to developing instrumental technique, this type of work helped to develop listening, and other important ensemble skills. It seemed easier to teach students to understand how their own part fits into the whole of the ensemble, how to follow a conductor, and how to listen when playing in an ensemble without using written music. I have developed these rehearsal techniques in my more than 20 years of directing wind ensembles at LUHMO and found them to be an effective way to introduce young musicians to an ensemble practice.

These experiences lead me to believe that I could adapt or develop similar exercises for use with adult returning musicians within rehearsals, to develop their confidence, enjoyment, and musical skills. The pieces I found that included improvisation and or extended techniques was geared mainly towards young learners, or professional students. At first, I found little mention of using improvisation with non-professional adult musicians in literature. Hung-Lin briefly mentions that improvisation could be an effective way to develop self-direction in adult piano students (Hung-Ling 1996, 2). Hartz and Bauer found that a systematic program of teaching improvisation could raise non-professional adult musicians' own confidence in playing by ear, increased their technical ability on their own instruments, and helped them in listening, and understanding their own individual parts within larger ensemble works. In this study, the improvisational methods used were very systematic, and harmonically based. The researchers felt that promoting the social aspect of learning by having the adults give more feedback to each other and celebrating individual improvisations would have helped the participants feel safe during the exercises (Hartz and Bauer 2016, 31–51). In a study of an adult choir using Dalcroze-based rehearsal exercises, choir members felt an increased sense of body consciousness after doing these exercises. They felt this understanding helped them to better express musical phrases. Other rhythmic exercises the choir used in rehearsals produced similar results. (Pretorius and van der Merwe 2019, 586–587).

Studies of young instrumental students (see Azzara 1993) and general music classes (see Beegle 2010) indicate that incorporating improvisation into an educational setting does help to develop musical skills and these skills seem to transfer to the performance of composed works. Instrumental students showed more accurate performances of composed works and a better understanding of structure and harmony after studying improvisation (Azzara 1993, 339). Even children in general music classes gained an understanding of the need for structure and practice in their musical performances, including memorizing motivic material for later use, while studying improvisation (Beegle 2010, 231–232).

Many of the exercises I adapted and developed for use in rehearsals with the HHO were exercises I have collected or developed during my teaching practice with younger students. They would fit into the style of improvisation Edward Sarath titled *trans-stylistic* improvisation: improvisation that is not tied to one particular set of style elements or one particular genre, but rather begins as free explorations that can lay the foundation for the development of important musicianship skills (Sarath 2010, 1). Other exercises were based on those found in Jeffrey Agrell's book *Improvisation Games for Classical Musician* (Agrell 2008), similar to Sarath's idea in that

they provide frameworks for musicians to start free improvisations. Classes on creative teaching and improvisation taken during these studies, and workshops and reading about Dalcroze's *Eurythmics* tradition informed the rehearsal techniques as well. I also adapted exercises drawn from theatrical improvisation to use as community building exercises, and to introduce the general idea of how to work with improvisation without using instruments. These exercises were mainly adapted from books by Keith Johnstone (see Johnstone 1992), and Peter Gwinn (see Gwinn 2003), as well as a general theory of improvisation drawn from Nachmanovitch (see Nachmanovitch 1990).

Emile Dalcroze's developed *Eurythmics* as a way of training the solfège and rhythmic technique of his students at the Geneva Conservatory (Dalcroze 1921, v–vii). It is a method of musical instruction that uses improvisation as a way of discovering music by and for yourself, rather than imitating performances that already exist. Improvisation is approached in *Eurhythmics* through movement. This is because Dalcroze believed that it was important to first have a kinesthetic sense of how expression feels in the body, before producing the expressive ideas on an instrument (Abramson 1980, 64–65). Eurythmics is used traditionally to deepen the experience and understanding of musical events through body movements. It encourages active involvement and concentration from the students that allows them to develop inner hearing and an inner sense of rhythm (see Juntunen 2002).

The exercises and rehearsal techniques developed during this project closely resembled what Edward Sarath calls *trans-stylistic* improvisation: Improvisation is a unique way to develop musicianship skills because it allows the performer to experience the "why" and the "how" simultaneously (Sarath 2010, 1-4). It negates the delay between music's composition and its performance, since in improvisation, the moments of composition and performance are one and the same (Brockmann 2009, 11).

Trans-stylistic improvisation does not necessarily mean that the player is drawing from several different styles at once during the improvisation, but that the player has more freedom during the improvisation than one specifically defined style would offer. Rather than requiring the student to learn strict stylistic rules or be aware of theoretical knowledge before they begin improvising, the player is encouraged to draw on any previous knowledge of different styles they may have assimilated or experienced in earlier formal and informal learning situations. The improvisations based on this previous knowledge can then be used to promote development of

both conventional and contemporary skills and theoretical knowledge and can help to foster a musician's self-sufficiency (Sarath 2002, 188–196).

The first attempts at this type of improvisatory work, when the player is not yet able to predict the sounds that will result from certain actions, it may be more accurate to define the resulting performance as exploration. In later improvisations, not only are the performers more aware of what sounds will be produced beforehand, the improvisations also become more pattern-based than the earlier explorations usually are (Kratus 1990, 35). In my experience with younger students, while the students are usually aware of what sounds they can produce on their instrument, during the first improvisatory exercises they are eager to test the limits of their instrument and explore new ways of producing sound. The soundscapes created from these earliest attempts usually do not contain patterns or structures, and especially since they often involve exploring new ways of producing sound, they easily fit into Kratus's description of early explorations.

On the other hand, as I will explain later in the narrative section of this report, the first attempts at free improvisation by the returning flutists of the HHO were often based on assimilated patterns from their earlier learning experiences. There was little listening involved; the returning flutists were just playing scales and motives they had memorized parallel to each other, with no exploration of new sounds. They did not fit into the description of *exploration* that Sarath uses for the first attempts at creating spontaneous music, but they also did not resemble improvisations. Realizing that this was where the returning flutists started was what made me realize that I would need to adapt the exercises I used, and the way I introduced them to the ensemble, in order to get the results I had expected. The returning flutists had patterns, and understanding of musical form, but until they trusted the other members of the ensemble playing alongside of them, there would be no listening or interaction. And taking the chances needed to begin what could be called exploration was out of the question until I was able to provide a supportive structure safe enough for the returning flutists to feel comfortable taking chances in a social setting.

Because Sarath's idea of using *trans-stylistic* improvisation as a learning tool is based on the idea that the player has previous musical knowledge to draw on during exercises and performances, it fits into the needs of returning learners as defined by the theories of Knowles and Mezirow (see Knowles 1988; Mezirow 1991). It draws on past experiences, helps the returning musicians examine and explore the knowledge they have assimilated, and then develop

or transform that knowledge to fit their present needs. Since the exercises I developed were for use in a group situation, it gave the returning flutists the possibility to also draw on the knowledge and experience of their fellow ensemble members during the learning situation. The social dynamics of ensembles can help musicians feel more comfortable when starting to improvise, as everyone is doing it together. (Brockmann 2009, 6). But as I mentioned, and will explain more in the narrative in Part Two, the returning flutists needed a different sort of introduction to working in this way than what Sarath suggests for younger learners. They also needed a lot of support in the beginning to feel comfortable exploring, and especially exploring as a united group.

4.3. The Many Roles of the Director

Throughout this report, I make the distinction between director, that for me indicates the leader of an ensemble, and refers to all the roles that such a leader takes on, and conductor. I use the term conductor throughout this report to refer specifically to the role of conducting the ensemble from the front. I understand that these terms can and are used interchangeably, but I chose to make this distinction here in order emphasis the different roles that a leader of an adult returner ensemble may need to take on. Using these two terms to refer to different tasks within the ensemble also emphasizes the fact that the director of an ensemble of returning musicians will find themselves taking on many roles. This is because ensembles of non-professional adult musicians do not usually have the type of organizational structure attached to them that youth or professional ensembles would have (Hackman 1990, 263).

One of the questions important to me during this project was what sort of tools and skills does a director of an ensemble of returning musicians need to fill these roles in a way that supports both the development of the entire ensemble, and its members as individuals? While a lot of energy went into adapting and developing the improvisational exercises that were used as rehearsal tools, it was important for me to also look at the organizational and social skills a director should have when working with this type of ensemble. In addition, I did spend a large amount of time developing my own conducting skills as part of this project; and the narrative in Part Two follows my development as conductor, in addition to the development of the rehearsal techniques I used. While this report and accompanying handbook were not meant to be a

discussion of technical conducting skills, the importance of developing these skills, and the communication and organizational skills that go along with them became increasingly apparent to me as the project went on, especially after participating in the rehearsals and performances of large flute ensembles in Boston and Lyon during this project.

The conducting instruction that I took part in during this project helped me to control the anxiety I felt in working with an adult ensemble and gave me the opportunity to become a returning musical learner myself. I will describe in detail the difficulties I had during my studies in Chapter 4.1.4. These struggles were an important source of information and motivation as I worked to develop a supportive rehearsal space for the returning flutists of the HHO. Combined with the experiences I had during this project of sitting in non-professional adult flute ensembles, these experiences motivated me to emphasize the importance of conducting skills as part of the set of tools a director of a returning flutists' ensemble should develop.

4.3.1. Director as Facilitator

Even when considering an ensemble as one social entity, the director of the ensemble is important in their own right. They are the only member of the ensemble whose role is dedicated both to hearing and listening. Having one person take on this role makes rehearsals more efficient. When a director takes on the role of conductor at the front of the ensemble, they are physically positioned to hear the entire ensemble better than any individual member would be able to from within (Jansson 2018, 84). The director has an overview of how the arch of a rehearsal period should progress. They need to understand what the challenges of a concert program will be and decide how, and in what order to present those challenges in rehearsals to the ensemble (Boonshaft 2002, 2–6).

Any director of any ensemble needs to be both artist and musician, to be able to understand the score, communicate it to the ensemble, and in their role of conductor, to the audience. They need to be able to spark interest within the ensemble for a specific style or a particular piece, through their knowledge of general music history, and their understanding of any specific score. When working with a non-professional adult ensemble, it's also important to have a high level of situational-relational mastery: an understanding of how and when to shift between controlling the ensemble and standing back to empower the returning musicians. This involves knowing how to organize rehearsals even to the point of knowing how to stage an

ensemble in a way that supports the confidence of the returning musicians and creates the best possible ensemble sound. The organization of rehearsals: knowing when to intervene, and when to stand back during rehearsals and performances will look slightly different when working with returning musicians than it would with ensembles of younger musicians or beginning adults. Directors working with returning musicians should cultivate the musical skill needed to understand a score, but they also need to be an efficient manager, and understand how to find a balance between creating freedom for the ensemble, and using discipline (Jansson 2018, 34–39).

A conductor's weak rehearsal skills, poor organization and lack of preparedness can have a significant effect on the ensemble's level of anxiety. The conductor's own level of anxiety, and their negative mood may have an even stronger effect on an ensemble (Ryan and Andrews 2009). With returning musicians, this effect may be even more pronounced, since the returning musicians often have high expectations of rehearsals and performances, but not always the resources to match those expectations (Jansson 2018). Returning musicians need structure and support to feel confident in rehearsals and performances, since they are often having to evaluate old beliefs from earlier learning situations, while at the same time navigating the social aspects of the ensemble (Alheit 2009, 205). A director that is not prepared, or one with low confidence in their communicative conducting skills leaves the ensemble without a definitive leader. As Bion pointed out in his studies on groups, when an appointed leader of a group is not able to fill that role in the way that is needed at the time, the group will turn to other members to take over that role (Bion 1961, 32–40). This can cause anxiety levels within the group to raise even higher, as I will discuss further in the narrative in Part Two.

In the overview of literature on adult ensembles, I quoted several sources that listed qualities such as patience, humor, and flexibility as important ones for a director of non-professional adult ensembles to develop. It's also important to keep in mind that these qualities do not replace the need for planning, organization, and technical skill. Returning musicians often have high expectations for their musical experiences, and may place high demands on themselves, and because of that, their director. While the goal of this type of ensemble may not be to reach the same level of musical skill expected of professional ensembles, or have the same development expected from a young student ensemble, the director may face interpersonal and situational challenges that would not arise in other types of ensembles. A conductor of a non-professional adult ensemble has an exceptional need to be able to communicate with the ensemble members, to listen and understand what is going on, and be aware of what the ensemble needs at any moment during rehearsals and performances. They need to take on the

role of coach and even teacher, but not in the same prescriptive way that might be used with a younger ensemble (Jansson 2018, 51–53). With a non-professional adult ensemble, it is important to think of rehearsals as a musical journey, rather than the musical training model the director might use with younger students (Bowles 2010, 44).

If the leader of an ensemble of returning musicians can create an environment that fosters trust and belonging, the members can use their unique experiences to engage in reciprocal learning relationships. As I explained in Chapter 4.1.2, to create this environment, the teacher-facilitator must ensure that all the participating learners have the information they need to take part fully in the learning process. In addition, the learning situation must be set up so that all participants are equally able to take part. Only then can real communication, and critical discourse: the central elements of transformation in learning, to take place (Mezirow 1991, 198–199). Creating a supportive, trusting ensemble involves situational mastery: the director should have a deep understanding of the needs of the ensemble, and the flexibility to know when to intervene and when to step back during rehearsals and performances (Jansson 2018, 53–58). This understanding involves allowing ensemble members to take part in the definition of the ensemble and its goals. A sustainable balance between the musical challenges offered by an ensemble as a whole and the goals of any one particular player is important for the committed participation by returning musicians (Pitts and Robinson 2016, 328).

The director of a returning musician's ensemble needs to have a 'bag of tricks' available to help balance the need for building enthusiasm with the need to act as teacher (Jansson 2018, 53–59). The improvisational exercises that I developed in this project were the tricks that I used to help develop ensemble skills and the self-direction of the individual returning flutists. But these exercises worked only alongside an understanding of how to build community, and using reflective questions to help the returning flutists reflect on the old beliefs they brought with them to the present learning situation.

The pace of the HHO rehearsals during this project altered between reflective improvisatory work and faster-paced, more formally structured sections. I also programmed pieces of varying difficulty in concert programs to aid in developing technique, and to allow the returning flutists to experience different roles within the ensemble. Not only does the reflective exploration itself foster the kind of novelty that Langer suggested helped to keep awareness high (Langer 2001, 70). the change in pace between the reflective exploration and the more traditionally faster-paced rehearsal sections does as well. Changing the pace of rehearsals,

including working on different pieces on a different schedule, is one important way to keep engagement high during rehearsals (Boonshaft 2002, 13).

During the differently paced sections of the HHO rehearsals, my role shifted between facilitator and conductor. During most of the reflective improvisational work in the rehearsals of the HHO, I took on the role of observer, rather than participating in the exercises along with the ensemble. Stepping back and observing the improvisations allowed me as the director to get a clear, strong vision of how the improvisations were progressing, and observe others' actions without the distraction of being part of the improvisation. (Ronen 2005, 8–9) Here, situational mastery became an important tool. A new improvisor will need a supportive environment, which includes the director knowing when to intervene, and when to let the learner continue without any interuption. When the director does intervene, they should avoid naming or labeling the improvisation attempts themselves, leaving a space open instead for the learners to do so (Kide 2014, 198–199).

As I will explain in more depth in the narrative in Part two of this report, during the more traditionally-paced rehearsal sections, my role became more of a formal leader. However, even during these sections, I strived to modify my interactions with the returning flutists based on the ideas of reflective learning. Using directive questioning encouraged the returning flutists to share, and become confident in their own knowledge. Referring back to the reflective exploration done in the improvisational sections of rehearsals encouraged the returning flutists to recall and internalize the knowledge they were building as a community.

4.3.2. Director as Leader: To Conduct or Not

Often the director of a homogeneous instrumental ensemble will be a professional on that particular instrument but may not have a great deal of experience or even instruction in the technique of ensemble conducting. While some directors of homogeneous ensembles direct from the front of the ensemble, others perform as a member of the ensemble. It seems this decision may often be made based on the technical conducting skills of the director, rather than on musical factors, or taking the idea of who feels ownership for the performance into account. This is unfortunate, since there are many benefits to having skills acquired in the formal study of conducting that go beyond the language of gestures. Score reading and preparation, as well as rehearsal planning are some of other important skills that can be developed through formal

conducting study and should most definitely be part of the instruction for a director of any ensemble. The argument for conducting from the front of the ensemble or not should be made on a musical basis, based on the needs of the ensemble and the works being performed, rather than on the technical conducting skills of the director.

Developing a gestural vocabulary is about discovering one's own personal way of expressing musical ideas. If a conductor is otherwise skilled in musicality and organization, a rich gestural vocabulary will enhance a conductor's effectiveness and efficiency (Jansson 2018, 41–42). Conducting helps to bring all musical activity of an ensemble together into a cohesive whole, and gestures can communicate musical concepts effectively and efficiently (Kelly 1999, 5). When gestures are used consistently, and have a clear, easily understandable meaning, there is no need for lengthy explanations. Communication in this way during rehearsals is more efficient, saving valuable time (Boonshaft 2002, 45–62).

Whether or not a director decides to conduct from the front of the ensemble, knowing the score is the basis for developing an aesthetic vision of the piece, as well as a guide to the rehearsal process. It is very hard to be able use time effectively in rehearsals without a high level of score proficiency (Jansson 2018, 43–44). Jansson argues that developing a balance between control and empowerment: knowing when to just beat, when to just give expressive instruction, and when to step back is a good reason for directing an ensemble from the front, rather than playing within the ensemble or just acting as preparational coach (Jansson 2018, 71–72).

During this project, I mainly conducted the HHO from the front, both in rehearsals and in performances, with some calculated exceptions. That does not mean that I was always beating patterns in front of the ensemble, but that I chose to limit my participation within the ensemble to that of conductor. An ensemble without a director in front of it during rehearsals or performances will still have to make musical decisions and find a way to run efficient rehearsals. Most likely this means that someone will take on the role of leader. And if there is already one director/leader, the ensemble will be able to read them very well, even after only a short introduction and will quickly start mirror the leader's behavior, no matter what role they are taking within the ensemble (Jansson 2018, 189). This can mean that by playing within the ensemble, the director is actually taking on two roles: leader and player.

When the director or leader of an ensemble is performing inside of the ensemble, their concentration is necessarily divided between their own performance, and the sound and well-being of the entire ensemble. During this project, I would occasionally sit in and play with the

ensemble to cover parts when ensemble members were not able to attend rehearsals. The sound cues a player gets from inside of the ensemble are much different from those a director gets from the front of the ensemble. I found that I needed to rely much more on the observations of other ensemble members during these rehearsals, and that meant that the musical vision of the piece was being divided between different musicians, most of whom did not have an understanding of the entire score. I also found it was not really possible for me to step back in the way Jansson describes when playing within the ensemble, since I needed to play throughout the entire performance. My playing most definitely did affect the overall performance of the ensemble in these cases. The returning flutists reacted and played differently when I was playing alongside of them within the ensemble. I did perform within the ensemble in a few concerts, mainly during freely improvised pieces. In these pieces I could step back (stop playing) to give the ensemble more space, or step in and have my own playing influence the shape and direction of the overall improvisation, when the performance needed support.

The main difficulty I had as conductor during this project, as I will explain in the narrative in Part Two of this report, was developing my sense of situational mastery: knowing when to step back and when to step in, and learning how to understand the needs of my ensemble at any moment. There were times when my idea of what constituted a safe space, where learners could feel supported, was not actually what the ensemble needed. It took more time than I originally expected to develop the community as a supportive space, and my own ability to read the needs of the ensemble. There were times that I expected the ensemble to act as a community long before it was ready to do so. Part of this was due to my lack of experience with this type of ensemble, and how to use the exercises in a way that felt comfortable to the returning flutists. Part of it may have been my impatience at a natural development of any ensemble into a community of practice.

Part Two

5 Development and Testing of Rehearsal Techniques

The rehearsal techniques I refer to throughout this narrative are described in detail in Chapter 4 of the handbook included as part of this portfolio. They were tested and developed during rehearsal-to-concert periods of the HHO that formed the action research cycles explained in Chapter 2.1.2. During this project, the HHO had two main rehearsal-to-concert periods each year. While occasionally there was a second concert in a period with a slightly different repertoire that involved additional rehearsals, for the purpose of this project these extra periods were combined into one of the two yearly rehearsal-to-concert periods. I have organized these periods into three cycles, in fitting with the traditional method of action research. The first cycle I considered a pilot project, that consisted of the first 2 years of my work with the ensemble. This first cycle was mainly an assessment of the needs of the ensemble, and my strengths and weaknesses as a director. The second cycle was the longest of the three, consisting of four years, each containing two rehearsal-to-concert periods. This was the developmental cycle, where I did the most development of the rehearsal techniques, my way of presenting them to the ensemble, and improved my skills as a director/conductor.

The final cycle of this project consisted of one rehearsal-to-concert period, ending with the *Linnunlaulu* concert held in the Church of the Cross in Lahti on October 28th, 2017. This rehearsal cycle was slightly longer than others in this project, and the rehearsals were adjudicated prior to the concert by Tapani Heikinheimo. During this cycle, the rehearsal techniques and improvisational exercises were tested during rehearsals where the regular members of the ensemble were joined by professional flutists, who gave feedback on rehearsals and the techniques. All the professional flutists had experience in teaching, and were therefore were well suited to comment on the effectiveness of the rehearsal techniques. In addition, the *Linnunlaulu* concert served as a public example of the effectiveness of the rehearsal techniques. All but two of the works performed in the concert included improvisational sections and/or required the returning flutists to use extended flute techniques in performance. Following the concert, a questionnaire was sent out to all the participating performers, asking their opinions on the

effectiveness of the rehearsal techniques, and their confidence and enjoyment levels during their participation in the HHO and the concert.

I collected data throughout all of the cycles through journal entries I made after each rehearsal and concert. At the end of each year, I wrote a narrative timeline of the events from that year, and these narratives helped me reflect on how to improve my work with the ensemble as the project progressed. These notes also form the basis of the narrative found in this second part of this report. Beginning in the second developmental cycle, I introduced a video camera into rehearsals, both to gain additional data, and to ensure that the ensemble became comfortable working while the camera was present. In the final testing cycle, all rehearsals were recorded on video, and additional information was gathered through the two questionnaires sent to participants.

5.1. Cycle One (Spring 2012 – Fall 2013): Beginning the Helsingin Huiluorkesteri

My interest in the problems I had as an adult learner coincided with a group of returning flutists contacting the Finnish Flute Association to ask if they would consider organizing more events for non-professional adult flutists. As a result, I arranged a weekend workshop for non-professional adult flutists through the Finnish Flute Association, and shortly after, an opening in my teaching schedule allowed me to add an adult flute ensemble to my studio. These first sessions that took place over a span of two years, made up this first cycle. This became a pilot project for this study, where I planned to test the ideas I had about using improvisation with returning flutists, formulate my research questions, and discover what skills I would need to develop myself in order to complete this project. Data gathered about the organizational challenges of starting the ensemble through the rehearsal journal I kept also informed the information in the handbook written for directors.

The weekend workshop attracted far fewer returning flutists than expected. It was somewhat of a surprise to me that one of the main themes of this first cycle became the difficulty in trying to attract returning flutists to the ensemble. While evidence suggests that opportunities for adult educational experiences is best advertised by word of mouth through peers (Goto, Spitzer and Sadouk 2009, 44), contacting teachers I knew that taught adult flutists, and asking the flutists who took part in the Finnish Flute Association's weekend class to contact

any flutist friends they may have did not do much to help increase the number of ensemble members. By mid-fall of 2012, there were nine returning flutists participating in the HHO. In addition, four of the older students studying at LUHMO took part in the ensemble during this first year. This was, of course, far short of the goal I had set for the number of participants I hoped to attract. I hoped that we would be able to encourage more returning flutists to join us during the year, but finding ensemble members was a continuing challenge during this cycle, and into the beginning of the second cycle as well.

As I have mentioned in Chapter 4.3, the director's organization and preparedness may have even more of an effect on the anxiety levels of a returning musicians' ensemble than on other types of ensembles. This became apparent from the beginning of this cycle. I found quite quickly that I needed to prepare for this adult ensemble in a different way than I did for my younger ensembles. Planning needed to be more concise, more transparent, and more flexible than I originally expected, and from what I was used to with my younger ensembles. My desire to inject novelty into rehearsals by not using the same structure for each rehearsal, and to include the ensemble members in the process of choosing repertoire came before I spent the time needed to build a sense of community within the ensemble. It quickly became apparent that I needed to balance my goals with the returning flutists' need for structure to help them feel comfortable in their new musical practice.

During the first rehearsal-to-concert period of this pilot project cycle, the HHO rehearsed Thursday evenings for 90 minutes, in the rehearsal hall at LUHMO. I scheduled the rehearsal at the end of my teaching schedule for the day, to make the time more accessible to the returning flutists. While the time did work well for the participants, other problems quickly became apparent. For the rehearsal to fit into my schedule, it needed to start immediately after a rehearsal of younger students, leaving me no time to readjust my focus and prepare specifically for the HHO. Because of this, rehearsals were often disorganized in the beginning, and started later than planned. It also became apparent that since we had a long rehearsal period, with many weekly rehearsals over a long period of time, the returning flutists took attendance somewhat lightly, and we often had few members at any given rehearsal. The returning flutists often gave little or no notice of their absence. This led to more disorganization, as I often needed to shift plans at the last minute for rehearsals, something I did not at this point in the project really have the skills, or material to do.

Difficulties in choosing appropriate repertoire for the ensemble was another theme that arose in these early rehearsals. Many directors of non-professional adult ensembles use repertoire that will be familiar to the musicians, believing that this will motivate them to practice, and enhance their enjoyment of the experience (see Rohwer 2005). Because of this, for this first rehearsal-to-concert period, I programmed easily accessible works, such as arrangements of folk songs and well-known classical pieces, with one or two original flute ensemble works composed in an easily approachable style for these. Since encouraging adults to take an active role in any decision-making processes that are part of the learning environment can enhance their motivation (see Knowles 1975), I planned to introduce a variety of different repertoire in early rehearsals, and then include the members in the decision process of which pieces we would prepare for the concert at the end of the rehearsal period.

It was my belief that by including the returning flutists in the process of choosing repertoire, I would be helping to develop a sense of community within the ensemble. However, at this early stage of the ensemble, there was not enough trust developed within the ensemble for the members to feel safe in sharing opinions on the repertoire. The varied skill sets of the returning flutists participating in these early rehearsals was another factor that made it difficult to include the returning flutists in the musical decision-making processes at this point. I did not gather enough information during this project to determine whether there were other, for example cultural, aspects that might have made a difference in how the ensemble worked during these early periods. However, it will become apparent in the data from later rehearsal-to-concert periods that as the ensemble developed as a community, the returning flutists became more active in making both musical and non-musical decisions regarding the ensemble.

As I mentioned in Chapter 3.3, I did not hold auditions for the HHO. Instead, I asked the returning flutists to tell me their history as a flutist. This way I was able to ensure that they were returning musicians. One result of not holding auditions was not being able to judge the skill level of the returning flutists as they entered the ensemble. It soon became apparent that some of my repertoire choices in the first rehearsals were too ambitious for the ensemble at this point. After one of the first rehearsals, I wrote:

> Players are set in their ways – very practiced (bad) hand positions, dropping intonation, too narrow intervals. How to shake them up and comfortably get them out of their comfort zone? We played though the faster movement slowly –and it WAS good – intonation, rhythm, everything, really! I guess we'll need a different type of repertoire, more musical, less technically demanding (Journal entry, fall 2012).

The skill level of the ensemble members varied considerably, and it was clear from the first rehearsals that it would take some innovation to keep the more skilled returning flutists interested and challenged, while insuring that other, less-skilled returning flutists didn't become discouraged by overwhelming challenges. Finding repertoire for the early periods became a matter of figuring out which pieces we could perform with the small number of returning flutists participating, and the varied skill sets they had. The returning flutists did seem willing to perform the pieces that I chose and did not offer opinions on what they would be interested in performing in these early periods.

After the first few rehearsals of this first rehearsal-to-concert period, I quickly changed my original plans, and chose myself a few pieces to prepare for the concert. The amount of repertoire the HHO managed to prepare in these early rehearsal-to-concert periods was limited. This was due in part to the limited number of ensemble members, their varied skills, and poor attendance during many of the rehearsals. By the end of the rehearsal period, as we got closer to the scheduled concert, attendance improved, and the returning flutists do not at least voice objections or concerns about the pieces I programmed. In the end, we do manage a performance of two or three pieces on the concert, and the returning flutists do seem to enjoy performing the works I chose.

5.1.1. Mindsets and improvisation

During these early rehearsals, members of the HHO shared that instruction they have received in previous private lessons and other ensembles is often corrective: they are told to 'play better' or that their playing 'is a little flat', without being given specific information on how to address these problems. As I discussed in Chapter 4.1.3, corrective or 'telling' teaching can be detrimental to developing self-direction in adult students. As I have previously mentioned, Schmidt-Jones found that this type of corrective teaching could inhibit returning musicians' ability to become self-directed in their later musical practice, by implying that there was only one correct way to learn music (Schmidt-Jones 2017, 628). Hung-Ling's study of adult piano students found that learners with teachers who used corrective teaching methods were able to explain specific elements of piano playing in general but remained passive in assessing their own playing They were unable to develop solutions to solve the technical challenges they faced (Hung-Ling 1996, 78).

The way the returning flutists in HHO defined themselves as learners and musicians indicates that many of them held what Dweck and Legget called a *fixed* or *performance mindset* (Dweck and Legget 1988, 256). More information on this motivation orientation can be found in Chapter 4.1.3. One ensemble member told me they've 'Never been good at rhythm', another explains:

> Probably since I did most of my playing in a wind band, I have a strong sound and good technique in the upper register, but my lower register is a problem. That is how I play, and it's not really going to change at this point in my life (HHO member, journal entries, fall 2012).

I was also guilty at this point of falling into a formal, instructive type of direction from time to time during rehearsals. I had to conciously be aware of the amount of time I spent explaining ideas to the ensemble, rather than allowing the returning flutists to discover these concepts with my guidance, and support from each other. This is probably because I did not include much reflective exploration in these early rehearsals, so there was little space for the returning flutists to reflect on the learning environment and their old beliefs. Many of my journal entries from these earliest rehearsal-to-concert periods contain a lot of sentences that begin with *'we talked about…*' While I believed that using improvisation in rehearsals could help the returning flutists develop their skills, I still spent time telling them what to do. I needed to reflect on my own internalized mindsets about the returning musicians as learners, since, as I explained in Chapter 4.1, Heimhovitz and Dweck discovered that the instructor's own internalized *performance mindset* would have more influence on the learners than the *mastery mindset* they were trying to communicate during the learning situation (Heimhovitz and Dweck 2017).

Because attendance was often poor during this first rehearsal period, planning rehearsals in advance, or at least sticking to the plans that I had made was difficult. And in this first cycle, I was not yet confident enough to switch plans when most of the ensemble members did not show up. Nor did I have a clear plan about how to use reflective exploration in rehearsals at this point, so it was difficult for me to switch to an improvisational type of working on short notice. I did sometimes use these rehearsals to interact with the few ensemble members that do attend.

> I encouraged the new member to share their earlier experiences, and they perked up when I did. I asked a lot of questions, and two of the returning flutists shared that they enjoyed the amount of specific flute information I could share with them during rehearsals (journal entry, fall 2012).

Very little improvisation happened during any of these early rehearsals. I did not yet have a clear idea of how I could incorporate the improvisational exercises into rehearsals with the returning flutists. Any occasional improvisational exercise that I may have used in these rehearsals was not yet well developed, and did not involve interaction through guiding questions. Because of this, I often just left improvisation out of rehearsals completely.

> I am struggling to figure out how I should approach these exercises with the adults. Part of it is I'm afraid of sounding patronizing if I approach the exercises in the same way as I do with my younger students. I'm also afraid that they will find the exercises too childish, or too difficult, and either become bored or discouraged. While I feel confident that using this kind of exercise can help to develop both confidence and technique, it is clear that I am not confident about how to best approach this with the adults. For this reason, in the early rehearsals, the amount of time spent on improvisational games is rather limited (Journal entry, 2013).

I did manage to include a few exercises as warm-ups during early rehearsals. One such exercise involved playing soundscapes with airy sounds on the flute, using a syllable like 'shh' or 'ffff'. During the exercise, I asked the returning flutists to be aware of their inhalation, and how the air feels on the embouchure. I have the returning flutists change their focus between upper and lower lips, jaw, mouth, and then to other parts of the body. At first, the returning flutists seemed honestly surprised that I was asking them not to produce a 'good' sound. One older player did seem to have physical difficulties with creating this type of sound, possibly due to a lack of control over lip muscles, but in general, the returning flutists' main difficulty with the exercise seemed to be allowing themselves to produce a sound other than what is traditionally considered a '*good*' flute sound.

Another exercise I tried in early rehearsals is one I often use when starting a new ensemble of younger students. In this exercise, I first encouraged the returning flutists to discover as many different ways of producing a G as possible: in addition to different octaves and dynamics, I introduced different types of articulation, overtone and whistle tone production as a way of creating different timbers. Then the flutists spread themselves around the rehearsal hall so that they have no eye contact with each other, and I asked them to have a conversation using only sounding 'G'.

When using this exercise with younger students, I have found that the first performance usually results in a chaotic exploration with no structure, and very little listening going on between the students. I then ask the students guided questions to help them think about the structure of pieces they have previously performed, and conversations in general. In my

experience, after this discussion, younger students begin to listen to each other, and by the second or third attempt, the improvised exploration begins to take on more structure. Occasionally, with an ensemble of very young students, I need to give each student a different number to count after they play before they play again, to encourage them to stop and listen rather than just continually play without listening. Even when this is necessary, it has been my experience that it only takes a short while for younger students to hear the difference between their first chaotic explorations and later more structured conversations.

The returning flutists' first performance of this exercise is less chaotic than I am used to from younger ensembles. This is because the returning flutists mainly played long tones, with very little rhythmic variation, and even less change in timbre. They played parallel to each other, without listening to what was happening around them. This was apparent from their body language, and the lack of structure in the resulting soundscape. Asking the ensemble members to stop playing for a while and listen to what was happening within the ensemble had a completely different effect on the returning flutists than I am used to with younger students. Shortly after one returning flutist stopped playing, all the other ensemble members stop playing as well, until someone takes a chance and starts playing again. This results in blocks of silence between blocks of non-interactive playing. More discussion using questions such as 'can you hear what is going on around you', or even talk of the structure of conversations or other musical works does not produce much change in the improvised result. It becomes apparent that this exercise does not work in the same way as an introduction to improvisation with the returning flutists as it has worked for me with younger students.

These early attempts at introducing improvised exercises into rehearsals are one more example of the lack of understanding I had on how to develop community in an ensemble of returning musicians. As I discuss in section 4.1.1, a gathering of individuals becomes a cohesive group when bonds of mutual attraction are developed, and the individuals begin to express coordinated interaction and adherence to a set of norms (Abrams 2006). In one respect, the ensemble did express coordinated action during the exercises described above: they all played together, and were very aware of what the other flutists around them were doing, which was apparent when they would all stop and start playing at the same time. The returning flutists seemed to have difficulty with taking the chance that they might end up playing alone or playing something that might fall outside of what they believed constituted 'good' or 'correct' playing. While the returning flutists seemed to feel comfortable enough with each other to work together, they did not feel comfortable enough to take chances that might make them stand out. As I have

mentioned above, comments and discussions during earlier rehearsals had already led me to believe that many of the returning flutists held *performance goal orientations*, and the ensemble's performances during these early explorations emphases that.

The returning flutists were themselves aware of the challenges they were facing while performing these exercises.

> Our identities are so much more formed than when we were kids. We first have to get past ourselves in order to start to open up to each other (HHO member, Journal entry spring 2014).

Since the individual social connections between the ensemble members were still weak at this point, it was difficult for the returning flutists to trust each other enough to take chances during the improvised musical exercises. It may even have been that the early attempts at improvisation I introduced into rehearsals created more anxiety for the returning flutists, rather than build trust or confidence. Anxiety, an interaction of external environmental factors and internal mental processes, can negatively impact learning, awareness, and memory (Bigdeli 2010, 675). Adults will try to avoid anxiety by lessening their awareness, if the new experience does not meet our expectation of habit; even to the point of engaging in self-deception to fill in the holes in our awareness (Mezirow 1991, 63). In the same way that I was unaware of what I didn't know in the early part of my own journey as a returning conducting student, I believe the returning flutists of the HHO were self-deceptive about their level of skills as a defense mechanism in these early rehearsals.

5.1.2. Development – Second rehearsal-to-concert period

At the request of the ensemble members, I changed the rehearsal schedule slightly during the second rehearsal-to-concert period. I replaced a few of the weeknight rehearsals with longer weekend sessions, which also made the entire rehearsal period slightly shorter. The returning flutists seemed to enjoy the weekend sessions, which meant having an entire day to focus on flute playing. The attendance for these longer weekend sessions is immediately better than attendance in general had been during the first period. These sessions also helped to solve some of the organization problems during the weeknight rehearsals, since there was more time to take care of organizational aspects such as part distribution. We also made a point to eat lunch together during the weekend rehearsals, which helped to build community, and took the need to socialize out of actual rehearsal time. The longer weekend sessions also meant that I could

introduce improvisational exercises in a more relaxed way, since we had time to allow the improvisations to develop naturally and include reflective discussions. In this case, it appeared that despite my concerns about the comfort level and loyalty of the returning flutists in the HHO, they did feel comfortable enough to express a need, and this turned out to be a positive move for the ensemble.

I also felt more prepared during this concert-to-rehearsal period to introduce more improvised reflective exploration to the ensemble. I had spent time collecting and developing more ideas for the rehearsal techniques after the first period, not only for musical improvisations, but also for trust building exercises drawn from theatrical traditions. In addition, I participated in a creative teaching class at the Sibelius Academy, which not only helped me develop new ideas for exercises to use with the HHO but allowed me to observe how the instructors of the class interacted with adult students, and how the students reacted to the exercises used during the class. This helped as I developed and adapted the exercises, and I became more confident in introducing them in rehearsals.

In the first rehearsal of this second rehearsal-to-concert period, I began by using theatrical improvisational games to help build trust and an enhanced a sense of community within the ensemble. The group building games I used were adapted from the works of Keith Johnstone (Johnstone 1992), and Peter Gwinn (Gwinn 2003). These and other exercises are described in more detail in Chapter 5 of the handbook portion of this portfolio. Some of these exercises included movement, awareness, and remembering. Others introduced basic concepts of improvisation such as the acceptance of ideas, and creating conversations with limited material. Since these exercises were originally designed for theatrical ensembles, they are non-instrumental, but they are easily adaptable for use with a musical ensemble. In the descriptions of the exercises I used found in Chapter 5 of the handbook, I explain how these non-instrumental exercises can be continued instrumentally.

I also begin to include movement exercises in rehearsals. As I mentioned in section 4.2.1, Emilé Dalcroze believed that the use of the whole body creates a more vivid realization of rhythmic experience (Findlay 1971, 2). By using exercises adapted from Dalcroze's Eurythmics, and Rudolf von Laban's ideas of experiencing music through movement (Juntunen, Perkiö and Simola-Isaksson 2010, 220–221) in our warm-up sessions, I hoped to help the returning flutists become more aware of how they use their body while playing, and to internalize musical concepts such as pulse, rhythm, and dynamics. In addition, I believed that adding movement to

rehearsals helped the returning musicians remain focused and aware, and helped to prevent or alleviate injury or pain resulting from repetitive stress, poor posture, and playing positions. These beliefs grew out of my experience with younger students, my own personal practice, and conversations with Marja-Leena Juttunen during this project.

The simplest movement exercise I used is a walking exercise. I simply asked the returning flutists to walk around the rehearsal hall, first without making visual or physical contact with any of the other members. When I asked the returning flutists to think of being led by a string through the center of their body, the flutists themselves commented that they felt lighter as they walked. When I continued the exercise by asking the returning flutists to gradually start becoming more aware of each other, they noticed fairly quickly that they had found a common pulse without being aware of doing so.

In later rehearsals, I added another version of the walking exercise: creating a 'ABA' form through walking. For this exercise, I asked the returning flutists to start walking as in the above exercise, until a point where they naturally start to connect with each other, either because they bump into one another, or somehow feel drawn to each other, until they come together to form a tight group (the 'B' section), and then naturally move apart again at some point, again, when it feels natural (the second 'A' section). In addition to being a physical representation of a musical form, it can help an ensemble learn to work together. The exercise does ask returning flutists to spend time in close physical contact with each other, so it is important that there is a trusting environment already established before doing this exercise.

The first time I had the ensemble do this exercise, the returning flutists walked nervously around the room and seemed uncomfortable about moving towards the B-section. One of the returning flutists in particular stayed noticeably apart from the rest of the ensemble and didn't really take part in the B section at all. The returning flutists spent as little time as possible in the tight formation of the B-section and rather quickly moved apart into the second A section. During the discussion after this first performance, the returning flutists revealed that they felt very cramped and uncomfortable during the B-section. When I asked how aware they had been of each other, the returning flutists said they didn't pay much attention to anyone's else's movements but their own. I encouraged them to open their awareness before the second performance, and this time, the A-B-A sections happed somewhat more naturally, and the B-section lasted longer and seemed less uncomfortable.

The returning flutist who noticeably stayed apart during this exercise was somewhat guarded during rehearsals as well. They were one of the older members of the ensemble and were often eager to share information about pieces we were playing or Finnish musical history that they had personal connections to. They did tend to be defensive at times about their playing however, and I think this uneasiness may have been what showed up in this exercise. I tried, especially with these types of movement exercises, to keep the reflective discussions light and fun. While the returning flutists were less comfortable in general with these types of movement exercises than with other improvisational exercises, the discussions were interesting and there were always noticeable differences in the way the returning flutists interacted after participating in these exercises. I was also able to make interesting observations about individual flutists and how the ensemble interacted as a whole. During one movement exercise, one ensemble member who eagerly told me they 'Had no sense of rhythm' danced happily and very rhythmically.

I noticed during these rehearsals that most of the ensemble members seemed to have difficulty in keeping a steady pulse during the instrumental improvisational exercises we performed. Adding a simple rhythmic accompaniment to the exercise was often enough to help the returning flutists feel more comfortable in exploring. In the earliest sessions, I produced the rhythm myself, but as the returning flutists become more accustomed to performing these exercises, I would divide the ensemble into groups and have one group perform a rhythmic accompaniment while the other does the actual exploration. Once we added the support of rhythmic accompaniment, the returning flutists say they are surprised to find that they are '*actually improvising*'. (HHO member, Journal entry 2014)

These improvisational explorations succeeded much better than those I tried to introduce in the earliest rehearsals. It was apparent that by using trust building exercises before I began introducing instrumental improvisation, I had helped the returning flutists feel more comfortable with each other which allowed them to feel more comfortable with the improvisational explorations. In addition, I was now better able to be more observant and aware of how the returning flutists received and understood the exercises. I was also better able to adapt the exercises to the needs of the returning flutists, such as including rhythmic accompaniment and reflective questioning. This helped to create a more supportive space for the returning flutists and made it easier for them to participate in the explorations. Through the use of reflective questioning, I could direct the returning flutists' awareness to how they were interacting during the exercises or to specific parts of their technique that was affective their performance. I also observed how body awareness that developed through the movement

exercises could help returning flutists find a more fluid, musical movement and more connection to the ensemble as a whole. I also observed that this awareness transferred to the returning flutists' performances as we worked on written material.

5.1.3. Third rehearsal period - Collaboration

The next rehearsal-to-concert period of this first cycle ended with a collaboration with the Finnish Flute Association. They asked if I would conduct a large flute ensemble in their Gala concert that would include the HHO. For this concert, the ensemble would be joined by other non-professional and professional members of the Association. We chose arrangements of two of Sibelius's orchestral works, and a work written by a Finnish flutist/composer arranged for flute orchestra for the concert. I was concerned that some of the returning flutists of the HHO would find the pieces too challenging to enjoy the experience, and I believe my internalized mindset affected the way I interacted with the HHO leading up to this concert. Despite my concerns and the improvements and success I had seen during the last rehearsal period, rather than using more reflective exploration in rehearsals, I cut down on the amount of time spent on improvisation. Instead, I planned faster-paced rehearsals where I spent most of the time running through pieces and working on problems within the music through corrective teaching without the aid of improvisation. I believe it is also telling that I kept very few journal notes during this period. The few entries I did write indicated my own struggle with anxiety.

> I also believe that I was struggling with my own anxiety. While I have worked with student ensembles for many years, I do find difficulty defining my role with the adults. Part of this most likely is my lack of confidence in my conducting skills, and the lack of trust I have placed in doing more improvisation with the group. Ironically, I believe that since I haven't done more improvisational games with the group, they feel the need to rely more on my conducting skills, which puts more pressure on me, causing me anxiety… not a recipe for success. (Journal entry, spring 2013).

The number of returning flutists who left or spent only a few rehearsals with the HHO seemed higher during this period than in other rehearsal periods. Even one of the very enthusiastic original members decided to leave shortly before the Gala concert:

> There's a lot going on in my personal life, and I don't feel I have the time to focus on playing in the ensemble. Since I don't have as much experience as the other members, I don't feel I can keep up with everyone, especially when sight-reading. So I think it's best that I leave the ensemble (HHO member, Journal entry, fall 2013).

Since I did not conduct exit interviews with the flutists who left the ensemble during the project, it is difficult for me to know exactly what caused them to decide the ensemble was not suited for them. In a few instances, I do know that the flutists who only participated for a short time fit more into the description of adult beginner, rather than someone returning to their practice, and this may have also contributed to why they didn't find the HHO a good fit.. However, I suspected that my belief that there would be difficulties which lead to the anxiety and lack of trust in the improvisational exercises that I showed during this period may also have contributed to the high-level of turnover.

This lack of trust in the reflective improvisation and my lack of confidence in my own technical abilities as a director made it easy for me to fall back into old, practiced patterns of formal, 'telling' teaching behavior. The repertoire I chose for this performance was the most ambitious the ensemble had performed up to that point, and it may have been true that it was beyond the skill of some of the returning flutists who were regular members of the HHO. However, there were other members and students from LUHMO who took part in rehearsals that could easily handle the challenges of this repertoire and there were a large amount of professional and highly skilled non-professional flutists who participated in the final two rehearsals and concerts. This meant that parts were covered very well which would provide support to those returning flutists who were lacking in confidence. While choosing a different program might have been wise, the nature of the concert and the wishes of the Finnish Flute Association did define what works were chosen and it would have been difficult to find more accessible Finnish material. With later reflection, I believe that had I been able to better address my own insecurities towards my knowledge and technique, this period would have been more enjoyable for all involved from the beginning.

In the end, however, the concert performance did go well, and was well received. I was able to run efficient rehearsals with a large ensemble in a short amount of time, with a large amount of material. The members of the Finnish Flute Association that took part in the rehearsals and performance during the festival enjoyed the experience. Since rehearsal time with the extended ensemble was extremely limited, I limited the reflective improvisation work during these rehearsals to a few warm-ups.

The returning flutists who were regular members of the HHO that took part in the Gala concert enjoyed the experience and the performance was well received. Several of the regular members of the HHO commented to me after the performance that it was '*The highlight of their musical career*' and that they '*Never would have believed that they could have had this kind of musical*

experience'. In discussions after the concert, the ensemble members reemphasized that they enjoyed working and interacting with the professional flutists and would enjoy doing so again. I was particularly impressed with the performance of our piccolo player. Their performance sounded confident, their playing was much freer and more musical than it had been during rehearsals. Later, I asked them about their performance:

> I finally realized that I didn't have to prove anything to anyone, I could just enjoy myself and my playing (HHO member, Journal Nov 2013).

5.1.4. My Own Development: Conducting Technique

In my work with student ensembles at LUHMO, I have almost always conducted from the front of the ensemble, even when the ensembles were small. I considered it part of the pedagogical process: I wanted my students to experience working with a conductor even though our school was too small to provide opportunities for all of the students to participate in large ensembles. My formal education in conducting prior to this study was minimal, however. I believe this affected my confidence as I began my work with the HHO. While I had worked with student ensembles for many years and felt confident in my rehearsal technique and ability to conduct a performance, I did have concerns about the adequacy of my skills as I began to work with the returning flutists.

As I was taking part in formal conducting lessons during this part of the project, I was also putting myself in the role of adult learner. I believe this helped me understand the mindset of some of the returning flutists, as I was also feeling anxiety in the learning process due to difficulties in being able to expand old beliefs I had about myself as a learner.

> What surprised me, as the conducting class and my study progressed, was finding myself making basic learning mistakes at every turn. My experience both as a musician and as a teacher seemed to get in my way more often than help. I placed unreasonably high expectations on myself, which usually ended up feeding my fears more than helping my development. I underestimated the amount of time and sheer repetition I would need to learn new skills. But at the same time, I had layers of self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy that were getting in the way of the learning process. One thing I found very interesting is that my fear seemed to get in the way of my actual understanding. In the beginning, I doubted my ability to read and understand music, in spite of my experience (Journal entry, fall 2013).

For me to make real progress in my own conducting studies, I needed to address the anxiety that was causing the gaps in my awareness. The need to allow myself to become a beginner again and take on and enjoy challenges that would help me develop my skills was inhibited by the fixed identity I had of myself as musician and teacher. I was highly motivated to develop my conducting skills, but unable to even be aware of the fixed beliefs that were causing anxiety and lowering my awareness. It was only through personal reflection that I started to recognize and understand that I did hold fixed beliefs about my abilities and that I was operating within a *performance mindset* (see section 3.1.3). I was holding myself back because I was afraid that my performance would not live up to my abilities. It was only once I was able to reflect and expand on these beliefs that I was able to even understand how to practice effectively.

In this early part of the project, the returning flutists of the HHO relied very heavily on my conducting skills. They did not trust themselves to count rests, or to be able to hold an inner pulse. At the same time, in this early part of the project, I had not adapted improvisation exercises into the rehearsals as much as I had planned. This meant that the ensemble needed to rely on my conducting gestures as a stand in for metronome, support for entrance cues, and musical interpretation, rather than just for encouragement and support. My lack of confidence, combined with the returning flutists' lack of experience, was not a good combination. It became very apparent that the confidence of the ensemble depended to some extent on my own confidence as a conductor:

> I don't think I was clear tonight. There were several problems with entrances in pieces that weren't problems before. On the other hand, one movement did work better (than it had in rehearsals) – haha, I spent time memorizing it… but even in a couple of other pieces, which I know well, and are easy, I was also dropping beats… I kept things together, saved some spots, but that's stuff I shouldn't be doing with this level pieces. Ok, I'm over-tired, and pretty over-taxed… but…(Journal entry, fall 2012).

I believe that the returning flutists' strict reliance on my conducting gestures, my own insecurities as a conductor, and my inability at this point to use rehearsal techniques that might help the returning flutists move beyond this dependence contributed in a large part to the anxiety the returning flutists often felt during concerts at this stage in the project.

> In the earliest rehearsal-to-concert periods, final rehearsals just before a concert were a source of stress for both me and the players, often detrimentally affecting concert performances. Some of the stronger players even seemed to try to take over these rehearsals, asking a lot of questions, and

> wanting to run through entire pieces, something I don't like to do with ensembles just before a performance. One of the players tends to act a little 'mother like'. Nothing major, they're not really questioning me, just a little second guessing at times, or assuming they know what I want/meant/am going to say… and I wonder if it undermines a little the balance of trust? (Journal entry, 2013)

A few of the returning flutists were concerned that I would conduct pieces differently during concerts than I did in rehearsals. They would ask me to use the exact same gestures in all rehearsals that I would use in the concert. Other ensemble members wanted to run through the entire concert just before the actual performance. This is something I rarely, if ever, did with my student ensembles, as I believed it wasted energy that was best saved for the actual performance.

> Trying to fit in a 'rehearsal' just before the concert causes too many problems – everyone is nervous, I'm in a hurry, and it creates a nervous situation for everyone. How can I satisfy the player's need for the security that they want, and that playing right before the concert brings to them, and keep the 'safe space' working? (Journal entry Spring 2013)

I considered not having any rehearsal in the hall just before a concert, but this was not an ideal solution. During one short rehearsal-to-concert period, the HHO performed works for smaller ensembles and I played along with the returning flutists in the ensemble, rather than conducting. The concert was in an unfamiliar hall with unusual acoustics and due to a tight schedule, we had little time to play in the hall before the concert. The ensemble members said afterwards that they had found it very difficult to play, could not hear each other well, and in general did not enjoy the performance very much.

While the anxiety that appeared just before performances most likely stems in part from the returning flutists' beliefs about their abilities; my own confidence, or lack thereof, did play a role. In my similar role with my student ensembles, I feel much more in control of the preconcert experience. I have developed techniques to help the students feel excited and confident about the coming performance. In the same way that the improvisational exercises I used with my younger ensembles did not directly translate to the HHO, these preconcert techniques did not, either. In addition, my role as conductor was also different with this ensemble and my own ability had more of an impact on the returning flutists than it did on my younger students. As I discussed in Chapter 3.3., the effect that the conductor of an ensemble has on the ensemble members' anxiety during performance is considerable. In particular, the conductor's own anxiety, their lack of preparedness, and poor organizational skills have a

significant effect on the performance anxiety of ensemble members (Ryan and Andrews 2009, 115). An ensemble leader's mastery of self – their confidence in their own abilities, and the ability to self-regulate and modify their behavior in response to the requirements and expectations of the ensemble – is an important part of helping an ensemble feel less anxious and more prepared in performances. (Jansson 2018, 75)

In the later rehearsal-to-concert periods of this first cycle, as my own technique and confidence increased, my own anxiety decreased. By the end of this cycle I had also become more self-aware of my own lack of self-confidence surrounding my actual conducting technique and the effect that had on the returning flutists' anxiety. Rehearsals ran better as my confidence improved. In addition to adding more reflective exploration to rehearsals, the rehearsals were better planned and more efficient. I started to use the time spent in reflective exploration to help the returning flutists discover how to solve the challenges they would face in the repertoire, rather than telling them what to do. Socializing, while still an important part of rehearsals, didn't take as much time out of rehearsals as it did in earlier rehearsal-to-concert periods. Instead, we were able to set aside specific time outside of rehearsals for socializing, which limited the returning flutists' need to socialize during actual rehearsal time.

The improvement in my confidence level and preparation became especially apparent in the final rehearsals before concerts. In later periods during this first cycle, the preconcert preparation became less of a source of stress. In one rehearsal-to-concert period, I had to ask a colleague to perform with the ensemble due to the sudden illness of one of our returning flutists. Despite needing to hold a full rehearsal just before the concert because of this, I did not experience the same amount of anxiety as I had in earlier rehearsal-to-concert periods:

> I noticed in the run through that I had not memorized the score, and there were some time signature changes that I missed in rehearsal (which affected the returning flutists – they picked up immediately on my slight confusion, and even though I was able to correct it quickly, they were affected more, and not as able to recover). I rehearsed the spot with them – as it really did affect the bass line, and I needed them to feel more comfortable.
>
> It went better in the performance – the rehearsal beforehand had helped, I remembered the change, and they were more comfortable and played a more stable bass [line]. I noticed that our first flutist played a lot more confidently than they had been in rehearsal, and while her intonation was not exact, her sound and phrasing were very good. There were some minor entrance problems, but nothing like the last concert, even though we still have mainly one member per part. This was by far the best performance the group has given so far. It was also my best performance. I felt a lot more confident in my own skills – which I am sure has some effect on the group.
>
> (Journal entries spring 2014)

5.1.5. Overview of Cycle One

The main themes that arose during this first assessment cycle were organization and rehearsal scheduling, attracting and maintaining ensemble members, as well as difficulties finding suitable repertoire. In addition, using improvisation as a rehearsal technique was also a central theme as I tried to understand how to introduce this way of working to the ensemble. My development as a director and the initial anxiety I felt in front of this ensemble was closely related to these themes and their development throughout this cycle.

Early rehearsals were especially disorganized. There was often time lost in the beginning of rehearsals when some of the returning flutists didn't have music with them, or when ensemble members who had not been in previous rehearsals needed parts. Long rehearsal periods with weekly 90 min. rehearsals led to poor attendance. That in turn made it difficult for me to plan rehearsals, or at least made it necessary for me to switch plans at the last minute when only a few ensemble members arrived at rehearsal. Parts were often not covered in rehearsals due to attendance problems and this led to frustration amongst the returning flutists who did attend rehearsals regularly. Attracting a smaller number of members for the ensemble than I had originally planned limited the repertoire that we were able to perform. It also meant that parts were often covered individually, leaving some of the returning flutists who were less confident in their skills with a lack of support that would have been provided by having more than one flutist on a part. In later rehearsal periods during this cycle, there was a high turn-over of ensemble members who took part in only a few rehearsals, which also made planning difficult and added to the general confusion.

Shortening the rehearsal periods by adding longer weekend rehearsal sessions did help somewhat with attendance. It also made it easier for me to focus solely on this ensemble during rehearsals, which improved the general organization and made it easier to begin rehearsals and run them efficiently. It also allowed me more time to incorporate trust building exercises and improvisation into rehearsals. When it became apparent that the exercises I had used with my younger students did not work in the same way to build community and teach improvisation with the returning flutists, I used specific exercises drawn from theatrical improvisation culture instead. These exercises did seem to produce better results: the returning flutists were more generally aware and began to interact more with each other during rehearsals after I used them in rehearsals. In the one rehearsal-to-concert period where I did not include as much reflective exploration in rehearsals, I felt a heightened anxiety level in the ensemble and we had a larger

turn-over of members than we had had up to that point, or, as I will explain in the narrative of later cycles, have seen since.

My journal entries from this first cycle seems to make it clear that my own lack of confidence working with this type of ensemble lead to many of the challenges the HHO faced at this point. I did not understand that building community in this type of ensemble would look different than it did with my younger ensembles. Since I was not confident in how to introduce and use improvisatory exercises in rehearsals, the returning flutists needed to rely strongly on my conducting gestures for support during rehearsals and performances. My own lack of confidence in the effectiveness of my gestures then created more anxiety. Even after I became more confident in the improvisatory rehearsal techniques, the challenging collaborative period caused me to lose trust in the reflective exploration techniques I was developing, and I fell back into old teaching patterns that created anxiety. In the last periods of this cycle, my general confidence improved, as did my trust in the rehearsal techniques and this was reflected in rehearsals and performances. With the knowledge I gained during this pilot portion of the project, I was prepared to plan the next cycle. Now that I felt more confident in my own skills, I could spend more time preparing rehearsals and practicing scores. I already knew that the new rehearsal schedule could help overall organization. For the next cycle, I planned to spend more time preparing rehearsals and adapting reflective exploration exercises to address specific challenges that might arise.

5.2. Cycle Two (Spring 2014 – Spring 2017) Developing and using improvisation in rehearsals

While the first cycle of this project was a pilot study, this second cycle was a developmental phase. There were three main themes that arose during this cycle. The first is my own organization: short term-organization of individual rehearsals and long-term planning of the overall rehearsal-to-concert periods (Chapters 5.2.1 and 5.2.2). Second was the further development of the improvisatory rehearsal techniques. I spent more time adapting exercises to fit the needs of the ensemble and to help with specific challenges that arose in the repertoire. I also began pairing pieces in rehearsals to help technical development (Chapters 5.2.3 and 5.2.4). A third theme that arose during this second cycle was how the personalities of the returning flutists became more apparent and played a larger role in rehearsals during this cycle, as do the general social relations within the ensemble. (Chapter 5.2.5)

5.2.1. Reflection and planning

The themes that arose during the first cycle – general organization, understanding how to create a community of adult learners, the development and implementation of the improvisatory exercises, my development as a director, and attracting members – were the starting point for planning the second cycle. I arranged my teaching schedule at LUHMO to allow me time before HHO rehearsals to organize myself, the physical space, and material specifically for the HHO. In addition, in this second cycle I chose the repertoire for each rehearsal-to-concert period before the first rehearsal of each period rather than using the first few rehearsals to read through new pieces before deciding on the concert program. I also made video recordings of rehearsals during this cycle to help collect data and aid in my own reflection and development.

Since including a longer weekend rehearsal session in the last rehearsal periods of the previous cycle had already helped to improve attendance and general rehearsal effectiveness, I continued to plan one long weekend rehearsal into each rehearsal period during this cycle. Later in this cycle, there was a more significant change to the rehearsal schedule of the HHO, resulting in an even shorter, more intense rehearsal period. While this change was due to factors outside of this project, it did influence the general atmosphere of the ensemble and rehearsals. During this cycle I also planned a full-length final rehearsal as close as possible to each concert, which took pressure off pre-performance preparation.

By planning the repertoire for each rehearsal-to-concert period beforehand, I had more time to prepare and plan the entire rehearsal period. This allowed me to be better prepared for each rehearsal, including balancing the amount of time between reflective exploration and playing pieces. As the HHO became more of a working community, it became more natural to include the returning flutists in the decision process of repertoire for the next rehearsal-to-concert period and this was easier now that I prepared programs in advance. While growing the size of the ensemble was a continuing challenge, during this cycle there was more loyalty from the members we do have.

5.2.2. Rehearsal organization

> No one wants to play exercises anymore; they want to play pieces (Dufeutrelle, 2016).

As I prepared the scores for each rehearsal to concert period, I tried to anticipate what challenges the returning flutists might find difficult and develop or adapt specific exercises to address them. I also started to pair pieces as I plan programs. I would chose a more accessible work to pair with a more challenging work that share similar traits such as the same 'difficult' key or time signature, similar rhythms, or harmonic textures. I then used the more accessible piece to help rehearse some of the technical aspects of the more challenging piece. Doing this allowed me to develop skills the returning flutists will need to perform the challenging piece while increasing the amount of playing time during rehearsals. It also gave the returning flutists with less developed skills an opportunity to perform more exposed parts during performances in repertoire where they would feel more confident.

I also started collecting pieces that include improvisation and extended techniques to add to the HHO's repertoire. I believed that adding repertoire that was new and somewhat unusual for the returning flutists would be another way to add novelty to rehearsals. It was also one more way to introduce improvisation into rehearsals, and I hoped it would help them understand that these techniques were not just rehearsal techniques and motivate them to use them more in their own personal practice.

There was a definite feeling of relief in the ensemble once I began choosing repertoire before the first rehearsal. It allowed the returning flutists to start practicing pieces they would be performing from the start of the rehearsal period. However, the start of rehearsals at the beginning of this cycle continued to be disorganized, despite the changes I implement. Members arriving late and absenteeism continued to be a problem in the first periods of this cycle, though as I explained in Chapter 4.2.5, these become less of a problem as the cycle goes on. By consulting the video recordings I took of rehearsals, it was easy to see how much I still talked in the beginning of rehearsals, which contributed to the disorganization. I am not the only one who felt this way, as '*long speeches during rehearsals'* (Returning Flutist from questionnaire) was given as a response to what was the most difficult part of rehearsals.

Throughout the project, I did not assign specific parts to the returning flutists. I instead encouraged them to find the parts they were comfortable playing and encouraged them to choose different parts for each piece. This continued to cause some confusion in rehearsals since there were still a few ensemble members who changed parts weekly in early rehearsals which made it difficult to know who was covering which part. This was an inconvenience that I was willing to live with up to a point because I felt strongly that there were benefits to allowing the

returning flutists to both choose what parts they wanted to play and to change the parts they played throughout a performance program. Before the second rehearsal period in this cycle, I created rehearsal folders to ensure that all parts would be easily accessible during all rehearsals. The folders helped some and by the second period of this cycle missing parts became much less of a problem both because of the folders and because the returning flutists themselves start to regulate the one or two members who caused most of the problem.

At the start of the second year of this cycle (periods 3 and 4), the HHO's rehearsal schedule changed noticeably. Instead of a 14-week period of weekly rehearsals and one weekend session, we moved to a more intense period of rehearsals that included several 4-hour weekend rehearsals and 90-minute evening rehearsals. This seemed to make the rehearsal period more effective, since at the same time, the HHO also added additional performances to their schedule. In addition to performing on the traditional wind ensemble concert along with my other ensembles from LUHMO, the HHO performed a second Christmas concert where they played additional material together with some of the student flutists from LUHMO.

5.2.3. Introducing improvisation

I began the first fall rehearsal period of this cycle with a two-day weekend workshop that allowed me to introduce a lot of improvised reflective exploration to the ensemble. I also used this time to distribute parts for the entire concert program as well as run through several of the programed pieces. I started the weekend with an improvisatory exercise drawn from the theatrical improvisation tradition to reacquaint the ensemble members, since it had been several months since our last rehearsal.

One of the exercises I used in this introductory weekend was based on an exercise learned from a Dalcroze workshop I attended. It is a movement exercise in which pairs create moving statues to a musical accompaniment. For the accompaniment, I chose a piece similar in style to one that we would be performing. In pairs, one of the returning flutists is a statue, and the second is told to move the statue by gently tapping parts of the body in the direction they'd like them to move. For example: the guider may tap the statue's arm from below and the statue should move that arm up in the direction they were guided, until the guider tapped another part of the statue's body.

During the first performance of this exercise, one of the members of the ensemble in the role of statue moved with stiff, overly controlled movements. Their stiffness continues even

when the returning flutists change roles – they were also exact and stiff as they guided their statue. Noticing this, I asked the returning flutists during the discussion portion of the exercise if they felt that their movements matched the style of the music they were listening to. The ensemble member who had used stiff movements said that they had tried to carefully control their movements to keep to the exact pulse of the music they were listening to. I found this answer interesting in that it showed that this returning flutist was following the instructions given: they were listening to the music, and they were aware of controlling their movements to match that music. To give this pair 'permission' to be freer and more fluid in their movement, I suggested that the returning flutists think more about the feeling of the music and the larger form of the work they were listening to as they guided their statues and moved, rather than trying to keep the movements to an exact pulse. When we did the exercise again, there was a noticeable difference in the returning flutists' movements. In particular, the pair that had been stiff were now moving with much more freedom. At the end of the second performance of this exercise, they commented:

> *All of a sudden, I realized I was creating a moving statue! It was very beautiful*
> (HHO member, Journal entry fall 2015).

I also noted in my journal entry for this rehearsal that this fluid movement carried over into the playing and demeanor of this returning flutist during the rest of the rehearsal.

While attendance was still somewhat of a problem in the early rehearsals of this cycle, I found I was better able to change plans at the last minute since I was more prepared and confident in my ability to use improvisation with the ensemble. It was also easier for the returning flutists to switch to working in an improvisatory manner now that we had spent time doing preparatory work. This means that these rehearsals became much more productive than if we had tried to play through composed works with many parts missing. I often started these rehearsals by asking the returning flutists who were present if they had anything they would particularly like to work on. This question often started interesting discussions and directed the way I used the rest of the time available.

In one such rehearsal, I had the returning flutists play simple folk tunes and intentionally play wrong notes in the melody. For some of the returning flutists, this exercise was difficult. It was hard for them to keep a steady pulse while playing the melody with wrong notes. Once I added a simple rhythmic accompaniment, the returning flutists felt much more comfortable with

the exercise. My situational awareness had developed to where it was easier for me to adapt exercises to meet the needs of the ensemble at any point in rehearsals. We were then able to continue to develop the exercise using different prompts such as adding embellishments or slightly changing the rhythm of the melody. I then had the returning flutists, in pairs, use small pieces of the melody in a conversation over a simple rhythmic accompaniment that I performed with the other ensemble members. Interestingly, this became easier for the returning flutists once we transposed the piece into its relative minor.

During a rehearsal later in this rehearsal-to-concert period, we further developed this exercise by adding a simple accompaniment created by the returning flutists themselves. I adapted this exercise from a harmonic exercise done in a workshop given by David Doland (masterclass 2014). While I played through the melody, I had the returning flutists play a note of any pitch each time they sensed a harmonic change in the melody. I explained that it was not important at this point what the note was. I just wanted them to indicate that they had heard where the harmonic change occurred. I was surprised to find that this was not difficult for the returning flutists, most likely because most of them accompanied simple songs on the piano. Possibly for the same reason, it was also not difficult for them to create a simple harmonic accompaniment based on the harmonic rhythm they detected.

Finding the harmonic rhythm of a piece was an exercise I had also used with my younger students as a way to develop their sense of harmonic understanding, something that is often difficult when learning a melody instrument such as the flute. The returning flutists understood this concept faster than my younger students did, most likely because of the past experience they had to draw on. It was more difficult for the returning flutists to perform solos over this accompaniment, however, even when I had them do this in pairs so that no one would be required to play alone. While there was a noticeable increase in trust at this point within the ensemble and the returning flutists were much more willing to explore in these exercises than they would have been in earlier periods, this trust did not seem to extend to them feeling comfortable performing a solo.

Later in this cycle, I ran an improvisation workshop that was used as an invitation to attract new members. While only one new member attended the workshop, it was possible to see development in how the ensemble worked together and approached improvisation during the weekend.

Playing through the piece this afternoon, one of the returner flutists made specific suggestions for

the beginning of the improvisation and this made a difference in the solos at the end, which were good.

After improvising on a slow folk song, I suggested adding a contrasting work for the performance. They chose a second, more rhythmic folk tune, and when I asked how they would start, one member was insistent that they should start with no plan. No one else made any suggestions, so they started in a similar way to the earlier, slow folksong, which didn't really work. I helped them find the harmonic rhythm, and then started a simple rhythmic accompaniment. This time, there was a longer improvisation, but they were still not pleased, and they weren't enthusiastic in having me play a pulse. After I pointed out that this piece was very rhythmic, and they should use that in the improvisation, the alto flute player started creating a rhythmic accompaniment, and everyone immediately jumped in, which resulted in a very fun improvisation.

(Journal entries, weekend workshop, May 2016)

My role during this workshop was much more of facilitator and observer than leader. I set the stage for each exercise and guided discussions, but the returning flutists took the lead in how the improvisations unfolded. Understanding the needs of the returning flutists meant that I was able to step back from my leadership role and they were eager and able to take an active role in starting and developing the improvisations. While they did need occasional guidance to move forward in the reflective explorations, each time I stepped back, the improvisations became freer, and the returning flutists seemed to enjoy the improvisations more. Taking the time in earlier rehearsals to create a sense of community and starting this weekend with similar trust building exercises since we did have one newcomer, made it easier for the ensemble to take chances during the improvisatory exercises. My understanding of the needs of the returning flutists allowed me to be more flexible in the roles I took on during the exercises, giving the ensemble more space to take chances.

5.2.4. Using exercises to address specific challenges

Since I was choosing the repertoire before the rehearsal period began, I had time to develop and adapt exercises that would address challenges I anticipated would arise in the programed music. In one of the first periods of this cycle, I programed a piece in 9/4 that I conducted in a slow subdivided 3. I anticipated that keeping a steady pulse, counting rests, and phrasing would be difficult for the ensemble at this tempo. I also expected that the thick, romantic harmonies of this piece would create intonation challenges, especially at this slow tempo. I planned to use movement exercises to help the returning flutists develop a sense of inner pulse and a kinesthetic sense of the long crescendos. In addition, I programed another similar piece, also in 3, that is somewhat easier to approach. As the melodic line in this more accessible work was easier to understand, and the tempo was not as slow, I felt it woud be a good way for the ensemble to practice creating long phrases, and that learning could then be transferred to the more

challenging work. The harmonic structure of the more accessible work was also much easier to perform in tune than the thick harmonies of the more challenging work, so I also planned to use this piece to practice listening to and tuning chords.

Before we played the challenging work in nine, I started with a simple movement exercise. I asked the retuning flutists to move while I counted in a slow three and change the direction of their movement on every first beat. Once that was easy for them I conducted silently, as the returning flutists continued moving in the same way. Through discussion and guided questions, I reminded the returning flutists to use fluid movements since I want them to internalize a feeling of movement that I hoped they would be able to transfer to the performance of the piece. Once their movements were fluid, I had them take their flutes and now rather than move, play one note of an a-minor chord, changing the pitch they were playing on the first beat of each measure. I encouraged them to continue moving somewhat during this part of the exercise which was a challenge for many of the returning flutists. Once I noticed that the movements seemed more natural, I divided the ensemble into three smaller groups and had the first group change notes on beat one, the next on beat two, and the third group on the third beat. At this point, I was conducting in a very slow, subdivided 3. When the ensemble seemed comfortable with this, we began working on part of the actual piece.

> It was much easier to count once we started playing the piece after doing this exercise, I noticed a real difference (HHO member, Journal entry, fall 2015).

In addition, in this rehearsal we practiced voicing some of the chords[10], which did help a little with intonation. In later rehearsals, I worked on the more accessible piece just prior to this challenging work, concentrating on intonation, dynamics, and phrasing. The returning flutists were able to transfer these lessons to the more difficult piece.

A second piece on this same rehearsal period contained a short phrase that repeated many times throughout the work. I developed an exercise to help the ensemble think of this short phrase as a conversation that goes on throughout the piece. I divided the ensemble into pairs and asked them to have a conversation using only the words 'mitä kuuluu' (how are you). The rhythm of this phrase in Finnish is similar to the short motive in the piece we were rehearsing. After a few minutes, we switched to flute, and remaining in pairs, I asked them to create a musical equivalent to 'mitä kuuluu' and have a musical conversation. In both cases, with

[10] Voicing chords: this involves helping the flutists be aware of which degree of the scale they are playing in any one particular chord, as well as who is playing the highest and lowest notes. Then having the lowest (bass) note play louder, and the highest note softest,

and without instruments, it took a couple of tries before the returning flutists understood that I wanted them to use the same short phrase the entire time, varying only the way they play – emphasis, dynamics, and tempo – rather than changing notes or rhythms. We then returned to the composed work and the returning flutists commented that they could hear the way the short motives talked to each other throughout the piece.

On a later period in this cycle, we performed an arrangement of American folk songs. One section of the piece contains a series of solos that moved throughout the ensemble, accompanied with a simple rhythmic pattern. In the first readings of this work, the returning flutists played their solos very carefully, similar to the stiffness I observed in the earlier movement exercise. I started a discussion about folksong, we talked about their simplicity and freedom, also the differences between Finnish and American folksong. The discussion did not make a big impact on the interpretation of the solos.

We then continued with reflective exploration. I had each of the soloists choose the notes they considered the most important from their own solo. With the rest of the ensemble playing the simple rhythmic accompaniment from the score, each soloist in turn created their own folksong using the few notes they chose from their original solo. The first improvisations were stiff, simple, and short, but after discussing a little more about how it felt to work in this way and talking more about the origins of these folk songs, the improvised solos started to sound much freer and more in the keeping with the style of the work. When we went back to playing the original solos, the returning flutists said they were surprised at how much easier it was to play the solos. The occasional notes they played that were not written in the score seem to add to the feeling of the piece and did not affect their confidence in the way their earlier difficulties had.

Dynamics were another major challenge for many of the returning flutists. The challenge came from both controlling the dynamics themselves as well as intonation while producing them. Producing dynamics on the flute requires an understanding of how to use airstream and resonance in a way that take a lot of practice to control. I noticed several of the returning flutists eagerly produced loud fortes by forcing more air into the flute, causing their tone to become quite rough and the intonation of the pitches to raise quite a bit.

I wanted the returning flutists to gain a more kinesthetic understanding of dynamics in the hope that they would be better able to use resonance, rather than force, to create crescendos. I began with a simple movement exercise where I conducted four bars in the subdivided 3 of our

challenging piece (to help reinforce the earlier counting exercises), and asked the returning flutists to act out a crescendo through movement. In the first performance of this exercise, many of the returning flutists made large movements from the very start of the exercise, so there was no noticeable 'crescendo'. We discussed this and the next time there was more of a crescendo, but as in earlier movement exercises, the movements returning flutists made were very stiff. When I asked the returning flutists to try to hear the piece as they moved, and to try to match their movements to the style of the piece, they did start to move more fluidly.

We repeated the exercise and this time I asked the returning flutists to stay in one place during the next crescendo while still making movements similar to the movements they used in the first part of the exercise. Finally, I asked them to stay still and not move outwardly, but instead internalize the feeling of movement. This seemed to interest the returning flutists, and when we switched to creating a crescendo with instruments, there was a definite improvement in both the size of the crescendo and the intonation. This improvement carries into the next rehearsals of these pieces. I was able to refer back to this exercise during later rehearsals by asking the returning flutists to remember how the exercise felt. This remembering does seem to help with dynamics and intonation in later rehearsals of this period.

I later tried to develop the crescendo exercise further by having the returning flutists conduct each other's movements in pairs. We did this without instruments, and I asked the 'conductors' not to use an actual beat pattern but just to try to just show the crescendo with their hands. This exercise would have needed more planning to be successful. The returning flutists conducted in a pattern rather than just showing crescendo and the movements of both the conductors and the conducted were stiff. Due to time constraints, we were not able to work on the exercise long enough for it to become more fluid and to encourage the conductors to become more creative with their movement. I would have wanted both returning flutists to feel the movement of the crescendo in slightly different ways and hear how that translated into sound.

Movement exercises in general were somewhat challenging for the HHO, since the returning flutists were always eager to get back to playing. I noticed the benefits of these exercises when I was able to encourage the returning flutists start to move fluidly, but that still took some time, and it was time they were not always willing to give to this type of exercise.

> I'm not always motivated to do these choreographed exercises. I need to understand the goal before I'm motivated (HHO member, questionnaire).

While these dynamic exercises did help some with intonation, there were still returning flutists who did not quite understand the connection between airstream, resonance, and pitch. During one rehearsal, the ensemble members asked to play standing up. This made a noticeable difference in intonation, including some of the intonation problems that were associated with dynamics. The reason for this was fairly simple: it can be easier for flutists to be aware of how they are using their airstream while standing. This is an indication of how the ensemble working together was able to find a solution to a challenge they were facing.

I programmed another pre-composed work that included improvisation in one of the last rehearsal-to-concert periods of this cycle. This work, Sophie Dufeutrelle's 'Aviaries' (Dufeutrelle 1994) was better received than the improvised work I had programmed in an earlier period. The piece is orchestrated for a flute choir consisting of any number of piccolos, C-flutes, and alto and bass flutes, all playing only headjoints. The score includes a short introduction, composed examples of birdsong to be used in the improvisation, and a coda ending. There is also an outline of how the performance should proceed and instructions on how to create a performance.

Dufeutrelle believed the most important part of working on this piece is the planning that needs to be done by the ensemble before any performance (Dufeutrelle 2016). There are examples of different performance plans included with the score to help the ensemble create their own model. Since the actual performance of the piece is not technically difficult, performers are able to focus on creating an interesting structure for the performance. For this reason, it is a good way to introduce improvised performance to an ensemble.

The piece ends with improvised solos on piccolo, C-flute, alto, and finally bass flute. In the first rehearsal of this work, it was difficult for the returning flutists to understand when to start the solos. After the first reading, the piccolo player who has the first solo, said they did not know when to start playing the solo, or how to get other ensemble members to understand that the solo had begun. During discussion, it became obvious that the piccolo player was trying to begin the solo while the rest of the ensemble was still in the middle of their group improvisation, which made it difficult for them to understand the piccolo playing as a solo. Another ensemble member commented that all of the returning flutists seemed to be playing all the time rather than listening to each other and creating conversations. In this discussion, we decided that everyone would try to listen more to each other and what was going on in the ensemble as a whole and to

use eye contact to understand when to move from the general improvisation to the solos at the end of the performance.

The coda section was more obvious in the second play-through, and this time there is a good crescendo in the performance. However, one of the returning flutists said that they did not feel their attempts at communication were effective. So for the next performance, I had the ensemble stand so that eye contact was not possible, requiring the returning flutists to rely solely on listening to one another in order to communicate. The returning flutists all agreed that the following performance was much better than the earlier ones had been. Even so, in a later rehearsal that included some of my younger students who would be performing this work in concert with the HHO, the soloists were still concerned that they would not know when to start without eye contact. We ran through the piece again both ways, with and without eye contact. Again, it was much easier for the ensemble to create a crescendo and for the soloists to understand when to begin their solos with no eye contact.

The final performance was well received, which surprised some of the ensemble members. I believe the simplicity of this work – both its form, and the technique needed to perform it – allowed the ensemble to take chances in the improvisation that they had been unwilling to take. In spite of their concerns about how difficult it would be to perform the piece, I was able to stand firm and convince them to rely on listening to communicate the progress of the work, which improved the performance dramatically. Including the younger students in the performance brought a different energy to the piece – the younger students had energy and eagerness to create sound without the cautiousness that the returning flutists had, while the returning flutists were better able to conceive of the form of the entire improvisation. Together, the different energies and strengths created a successful performance.

This concert also included a transcription of several movements from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*. This is a much more challenging work than I would have been able to program in earlier rehearsal-to-concert periods. A few of my more advanced students joined the ensemble for this performance. Since the HHO is part of my teaching schedule at LUHMO, it was easy for me to include students at least once a year in the performances we gave. The improvised works I have programed were written for ensembles with a wide range of technically skilled flutists and that allowed me to include my youngest students in performances. My older students joined in some of the larger works I programed, giving them the opportunity to play in a larger ensemble than would have been possible without the returning flutists. Including the students also allows

HHO to perform larger works with more than one player on a part, something that helped raise the confidence of some of the returning flutists during performances.

Through these collaborations and since the HHO often performed on the same concerts with my younger students, the returning flutists became interested in, and eagerly followed the progress of these students. During rehearsals, returning flutists would ask about certain students they had worked with. There was always a lot of conversation during the rehearsals that included the students, and the returning flutists were eager to ask the students how they would approach challenges that arise. My students seem more present in rehearsal and eager to interact with the returning flutists. The returning flutists were easily able to include the students in their social community and use the knowledge they brought with them to add to the growing body of knowledge they were creating together.

5.2.5. Social Challenges

As the HHO developed during this second cycle, the social and interpersonal challenges that arose in rehearsals became more apparent. Adding a video camera to rehearsals may be one of the reasons they were more observable at this point, but I also noticed more journal entries referring to this as well. The video recordings gave me a different view of how I was actually running rehearsals and provided a different perspective on the way the reflective explorations progressed. The fact that I was still talking a lot during rehearsals is unescapable. It became apparent through the questionnaire that returning flutists also find my explaining a challenge.

> One of the biggest challenges in rehearsals is listening to long sections of explanation (HHO member, questionnaire).

While some of the talking stems from my getting carried away with explaining an exercise or discussing a challenge within a piece we are working on, it was more often a response to some of the returning flutists' need to be heard, or to explain themselves.

> An ensemble member continually played one particular rhythm wrong, and when I pointed it out, they asked if I wanted them to play the tied note 'staccato'. As I didn't understand what they meant, they tried to explain, but finally I had to go on, and at the end of the rehearsal, played through it again with them alone. It became quickly apparent that they were holding the note too long, and when I pointed it out, they said 'Ah, you do want it staccato'! I explained that articulation shouldn't affect rhythm, and the returner started to analyze and explain why they made that mistake. I pointed out that the important thing was that they now understood how to count the rhythm. (Journal entry fall 2014)

> One of the ensemble members was […] speeding up their pulse and coming in slightly earlier in each measure. They started giving all kinds of explanations as to why they were speeding up, I stopped them to explain the 'why' didn't matter, we just needed to find a way to internalize a steady pulse […]They still had explanations, and we went back and forth a little, I feel like I was trying to explain too much. It's hard not to get into this trap. (Journal entry spring 2015)

Both incidents show examples of what Dweck refers to as a *performance mindset* where the learner sees the learning situation only as a place to prove their ability or lack thereof. As explained in detail in section 4.1.3, holding a *performance mindset* can cause the learner to become anxious in the learning situation and makes it difficult for the learner to take in new information or discover new ways to address challenges.

In both cases presented in the above quotes, the returning flutists' need to explain why they were struggling with the skill they were trying to perform was so important to them that they had trouble taking in solutions that I may have been able to offer. I also easily fell back into explaining, which only wasted more rehearsal time since the returning flutists in question were unable to take in the information that I was trying to give. As explained in section 4.1.3., this type of corrective instruction does nothing to foster self-direction and can contribute to a performance mindset rather than helping the learner solve problems.

As I became better at integrating improvisational exercises into rehearsals, these sorts of interactions happen less. I became more aware of which ensemble members were able to take occasional correction during faster-paced rehearsal sections and which were better served through doing reflective improvisational exploration where they do not feel singled out. Once I used more reflective exploration during rehearsals, when problems arose in faster-paced rehearsal sections, asking the returning flutists to remember the exercise often helped solve the problem. This way of working is much less stressful for some of the returning flutists and helped to reduce the amount of time I spend explaining in rehearsals. I believe it also fostered self-direction by creating opportunities for the returning flutists to learn new practice skills rather than feeling that they needed to *perform* for me.

Some of the social challenges that arose at this time involved opinions on the music I programed. Not all of the returning flutists were eager from the beginning to work on modern pieces that included extended techniques or improvisation.

> I begin the rehearsal with an improvisation using a few of the extended techniques found in a new piece I'm about to hand out, including unfocused sounds, key clicks, and alternate fingerings. The improvisation goes well, but as I hand out the pictural score, one returner comments 'Is this candid camera'? and another said 'Are you really asking us to play this way'? Regarding the exaggerated tonguing called for in the score, one returner says 'I'm not a brass player, I don't have to buzz notes' (Journal entry spring 2016).

I originally programed the work in question to introduce some of the extended techniques we had been using in rehearsals into performed works. The score of this work is pictural, as it was originally written as a pedagogic work for younger musicians. We did perform this piece, including some of my younger students in the performance, but it was not a popular work with the returning flutists. This was one of the rare pedagogic works that I used that did not really work well with the ensemble. It may have been that the newness of the techniques in addition to the unusual and perhaps childlike score made it difficult to accept.

> I've noticed one ensemble member complaining a lot during rehearsal. They refer to a modern, quarter-tone piece they recently heard in a concert as being 'out-of-tune' and horrible. I get caught up in a discussion about different types of intonation and its cultural components. Their comments about the piece continue throughout the whole rehearsal, and I notice as well that they are physically standing back from the group and being the last one to end improvisations as if to show their disapproval (Journal entry spring 2016).

By observing most of the reflective explorations rather than participate in the exercises along with the returning flutists, I was able to gather a lot of information about how the ensemble worked together as a whole. In Chapter 5.1.2, I mentioned how one of the returning flutists, who was often quiet and stayed to themselves during rehearsals, also stayed apart from the other ensemble members during an early movement exercise. During another movement exercise in a weekend workshop, I noticed that the returning flutists were moving independently rather than interacting with each other. I had not given any specific instructions on where they should put their attention before we started the exercise, so I was interested in why they chose to be so independent and asked them about it during the discussion.

> When I asked them how the exercise felt, they all said they were working independently. One member said they specifically went out of their way to be independent in their movements. When I questioned further, they said that it had felt difficult not to let themselves be influenced by the movements of the other members. In the second performance, I asked them to allow themselves to be influenced by the movements of others and see how the exercise changed.
>
> This time, they found a common pulse very quickly, and moved in a very organized manner, still no visual contact. Finally, I asked if they could find a way to act independently while being aware of what others were doing. This third time, their personalities came through in the movements, but

> they were all working together. I was surprised in particular by one member, who stood back and observed for a while before taking part, rather than trying to lead, as they often did in rehearsals. In the discussion after, they all mentioned how interesting and freeing it was to 'have permission' to be an individual within the group
>
> (Journal entries weekend workshop, May 2016).

By picking up clues from movements made by the returning flutists during these non-instrumental exercises, I could ask leading questions that started reflective discussions, as seen in this quote. The returning flutists themselves were able to reflect on their own performances during the exercises and understand changing their perspective brought about entirely new feelings or outcomes. In the exercise mentioned above, the returning flutists found a new confidence in being able to be an individual within the group, something that later helped in performances as well.

Occasionally, there arose other challenges to my authority in rehearsals that were more difficult to deal with. A few of the returning flutists wanted to tell me how to run rehearsals, or how I should conduct a certain section of the piece. Similarly, there were times when I did not explain the purpose of an exercise before we perform it, because I wanted to observe what would happen if the returning flutists did not know what I was expecting from an exercise. This is something I do often with my younger students, in part because I know I will lose their attention if I spend time explaining, but also because I don't want them to try to perform the exercises in a certain way. For some of the returning flutists, however, not knowing exactly why we were doing something was frustrating. Explaining my reason for not explaining sometimes helps, but not always.

> One ensemble member often tries to tell me how I should conduct. This is the same member who will ask if I can show exactly how I will conduct certain places in the concert. I was able to show them that I can make these places feel easier, and it usually involves me staying out of the way by conducting less. I take the trying to tell me how to conduct as a sign that they are not feeling confident with their own parts, which is a little frustrating, since this particular ensemble member often doesn't fully take part in the exercises, or doesn't try to understand them (Journal entry, fall 2016).

There is also one ensemble member who often wanted to know exactly how I would run a rehearsal before I began. This was a challenge for me since I often run rehearsals without explaining my plan beforehand to keep a sense of novelty alive that can help to keep awareness

high. But it was obvious that for some of the returning flutists, not knowing increased anxiety rather than awareness.

> There is one ensemble member who tries strongly to control the flow of rehearsal, asking why I don't rehearse certain pieces more and wants to control non-musical organizational aspects of the ensemble as well. I find myself feeling attacked by this and I use up a lot of energy not engaging with them during rehearsals (Journal entry spring 2016).

It does become clear that as my confidence in my conducting technique and general rehearsing skills increase, my ability to deal with these challenges grows as well as explained in more detail in the following chapter. As I spent more time planning the reflective exploration included in rehearsals and learned to read the ensemble better, these challenges don't happen as often. Referring back to section 4.1.1, I was becoming more skilled in creating a space where the community could flourish It is possible that as the ensemble members were beginning to feel more like a community, they also felt more comfortable in questioning my authority.

At the beginning of the last rehearsal-to-concert period of this cycle, three new returning flutists joined the ensemble. I was not sure how the new members would be welcomed into the group. But in addition to the diminished number of challenges to my authority, there were other signs at this point that the HHO had become a working community. The established HHO members had started attending flute concerts in the area together as a group, in a show of support for the professional community. Several members started an independent smaller ensemble within the group. The returning flutists started to monitor each other in rehearsals for attendance and taking care of parts. Unlike earlier cycles where new members would remain quiet in the first few rehearsals they attended, these three new members eagerly joined in our activities from the very first rehearsal. One of the three eagerly took on the role of playing bass flute almost immediately. While this may have been partially due to the new returning flutists' own eagerness, I believe the fact that the HHO had become an affective working community made it easier for the newcomers to be accepted into the group. During the first rehearsal these three returning flutists attended, established members of the HHO invited them to attend the next flute concert together. These three returning flutists ended up remaining in the HHO through the *Linnunlaulu* concert and beyond.

5.2.6. My own Development: Communication

During this cycle my organization skills improved, I prepared for rehearsals in a more efficient way and I included more reflective improvisational exploration in rehearsals. Knowing how to adapt my rehearsal techniques to the needs of the HHO at any given time and my growing confidence in my technical skills as a conductor had direct effects on how the ensemble worked together as a community during this cycle.

With each rehearsal-to-concert period within this cycle, I gained more experience preparing specific improvisational exercises to include in rehearsals. In addition, I gained a better understanding of how to balance the amount of reflective improvisational work to faster-paced rehearsal work. Better rehearsal planning also allowed me to be more flexible when there was a need for last minute changes.

It was still easy for me to get caught up in discussions and other social distractions during these rehearsals. I notice especially during early periods in this cycle, that my journal entries often mention talking:

> We talked a bit, and I told them about my intentions for the next program, and about how certain parts within the ensemble took on the role of conductor. It's hard watching the videos! I talk. A lot. (Journal entry fall 2015)

> I try to explain how they could hear their part within the whole piece, and they would talk over me, trying to explain (Journal entry spring 2016).

As the cycle progressed, I got better at recognizing these spots in rehearsals where I would get caught up in telling as cues that I needed to add more reflective improvisational work. I slowly became better at not addressing individual problems during rehearsals and instead planning improvisations around the theme that arose for a later rehearsal. As mentioned earlier, becoming aware of which individual returning flutists were able to take direction during rehearsal and which were better served by reflective exploration helped me to keep the pace of rehearsals moving forward.

I also became more confident in the technical aspects of conducting during this cycle. In addition to taking part in a conducting seminar, I believe spending more time in preparation and planning before each rehearsal period helped. I was also better able to see how my preparation directly affected the ensemble.

> There were a couple of places over the rehearsal where my technique was definitely causing problems [...] I am now usually able to correct these. It points out two things: I need to be on my

> game, and the ensemble members are following me. It is now easier for them to express what they need, and for me to accommodate that. (Journal entry fall 2016)

> We gave two concerts with the same program this period, and had too few rehearsals before the first, and one teacher who joined us had some problems. I take at least part of the blame, I wasn't prepared enough, so I didn't have as much control over communication as I would have wanted. Still, far better than it would have gone a year ago. (Journal entry spring 2017)

I was also able to see how the development in my conducting technique affected the ensemble. Our concert programs were more demanding both technically and musically than they were in the previous cycle. I was able to communicate through gestures more clearly, leading to more effective rehearsals. And there was improvement in the way the ensemble was able to respond to my gestures.

> Watch out for stiffness in my beat!!!!!! This is something I tend to do a LOT – probably from fear that no one is following, or from trying to be clear – but I notice that things move much better when my beat is fluid. hmmmm. Yikes. will take a LOT of practice to get rid of. I can be clear and fluid. And players react better when I am. (Journal entry, fall 2016)

Also, when there were problems with the ensemble understanding my gestures, I was able to correct them and notice an immediate difference in the way the ensemble responded.

> We were having trouble with entrances in one section of the piece, that seemed to be getting better as I got clearer, but I still wanted a bigger ritardando just before the next section. After trying a couple of times the way I had practiced it, they still said it was unclear, so I tried staying down on beat 4 just before the new section. Worked perfectly. As if to prove how well it worked, I made a mistake once – and the problem was back immediately. (Journal entry, fall 2016)

During this cycle I learned that I needed to prepare and organize rehearsals and programs differently for the returning flutists than I how was used to with my student ensembles. The pace of rehearsals moved more quickly, and each rehearsal needed to contain more material. I learned that I needed to avoid getting caught up in social commentary or telling teaching behaviors during rehearsals. Also, the level of my preparedness directly affected how I reacted to defensive challenges that arose to my authority. I became more confident in my technical conducting abilities, better able to see how my gestures affected the way the ensemble responded, and better able to adapt my gestures to the needs of the ensemble. When I could confidently assure the returning flutist that I was able to support them during performances, their own confidence rose as well. I also became much better at integrating reflective improvisations into rehearsals and

developing exercises that specifically addressed the challenges that arose. I was able to switch to working with reflective improvisation when needed more easily during rehearsals and better able to modify the exercises to meet the needs of the ensemble at any given time.

5.2.7. Commission

During this cycle I also began the process of commissioning a new work for the HHO including improvisational elements that would be premiered on the *Linnunlaulu* concert. While there is a growing number of works for flute orchestra that incorporate extended flute techniques or improvisation, many of these works are more suited to younger ensembles due to their childish themes or simple musical material. Many new works created for professional ensembles present challenges that would have been too great for the HHO at the time of this project. The lack of existing repertoire including extended techniques and/or improvisation that would be interesting enough for my ensemble of returning flutists, while still possible for them to perform at an enjoyable level was one of the main motivating factors to include a commission as part of this project.

Pasi Lyytikäinen was an ideal choice to approach for this commission. Lyytikäinen has written with non-professional ensembles previously and he expressed interest in the challenge of creating a musically interesting work that would be accessible to a group of motivated non-professional musicians. Lyytikäinen also plays the flute, which meant he had some knowledge of the techniques and type of writing that would be accessible to an ensemble of returning flutists. Lyytikäinen was very willing to listen to my ideas and concerns and work with me to create a piece that would be suited to this project and the HHO.

The first version of *Lume* that Lyytikäinen sent for me to look at had thick chords alternating with short, technically challenging motives. I was concerned that this type of texture would present challenges for the ensemble. The slow, harmonic sections would be challenging in respect to intonation and breathing, while the shorter motives were very rhythmically and technically demanding. Keeping an inner pulse was a challenge for many of the members of the HHO. While this is an area that we work on regularly in rehearsals, due to the size and difficulty of the concert program, I was concerned that a piece of this type might create problems for these returning flutists. Also, interestingly, Lyytikäinen had scored the lowest part of the work for bassoon rather than bass flute.

In discussions with Lyytikäinen, I explained my concerns, including that we did have a bass flute available, and I would rather the piece was orchestrated for just members of the flute family. A few weeks later, the five short movements of the final work started showing up in my inbox and I could tell that the pieces would be interesting both for the returning flutists and the audience. I was so excited that it took me another day or so to realize that *Lume* did not contain any improvisational elements or incorporate any extended flute techniques. I contacted Lyytikäinen once again with my concern but did not hear back from him. I continued with planning the concert including choosing the venue. I settled on The Church of the Cross in Lahti, designed by Alvar Aalto and well known for its acoustics.

In the end, this small setback became an asset. Several weeks later, I received the score to *Rituale* in my inbox. Not only was the new piece improvisatory and used extended techniques, but it was also composed with the concert space in mind. Lyytikäinen described the piece as follows:

> Rituale is a place-oriented work for flute orchestra. Here the position of the players in the concert space is an essential part of the nature of the work. The other central theme of the work is improvisation, which is controlled in different ways throughout the work. Therefore, the formation of each performance is a unique process. The extended techniques used throughout the work add a new dimension of sound color. The listener can follow the affect the acoustics of the space have on the different effects produced by the players, and the original sound world this creates. (Lyytikainen, 2017)

The commission exceeded my expectations. The result was two new pieces in two different styles for flute orchestra. Both pieces were both accessible to the HHO as well as musically interesting for both the ensemble and the audience.

5.2.8. Overview of Cycle Two

I was able to put organizational changes into place from the beginning of this cycle that did seem to resolve some of the problems that had arisen in the previous cycle. Programing entire concerts before the first rehearsals gave me more time to prepare, including developing specific exercises to help work through challenges I anticipated would arise. Creating rehearsal folders helped resolve the disorganization that often occurred in the beginning of rehearsals. Changing our rehearsal schedule to a shorter more intense period helped with attendance problems and seemed to help the returning flutists focus on the pieces we were performing.

During this cycle, I used a lot more reflective improvisation during rehearsals. Discussions during these improvisations brought up interesting insights into how the returning flutists approached their practice. In movement exercises, returning flutists who tended to be

rigid in their playing showed the same stiffness. Encouraging them to be more fluid in their movement helped the returning flutists perform with more flexibility as well. Removing eye contact during improvisations helped the returning flutists understand the importance of listening. Using notes taken from difficult sections in composed pieces as the basis of improvisations helped the returning flutists develop better technical dexterity and a sense of freedom in their playing. Improvisations also helped to build community by increasing communication between members and by allowing them to discuss and change their identity within the group. I also learned that for some of the returning flutists who still held a *performance mindset*, creating exercises for later rehearsals was a better way to address challenges than correction during a faster-paced rehearsal section.

By the end of this cycle, the HHO began working together as a community. The ensemble held me to a high standard and there were occasional challenges to my authority at times when I was not as prepared as I could have been, or when they felt uncomfortable. Ensemble members also started holding each other accountable for attendance and in other organizational aspects such as part distribution. Smaller communities formed within the larger ensemble and the returning flutists planned social activities together outside of rehearsals. The established ensemble was eager to welcome new members by the end of this cycle, and these members were more likely to stay on. The ensemble understood and enjoyed their role in the larger musical community, as shown through their interest in the younger students of LUHMO, as well as in their attendance as a group to professional music performances in the area.

The development in community was reflected in the musical performances of the HHO. By the end of this cycle, concert performances sounded more confident even as technical challenges in the repertoire grew. Ensemble members were obviously proud of their performances, as shown by the fact that they invited friends and family members to attend. This again not only benefitted the ensemble but the younger students as well, by providing a larger, enthusiastic audience for concerts. The ensemble performed two largely improvised pieces during this cycle, and while they were somewhat wary of the pieces in the beginning, the second piece especially was well enough received by the audience that the returning flutists started to become more confident with improvising.

My own confidence as a leader and conductor grew as well. I became better at understanding what type of exercises would benefit specific challenges. Spending more time planning rehearsals also allowed me to be more flexible when unanticipated challenges arose. I

became better able to handle challenges to my authority as the cycle progressed by being better prepared. As my own technical skills grew, I was also better able to understand when stepping back from the ensemble served the returning flutists better and I was able to communicate this to them. This also helped build the confidence of some of the returning flutists who were at times concerned about how I would conduct during performances. By the end of this cycle I felt confident that both I and the HHO were ready to take on the challenges that the *Linnunlaulu* concert program would present.

5.3. Cycle III (Fall 2017): Testing of Rehearsal Techniques and *Linnunlaulu*-Concert Project

The final cycle of this project consisted of one rehearsal-to-concert period held during the fall of 2017. This cycle served as a test of the improvisational exercises and rehearsal techniques I had been adapting in the previous cycles. The rehearsal cycle ran from late August until the concert on the 28th of October at Ristinkirkko in Lahti. During this cycle, there were nine returning flutist members of the HHO. All nine had participated in at least one earlier rehearsal-to-concert period with the ensemble. In addition, six professional flute teachers took part in this final cycle, performing with the HHO in the concert. Not only did the professional flutists make it easier for the ensemble to cover the number of parts scored in the programed pieces, but the professional flutists were also able to provide me with feedback on the rehearsal techniques. They also served as resource and motivation for the returning flutists, which they needed as they took on the challenges that this concert program presented. The many benefits of having the professional flutists as part of this cycle were not without challenges, however, as I will describe later in this chapter.

5.3.1. Choice of Repertoire

Since this project focused on developing improvisational rehearsal techniques and introducing extended techniques, I wanted the concert to represent that. In my discussions with Sophie Dufeutrelle, she also suggested that I use composed works to introduce improvisation and extended techniques, rather than just to rely on exercises, since '*most people are more interested in playing pieces than in playing exercises*' (Dufeutrelle, 2016). I also believed that using extended techniques to extend the tonal color palate of the flute ensemble would create a more interesting concert for the audience. As I knew of several flute ensemble pieces written by Finnish flutist-

composers that used extended techniques and/or included improvised sections, I decided the concert would consist only of works written by Finnish composers. Except for *Lume* commissioned from Pasi Lyytikäinen and *Lintujuttu* composed by **Herbert Lindholm**, all of the pieces on the program used extended techniques, and most also contained improvisatorial sections.

I have already introduced both commissioned works written by Pasi Lyytikäinen in Chapter 5.2.7. The second of these pieces, *Rituale,* was the most intimidating of the programed pieces for the HHO in early rehearsals because of the unusual appearance of the score. I ended up creating a more condensed version of the score that was easier to read both for myself and the returning flutists, but it still took quite a bit of explaining to help the returning flutists feel comfortable reading the score. This was the most improvisatory of all the works programmed and I often used the free improvised section that ended the piece as a warm-up in rehearsals.

Each of the five short sections of *Lume* have a distinct character, which Lyytikäinen said were based on Finnish hymns and the sound of the harmonium he remembered as a child. The pieces are not technically difficult, but musically, it was challenging for the returning flutists to perform the pieces in such a way that would bring out the distinct character of each section. Herbert Lindholm's *Lintujuttu*, on the other hand, is technically one of the most challenging works on the program, including interesting and challenging rhythms. Since this work does not include any improvisation or extended techniques, it ended up being one of the easier pieces to prepare, in spite of my original concerns over the technical challenges.

Both of **Lauri Toivo's** works included on the program: *Illanvälke (Evening Gleam)* and *Uudemmasta Maailmasta (From a Newer World)* incorporate many different extended flute techniques, including different types of exaggerated articulation, jet whistles, and overtones. *Uudemmasta Maailmasta* also has several improvised sections. Both works use extended techniques to extend the range of tonal and percussive properties of the flute, in slightly different ways. *Illanvälke* is a lilting waltz and Toivio uses jet whistles, overtones, different articulations, and tonal colors to create a soft accompaniment to the melody. *Uudemmasta Maailmasta* has a jazzier feel. While it uses the same array of techniques as *Illanvälke*, the articulations asked for in this work are more percussive. In addition, there are dramatic dynamic contrasts and a strong rhythmic accompaniment. It also includes a few places for soloists to perform free improvisations in the style of jazz improvisations.

Toivio obviously understands both how to use these techniques in composition as well as how to produce them on the flute and the notation he uses in both pieces is very clear and specific. This meant that even though the pieces were at first a bit intimidating to the returning flutists because of the number of extended techniques used, once I was able to explain the notation and how to produce the sounds, it was easy for them to learn the pieces. Toivio, as a flutist, understands what techniques are accessible and is not afraid of introducing them in pedagogic works. While there are more accessible works using these techniques becoming available, I have not yet found any that use such a wide range of techniques as successfully Toivio does in these two works. Pairing these pieces during rehearsals helped me emphasize to the returning flutists how the same extended techniques could be used to create different styles and colors. I believe pairing these works helped the returning flutists learn the extended techniques required more quickly, since they needed to approach them in different ways.

I wanted to include **Jukka-Pekka Lehto's** *Ihminen onn…* (A person iss….) on the concert program both because of its improvisatory style but also, perhaps more importantly, because it involved the audience in performance. This allowed me a way to create a community between the different groups present at the concert: Professional musicians, Non-professional musicians, and Public; and symbolized the importance of communication between these three groups. The second piece by Lehto included on the concert program, *Chorale,* used some of the same extended techniques found in Toivio's works. Both of Lehto's pieces also contained aleatoric sections, therefore introducing one more type of improvisational performance technique. These two pieces worked well as a pair in rehearsals. *Ihminen onn…* was a more accessible work that made it easy to introduce the aleatoric style also present in *Chorale* as well as Lyytikäinen's *Rituale*.

Orchestration provided one of the challenges with all of the repertoire chosen for this concert. All of the programed works included between 8 to 11 different parts. This meant rehearsing would be a challenge for our small ensemble since there would be few rehearsals where all the parts would be covered. By this point in the project, the HHO had performed works where there were only one flutist on each part, but here, not being able to double parts might be more of a challenge due to the other challenges presented by these works. I knew that at least a few of the returning flutists would not feel comfortable covering a part on their own and rehearsals could be difficult if several parts were missing. However, limiting repertoire to works with 4-6 parts would have made it much more difficult to find appropriate pieces for this concert. Another challenge with these works was the difference in notation between the different

scores. Even though I limited the works performed in this concert to those composed by Finnish composers and the works were all composed relatively recently, there were differences in the way some of the extended techniques were notated between the different scores. I will go into more detail about this challenge in section 5.3.3.

Interestingly, even though all the pieces being performed were less than 30 years old, only the newly commissioned pieces included bass flute in the instrumentation. Of the remaining pieces that did not originally ask for bass flute, only *Chorale* included alto flute. The rest of the pieces were scored only for concert C-flutes, and occasionally piccolo. The returning flutists themselves suggested we double the lowest concert flute part on bass flute in several of the pieces, to add more depth to the sound of the ensemble.

5.3.2. Organization

The rehearsal period for this concert was longer than earlier rehearsal-to-concert periods had been during this project. I scheduled an equal number of 90-minute weeknight rehearsals and longer weekend sessions to accommodate the schedules of both the returning flutists and the professional performers. I encouraged the professional flutists to attend as many rehearsals as they were able and to attend rehearsals from early in the cycle, in order to become acquainted with the ensemble and our approach to rehearsing. I used an online scheduling program to help find times when the greatest number of flutists would be able to attend.

Even with the amount of planning and communication I did before the rehearsal period began, attendance was a challenge during this cycle. I was surprised to find that many of the professional flutists preferred attending the weeknight rehearsals after they had finished teaching for the day rather than taking part in weekend sessions, especially in the early part of the cycle. Since by this point in the project, I had fallen into the habit of running the shorter weeknight rehearsals in a faster-paced, more traditional fashion, many of the professional flutists did not take part in many reflective exploration sessions until much later in the period. As I will explain later, this created an interesting challenge. We also ended up having very few rehearsals with all the flutists present and this made part distribution difficult. There were also many rehearsals where we had difficulties playing through pieces, since there were many parts left uncovered.

Another organizational difficulty was the distribution of parts. By this period, the returning flutists of the HHO knew the benefits of deciding which part they would play in any given piece early on in a rehearsal period. The one or two returning flutists who took time

deciding what part to play were 'kept in line' by the other ensemble members, unlike in the earliest rehearsal-to-concert periods when switching parts was a major source of confusion. While I was able to create a list early on of what parts would be covered by the returning flutists, there was confusion concerning the distribution of parts amongst the professional flutists. Additional confusion happened when one of the professional flutists had to pull out of the project, requiring new part distribution.

5.3.3. Early rehearsals

In the first few rehearsals of this cycle, the returning flutists had some apprehension about being able to play, or even read a few of the pieces that included extended techniques. While I had introduced the HHO to all of the extended techniques called for in this program during earlier reflective exploration sessions, the returning flutists had not seen many of these techniques notated. With unusual markings for the extended techniques and improvised sections, the scores looked intimidating to the returning flutists. This was not helped by the fact that the same technique might be notated slightly differently in different scores. For some of the returning flutists, the idea that a mark in the score might not notate an exact sound, or even an exact rhythm, was difficult to understand. Other returning flutists were concerned that they would not remember what the new markings meant or remember how to read the score. This anxiety seemed to result in a lot of talking during the first rehearsals, rather than playing.

> The players are a little overwhelmed right now by the program… one of the players was talking. A lot. To the point that a few other players asked them to stop. (Journal entry, 2017)

The anxiety was not limited to the returning flutists.

> I felt there was a high level of confusion and anxiety in the rehearsal…but the players said they didn't feel it. I felt a little that people were talking over me, not hearing what I wanted to say (Journal entry, 2017).

Since *Lume* contained no extended techniques and the score looked very traditional, we were able to read through it quite early in the cycle and without much anxiety. The returning flutists enjoyed the piece from the beginning and were excited that they would be performing the

premiere. Having this piece to work on was a good way to start rehearsals for the concert and along with *Lintujuttu*, the other programmed work that did not contain any extended technique, helped to build the returning flutists' confidence that the program was possible to perform.

I was afraid that spending too much time explaining and talking during these early rehearsals fed the returning flutists' anxiety. Talking was not limited to the returning flutists, especially in the early rehearsals. The demands of this program meant that I needed to plan and run very efficient rehearsals, especially since I probably included more reflective exploration in this cycle than in earlier rehearsal-to-concert periods. It did mean that I needed to keep the rehearsals moving forward at all times, which meant keeping strictly to a schedule rather than allowing the returning flutists to determine the pace of the rehearsals as had sometimes happened in earlier cycles. To adjust for this, I planned for discussion times during rehearsals where I knew that there would be only returning flutists present so that they could have the opportunity to ask questions without derailing rehearsals where there were more professional flutists in attendance. As explained in Chapter 5.3.5, the different rehearsal styles between the returning flutists and the professional flutists caused some challenges.

I planned a good deal of reflective exploration for the earliest rehearsals that included the techniques found in the repertoire, to help the returning flutists feel more comfortable using them in the composed works. While it is often a good idea to help an ensemble get an overall view of a new work early in the rehearsal period, in the early rehearsals of this cycle, I often worked on only small sections of any one particular work during each rehearsal. I would first explain any unusual notation, make sure that all the returning flutists were comfortable trying any of the extended techniques called for, and then immediately read through the section. This unusual type of micro-rehearsing allowed me to help the returning flutists understand that they could perform these unusual works.

Because many of the returning flutists were still uncomfortable playing many of the extended techniques called for in the score, I also had the returning flutists read through *Illanvälke* as a traditional score in early rehearsals. This was possible because the piece is notated with specific pitches and rhythms, even though these are produced using different extended techniques. So, though I usually use extended techniques to develop traditional technique, here I needed to do the opposite. Playing the work with traditional technique made it easier to read through the score in early rehearsals and gave the returning flutists an idea of the shape of the piece. Ironically, when I had the ensemble play through the piece using traditional playing

techniques, a few of the returning flutists took it as a challenge and used the actual techniques called for in the score.

One of the professional flutists did join us in the early rehearsals, and they were a good reference for some of the returning flutists who were still concerned about the extended techniques. The returning flutists were able to ask questions, and hear things explained in a different way from how I would explain them. In addition, it helps the returning flutists understand how vague some of the notations are when the professional flutist needs to ask for clarification on how I want certain things played. It was interesting for me to see how my colleague interacted with the returning flutists. They eagerly took part in the reflective exploration that we did in the rehearsal and seemed to enjoy it along with the returning flutists.

J-P Lehto's *Ihminen onn…* became a good score to help the returning flutists feel more comfortable with the unusual scores and notations. The overall form of the piece is simple and technically it was easily accessible to the HHO. The work is mainly aleatoric, and the score only calls for the flutist to use a few simple extended techniques. This helped the returning flutists become more comfortable reading unusual looking scores, which in turn helped them feel more comfortable reading the more complex scores.

While this cycle produced unusual challenges to the HHO in a way that could have been similar to the period in the first cycle where my anxiety caused problems within the ensemble, in this cycle I was better able to adjust and adapt rehearsals to better meet the needs. This was a challenging cycle and not without problems, but during this cycle, I held an unwavering belief that the returning flutists would be able to meet the challenges the repertoire presented.

5.3.4. Use of improvisational exercises

During previous cycles, I had used improvisation and included extended techniques in reflective exploration exercises to address challenges that came up in more traditional repertoire. I did also occasionally program a work during the earlier periods that incorporated these elements into our concert repertoire to help the returning flutists understand that these techniques had merit beyond just being developmental exercises. Since most of the pieces programmed for this final cycle contained improvisational elements and used extended flute techniques, the way I used improvisation in the rehearsals of this cycle was slightly different. Intonation, pulse, and other technical challenges arose during this cycle as in earlier rehearsal-to-concert periods and I did use reflective exploration to address them. But often during this cycle, the focus of our

improvisational explorations was more on creating an interesting form and finding musical freedom as well as exploring new ways to use the extended techniques. I incorporated extended techniques into most if not all of the reflective exploration improvisations we did during this cycle.

In the first few rehearsals of this cycle with just the returning flutist members of the HHO, I used exercises I designed to help the ensemble become more comfortable with free improvisation. In one such exercise I divided the ensemble into pairs and asked the ensemble to choose one unusual word such as octopus or helicopter and have one-word conversations. Once the returning flutists noticed how expressive they could be with just one word, I asked them to do the same with their flutes: create duets on just one note. I used another variation of this exercise to start other rehearsals: moving around the room, I asked the returning flutists to greet each other using a short rhythmic phrase on one note. As they moved around the room, I asked them to try to match the note of each flutist they interacted with and change the note they used each time they greeted someone new.

Intonation, as always, presented challenges in this cycle. During one rehearsal a few of the returning flutists were having difficulties hearing the intonation of a section played in unison. Listening and movement exercises that might have increased awareness of how they were using their airstream did not help, so I developed a new exercise. I asked the returning flutist to play an 8-beat crescendo-decrescendo on the long unison note that was causing difficulty. As I suspected, there were points during this performance when the intonation was pretty good. I asked the returning flutist that were playing if they could say at what point the note sounded best in tune. They could not at first, so I asked other members of the ensemble to listen and say at what point the intonation sounded better.

The other returning flutists were better able to hear the intonation and this helped those who were playing locate the point as well. I asked the returning flutists if they could remember how it felt physically at that point in the exercise. After one more try, they had an idea of how it felt and I asked them to play the long unison note and try to keep the same feeling throughout. My intention was to help them understand how a change in airflow would affect intonation. The returning flutists were able to play the note somewhat better in tune. Together with other intonation exercises I developed; the ensemble did make some progress with intonation during this cycle. One of the returning flutists thanked me after one themed rehearsal on intonation.

I really appreciate that you spent so much time on this, I never realized what intonation meant

before (Journal entry, fall 2017).

As mentioned earlier, I incorporated the extended techniques found in the programmed repertoire into the reflective exploration improvisation exercises we did during this cycle. Rhythm exercises such as rhythm circles where each returning flutist performs their own unique rhythmic loop at the same time, were a good place to practice different types of exaggerated or percussive articulations. I also used different types of articulation and tone production in another exercise adapted from an improvisation class I attended, I divided the ensemble into four groups, assigned each group a unique rhythm to perform and a specific technique to play it. Once all four groups were able to play their own rhythms on their own and keep their individual rhythms going while all four groups played together as an ensemble, I asked the returning flutists to move from group to group, switching to new group's rhythm and technique as they moved. I found that when I asked each group to add movement to their performance, the returning flutists found it easier to learn the assigned rhythms and keep them going at a steady pace. The returning flutists became quite enthusiastic about performing this exercise with movement and it ended up creating a lot of laughter.

In another example of a free improvisation exercise incorporating extended techniques, I divided the ensemble into 3 groups of three. I had the returning flutists come up with a scenario that involved three different characters, each holding a different status [11], and they decided on a CEO, mid-level manager, and summer employee during the company's restructuring negotiations. These roles formed the basis for a free improvisation. All of the flutists enjoyed thinking about the roles and the discussion and laughter seemed to make it easier for them to start playing. I had all three groups perform the exercise at the same time in close proximity to each other. This made it a little more difficult for the flutists to concentrate on their own group of three. The first performance revealed this difficulty as the flutists were listening more to the performers in each group that shared the same role, rather than interacting with the members of their group having different roles. While that is understandable and often desirable in an ensemble setting, I wanted to see if the challenge of going against that tendency to instead listen and interact to what was happening within their own group would help them direct their attention when necessary during rehearsals.

[11] The idea of 'status' is common in theatrical improvisation (see Johnstone, *Improv!* chapter 3, Status), here I used it to help flutists understand the difference in being a 'soloist', accompanist, or playing a secondary theme.

I included extended techniques to add an additional dimension to the exercise. Pizzicato articulation can be very difficult to perform at lower dynamic levels, while a breathy tone is very difficult to perform loudly. Jet whistles can be played in a few different ways but in general, it is difficult to produce multiple jet whistles in succession and it is difficult to control their dynamics. We tried the exercise three times and each time I assigned a different technique to each of the roles. I wanted the returning flutists to experiment with the techniques and find ways of asserting the different status roles in spite of the limitations of the technique they were assigned.

This type of experimentation was especially important in rehearsing the two Toivio pieces. In *Uudemaasta maailmasta*, the techniques are used to create a percussive, jazzy sound that requires the techniques to be performed at loud dynamic levels, while the effect of *Illanvälke* is much softer and more flowing. For this reason, it was important for the returning flutists to understand that the same techniques could be used in different ways and at different dynamic levels. I also hoped that this exercise could help returning flutists understand how articulations in a more traditional style of playing could also be used in different ways expressively.

Since the entire concert ended with a free improvised section at the end of Lyytikäinen's *Rituale*, I often had the returning flutists improvise on the pentatonic scale indicated in this section (A, B, C#, E F#) to begin rehearsals. For the first few rehearsals with just the returning flutist members of the ensemble, I just had them just explore the scale and ended the improvisation myself if it went on for longer than several minutes. I wanted the ensemble members first to become comfortable with the scale without putting any kind of additional pressure on the returning flutists to feel they 'had' to play in a certain way. Remembering the scale was a source of anxiety for some of the returning flutists in the early rehearsals so I wrote it down and had it visible in the rehearsal space. Even though I planned to play in this part of the program during the concert, I did not join in during the rehearsals of this section. I wanted the returning flutists to listen and structure the improvisation themselves without my interference and I would just add to their ideas during the performance.

After the returning flutists became more comfortable with the scale (there were less incidence of accidentally played Bb's for example), I started asking a little more from these improvised sessions. At this point I alternated between using this scale and using the given chorale phrases from Lehto's *Chorale*[12] during these exercises as both sections provided similar

[12] The chorale theme that Lehto uses to begin the piece is used later on as a basis for an improvised section. Lehto includes a sheet of different transpositions of the phrase, and flutists are asked to choose different transpositions during the improvised sections, altering articulation, rhythm, tempo and dynamics.

challenges. Now I started asking the returning flutists to think about these improvisations as conversations and encouraged them to spend as much time listening to what the other returning flutists were playing as they did playing themselves. I started including reflective discussions during these free improvising session where I would ask the returning flutists how they felt they could make the improvisation stronger.

As the returning flutists became more comfortable with free improvisation and were able to listen and comment on their improvised performances, I began to talk about endings. In order to help the returning flutists understand how to end an improvisations, I asked them to think of different endings – arriving at or leaving a party, waking up after a bad dream, falling asleep – that they could describe with there improvisation. After trying a few different possibilities, the ensemble decided that 'Falling asleep' worked well, as it seemed to be easier for the returning flutists to end their improvisations on a decrescendo.

I did not only use material from the scores we were preparing as a basis for improvisation. In one rehearsal, I had the returning flutists improvise pictures. I chose several pictures of scenes that somehow related to 'evening' since I used this exercise to start a rehearsal of *Illanvälke* (Evening Gleam). After dividing the returning flutists into groups of three, I had each group choose a picture and spend five minutes preparing a short improvisation on that picture. Each of the groups came up with interesting improvisations and they all seemed to enjoy the exercise. At the end of the exercise, one of the returning flutists commented '*why do we even need written music*?' (Journal entry fall 2017). In addition to using the exercise as an introduction for that rehearsal's work on *Illanvälke*, this exercise provided further practice on creating interesting free improvisations. Listening and commenting on each group's improvisation helped the returning flutists understand how to structure an effective musical improvisation.

5.3.5. Integrating Professional Flutists into the HHO

One of the biggest challenges that arose from inviting professional flutists to join us in this concert period was organizational. I did not know exactly how many professional flutists were taking part in the concert before the first few rehearsals. This meant that even though I had parts organized and easily available for most of the pieces before the rehearsals began, there was still a lot of confusion about who was covering what part. This confusion lasted well into the rehearsal cycle, since one or two of the professional flutists who originally had agreed to perform had to pull out. This resulted in my having to change parts of the professional flutists several times

during the rehearsal cycle. There were also times when professional flutists arrived to rehearsals without material, for the same reasons. The returning flutists of the HHO had chosen which parts they would play early in the rehearsal period. The need to shuffle parts as professional flutists dropped out of the program was to ensure that all of the parts were at least doubled, so that the less confident returning flutist members had professional flutists playing alongside of them.

Another challenge arose from the different way the professional flutists approached rehearsals. When I would stop playing during a rehearsal to give instructions or corrections, the professional flutists were able to look ahead and anticipate what was coming next in the score and able to ask questions that anticipated what I would work on next. The returning flutists in contrast, would usually be focused on the specific spot we were playing at that moment. I usually tried first to focus on helping the returning flutists through the passage we were presently looking at which sometimes made the professional flutists frustrated that I was not attending to their needs. Trying to navigate the professional flutists' questions, while keeping the returning flutists feeling comfortable and aware of what was going on was a difficult balancing act. If I had run rehearsals at the pace that the professional flutists were accustomed to, I knew that I ran the risk of causing anxiety amongst the returning flutists. I wanted the professional flutists to participate in the ensemble in the same way as the returning flutists did so that they would have the same experience. However, the reality of the limited amount of time many of the professionals had to participate in rehearsals made this difficult in practice.

Scheduling was another challenge that exposed some of the differences between the returning and professional flutists. Often the professional flutists were able to come to only part of a rehearsal. While I appreciated that they came when they could, they would often ask me during the rehearsals to change my arranged schedule or move through a piece we were working on more quickly, so that they would be able to play through as many pieces as possible before they had to leave. While there were some professional flutists who did spend time getting to know the ensemble and how we worked, others saw their role in this cycle more as 'helpers' and did not spend the time to become part of the community.

> The regular players [returning flutists] were really actively present at rehearsals. I was not (Professional, from questionnaire).

Of course, I needed to include reflective exploration during rehearsals to help the returning flutists navigate the challenges of the repertoire and the returning flutists often needed to talk about certain sections that they were uncomfortable with. The professional flutists' main concern, on the other hand, was often whether they were able to get through all the pieces in the short amount of time they had to rehearse with the ensemble. This made taking part in the reflective exploration uncomfortable for them at times. It also caused some conflicts during rehearsals.

> The rehearsals were laid back and the returning flutists had a lot of time to learn their parts without pressure. For me, this was a little strange, since as a professional I am used to much more efficient rehearsals, but I remembered the point of this, we went at the pace of the amateurs. (Professional from questionnaire)

Many of the professional flutists only joined the rehearsals about halfway through the cycle. Even then, they come mainly to the shorter weeknight rehearsals. In the early part of the cycle, the returning flutists have done quite a bit of reflective exploration using the extended techniques found in the programmed works, as well as free improvisation. There were only one or two professional flutists who took part in these early rehearsals and even then, they are only present for short amounts of time. This leads to interesting new dynamics within the ensemble. The HHO community still existed among the returning flutists, but it was sometimes difficult to incorporate the professional flutists into rehearsals and know how to navigate their presence.

> We really have to start the run-through by doing some of the [theatrical] exercises, since there are still one or two people who don't know everyone's name (Journal entry, Oct. 2017).

As I have mentioned before, I often began rehearsals with movement. While the returning flutists were eager to do some stretching movements, other types of movement exercises were not always well received. This became apparent as explained in Chapter 6.1, through some of the answers to the questionnaire as well. However, as I mentioned in chapter 5.1.2., in addition to enhancing body awareness and helping the returning flutists stay present in rehearsals, the movement exercises give me an insight into how the ensemble is working together. For this reason, I was interested in using them with the combined ensemble. In one of the early rehearsals during this cycle when there were a few of the professional flutists present, I had the ensemble perform the 'A-B-A' exercise I described in chapter 5.1.2. I again explained the exercise: I asked them to begin by walking individually around the room until they felt somehow

'drawn' to another player or found themselves walking closely together. At that point, they should start to form a tight group (section B) and then move apart when it again felt natural (section A). It was easy to see that many of the flutists, especially the professionals who are not familiar with the exercise, began awkwardly, not exactly sure of what is expected and they seemed self-conscious of their actions. Some of the professional flutists also tried to lead the performance, even using hand gestures to ensure that the B section came together. There was very little eye contact between the participants and they did not find a common walking pulse.

Through reflective discussion, the flutists themselves acknowledge their awkwardness at doing this exercise and understood that they had not been aware of what was going on around them. I encouraged the flutists to notice each other in the second performance and asked them to try to trust that the different sections would happen on their own. The second performance of the exercise was more musical: the flutists were more aware of each other, the 'B' section happened naturally, and it looked like a group moving together rather than individuals who happened to be walking in proximity to one another. The return to the second 'A' section was also more natural than in the first performance.

We continue the exercise, still without instruments, to include a crescendo and decrescendo made through movement. I asked the flutists to make a crescendo with their movements through the first 'A' section, and a decrescendo from the 'B' into the second 'A' section. The first time the ensemble tries this, all of the flutists say that it felt stiff and forced. Before the next performance, I asked them to be more aware of each other while they are playing and to listen to how others are creating the dynamics. The second performance was more natural. We continued further, introducing instruments, and this time, the quieter 'A' sections were stiff and intonation became a problem during the crescendo. This is not surprising to me and was similar to other intonation exercises the ensemble has done (see Chapters 5.2.4, 5.3.4). We discussed the exercise and I suggested that the returning flutists try to remember the physical sensation of making the crescendo and decrescendo. This did help improve the intonation of this exercise, even if the dynamic range was slightly smaller than before.

Improvisation was another area where interesting challenges arose between the two different groups of flutists. In one of the later weekend rehearsals in the cycle when there were a large number of professional flutists present, I began by having the ensemble create a free improvisation using the pentatonic scale at the end of *Rituale,* as I had started many of the earlier rehearsals with only the returning flutists present. I also asked the flutists to incorporate a few of

the extended techniques from the concert program in this improvisation. Before we even began the improvisation, one of the professional flutists asked: '*Shouldn't we decide how we are going to end the improvisation?'* (Journal entry, fall 2017). This question was raised each time a new professional flutist joined this part of the rehearsal. I could see on the faces of the returning flutists how this question increased their confidence, since in this instance, they were the 'experts' with more experience.

Since the returning flutists had worked with improvisation at this point for two cycles and especially in the beginning of this cycle, they understood how to listen and trust that an improvisation would find its natural ending. One of the reasons I had asked the professional flutists participating to join us in the earliest rehearsals was because I knew that it took time to establish trust between members of an ensemble and time to get used to this type of free improvisation. The professional flutists performed similarly to the way the returning flutists had when they first took part in free improvisations. They were bolder in what they played than the returning flutists had been, but there was a similar type of 'parallel playing' without listening. Seeing that the professional flutists were struggling with improvisation in a similar way that they had in the early part of this project noticeably affected the returning flutists in the same way as realizing that the professional flutists also did not know exactly how to use the extended techniques in any particular score. It also helped me understand just how equalizing the experience of improvising in this way can be when mixing flutists with different experience levels and skill sets. One of the first comments from the jury at the end of the *Linnunlaulu* concert was that they often were unable to differentiate between the professional and returning flutists during the concert.

Towards the end of this cycle, more of the professional flutists did take part in the longer weekend rehearsals, and I included more of the reflective exploration exercises in these rehearsals. Doing this went some way towards building community within the expanded ensemble, though it was already late in the cycle and most of the professional flutists did not spend enough time with the ensemble to really move out of the 'newcomer' role. I believe it is for this reason that as we will see later, some of the professional flutists were critical of rehearsals in general. It was not my intention in this project to run fast-paced, formally structured rehearsals.

The composers who were able to take part in a few of the rehearsals were received differently by the ensemble. The returning flutists were enthusiastic to have the composers

present, and the composers themselves showed a real interest in the rehearsals, sometimes to the point of sitting in the ensemble for part of the rehearsal. There was a lot of interaction between the composers and the returning flutists, and similarly to the few professional flutists that did take part in early rehearsals, the composers were a good source of information. One of the returning flutists said they were surprised that […the composers] *seemed happy with what we were doing, they were very calm, didn't jump around saying 'That shouldn't go that way!'* (Journal entry, fall 2017).

5.3.6. Choice to conduct

The idea of ownership was important to me during this project. I wanted to ensure that the returning flutists felt as though they had ownership of their performance, and that my role, even when I conducted, was that of supporter and motivator. In earlier cycles, I conducted most of the performances of the HHO from the front of the ensemble, except for one period where I played small chamber works together with a few of the returning flutists. As I discussed in the beginning of this narrative, in these early periods, the returning flutists relied on my conducting for support and had difficulty taking ownership of their performance. Taking the position of director had also helped to strengthen my role as leader of the group, which was not as naturally clear as it would have been with a younger student ensemble. Having a clear musical and organizational leader in the early periods of the ensemble helped the returning flutists feel comfortable as they were navigating being newcomers in the group.

I also conducted most of the pieces during the *Linnunlaulu* concert, including the works that had improvisatory sections. Again, from the position of conductor, I was able to give guidance, rhythmic, and structural support when needed. I could easily move to different positions in the hall away from the ensemble to hear what was happening during rehearsals. Some of the improvisatory sections also had a rhythmic accompaniment that worked better when conducted. Other works included sections that were aleatoric and needed a conductor to keep the piece moving forward. Conducting from the front of the ensemble also allowed me to take control of the rehearsals in a way that might have been more difficult if I were playing within the ensemble, especially when the professional flutists joined the rehearsals. This became especially important at certain points during the cycle when the needs of the professional and returner flutists were somewhat in conflict with each other.

One exception to this came at the very end of the concert where I played within the ensemble during the final freely improvised section of Lyytikäinen's *Rituale*. For this work, I was

already standing in the choir loft in the back of the church to conduct–or rather oversee–the progression of the first part of the piece. Since the flutists were spread throughout the church hall, and I was somewhat removed from them and could stand back so that I did not become the focus of their attention, I felt it was easy to add my voice to the performance without taking over the structure of the improvisation. I did I did not want to conduct the freely improvised section but rather let it emerge naturally from the end of the more structured first part of the piece. And as I was on a different level than the rest of the flutists, my participation would increase the way the sound of the ensemble filled the hall.

I planned step back from my position of conductor during the more improvisatory sections in other works as well during the concert to encourage the returning flutists to take more ownership of the performance. In the final section of the concert that I described above, this worked well. In other improvised sections, such as the solos during Toivio's *Uudemaasta Maailmasta*, I could sense some anxiety from the soloists, which may have been due in part to my decision to step back. In this case, it might have been better for me to react to the needs of the returning flutists in the actual moment rather than sticking to the decision I had made earlier to step back during this part of the performance. It is possible that had I chosen to stay more present during this section I could have provided the support that the soloists felt they needed.

5.3.7. Overview of the Final Cycle

This cycle involved a long rehearsal-to-concert period and contained a large number of challenging works, including material and techniques that in many cases were unusual to the returning flutist. The HHO as a community was challenged by inviting professional flutists to join them in the performance. In spite of these challenges, the *Linnunlaulu* concert that ended the cycle was a success: it was well received by the audience including the adjudicators. The performers also seemed to enjoy the performance. It was exceptional to program a full-length concert of pieces that contained so much improvisation, and so many different techniques for an ensemble of returning flutists.

I believe that the reason this concert was this successful was because of the I took to build a supportive community for the returning flutists. Despite the challenges that did occur during this cycle, the returning flutists were energetically present in each rehearsal: not only physically, as attendance improved, but also eager to participate in exercises, asking questions, and listening. I believe that the trust I had that this program could work helped the returning

flutists trust that it was possible. I also believe that rehearsing in a manner that put the returning flutists' needs first was an important part of the success of the concert. Creating a space where the returning flutists could play with the extended techniques before they read notation and navigated written material meant that they were a familiar part of their rehearsal technique before they were used in performance. Using the techniques in different exercises and then reading them in different types of scores meant that the returning flutists had to approach this challenge from different angles, which also supports learning. The fact that the HHO had, in previous cycles, become a working community of practice meant that the returning flutists were able to draw on each other for support and help in creating the new knowledge needed to navigate the challenges presented by this cycle.

My rehearsal technique improved during this cycle. While there were more rehearsals in this rehearsal-to-concert period than those of previous cycles, they were even more tightly planned than earlier periods had been. This overall rehearsal plan was very flexible and it ended up changing from week to week as I discovered the places where my own preconceived ideas differed from the actual needs of the ensemble. Especially by the end of this rehearsal period, there was little confusion in the beginnings of rehearsals and they began on time. I was also better able to at least somewhat control the amount of unneeded discussion that went on during rehearsals. While there was some confusion over the distribution of parts, overall, the rehearsals were more efficiently run than rehearsals in earlier cycles. The length and challenge of this concert performance, as well as the challenge of including professional flutists in the ensemble meant that I needed to run efficiently paced rehearsals, trying (not always successfully) to strike a balance between the fast, formal pace that the professional flutists expected and the more laid-back pace the returning flutists needed. I felt much more comfortable by the end of this cycle in taking a tighter rein during rehearsals, while still managing to keep the atmosphere light.

Perhaps because of the unusual nature of these scores, I felt I was able to spend more time in later rehearsals on more musical aspects of the piece such as structure and dynamics. This could also be because of the amount of time I spent in earlier rehearsals during this cycle on improvisational exercises. Since the HHO continued to practice and perform after the end of this project, I also know that many of the lessons learned in this last cycle only became apparent later. There has been continued evidence of growth including more efficient rehearsals and performances that are more enjoyable both for the returning flutists and their eager audiences.

6 Results of questionnaire

I created two separate questionnaires for the flutists participating in this last concert cycle. One questionnaire was given to the returning flutists (see Appendix 1), the second to the professional flutists (see Appendix 2) who took part in this final cycle. It is important to note that all of the professional flutists who participated in this project were teachers. This was important, as I wanted their feedback on the rehearsal techniques, and how willing they would be to incorporate them into their own teaching. The questionnaire was created using the Surveypal feedback software, and participants were able to complete the questionnaire anonymously. The questionnaire was written in Finnish, and I translated the results. Since I held several, sometimes overlapping roles during this project, an anonymous questionnaire allowed the best possibility for the participants to provide candid answers.

The questionnaire given to the returning flutists (see Appendix 1) focused mainly on their perception of how effective the rehearsal techniques were, whether they felt they had developed during the project, and how they felt about rehearsals in general. I was interested to see if the returning flutists felt any improvements in confidence and skills going into this concert as a result of taking part in these exercises. I also asked the returning flutists general questions about their identity as flutists and their musical practice. In the questionnaire for the professional flutists (see Appendix 2), I focused more on what observations about the rehearsals and rehearsal exercises the professionals made during their experience. I also asked them if they felt this type of rehearsing would be beneficial to their own work and how likely they would be to incorporate these techniques into their own teaching.

I sent the questionnaire to the participants the morning following the concert. The response rate to the questionnaires was 75% (6 of 8) of the returning flutists, and 66% (4 of 6) of the professionals. I believe the high response rate may have been due to the timing of the questionnaire. I wanted to ensure that the participants had the possibility to answer while the concert experience was still fresh in their memories.

6.1. Returning Flutists

The questionnaire sent to the returning flutists participating in the *Linnunlaulu* concert was the longer of the two questionnaires. This questionnaire touched generally on the *Linnunlaulu* concert cycle and the perceptions the returning flutists had about the effectiveness of the

rehearsal techniques. There were also general questions about the returning flutists' musical background and activities, as well as their general perceptions of the HHO. A translated version of the questionnaire can be seen in its entirety in Appendix1. I made the decision to send the questionnaire only to the members of the HHO that participated in the *Linnunlaulu* concert period.

6.1.1. General Background

All but one of the returning flutist respondents said that they had played a musical instrument for between 6 to 9 years when they were younger. One of the participants that responded was a continuing flutist, with no break in their musical practice. The one returning musician who did not play flute when they were younger had taken classical guitar lessons when younger and began playing flute as an adult, after a break in their musical practice. This same respondent had also taken violin lessons along with their child and studied recorder because of their interest in Baroque music.

When asked why they had stopped playing, many of the returning flutists cited work or starting a family as the reason. Most of the answers were similar to the following:

> I completed my studies in the music institute at 18, took part in youth orchestras and musical productions, and later took lessons as a practice student at the conservatory level. For about 20 years I played rarely, sometimes for my own enjoyment or for family parties. The reasons for this are many. At first, I just wasn't interested, but then the lack of possibilities and time limitations made it difficult. Possibilities to play in a relaxed setting are pretty rare. (HHO member from questionnaire)

Half (50%) of the returning flutists respondents said that one of their main motivations for joining the HHO was to rediscover the joy they remembered from their earlier musical experiences. One respondent said that '*the sound of the flute was the best thing they knew.*' (HHO member from questionnaire) Another respondent named the HHO specifically as the reason they returned to a musical practice.

> When I heard about the orchestra, I was excited because already in the advertisement it said that this was good for people who hadn't played in a long time. It also came at a good time, since my kids are a little older, so I have more time for my own hobbies. (HHO member from questionnaire)

Of the six respondents, half said that they had heard about the HHO from other flute playing friends. Two of the other respondents had heard about the HHO through their private flute teacher and one had seen an ad for the HHO on social media.

When asked what strengths they brought to the orchestra, half of the returning flutists mentioned that they enjoyed learning new things and trying new techniques. Being positive, enjoying different types of music, and concentration and commitment were other traits the respondents brought up as strengths.

The returning flutists respondents are very active in their musical practice. In addition to their participation in the HHO, half of respondents said that they took private flute lessons. One additional respondent added in the comments that they occasionally took private lessons, and two thirds (67%) play flute in other ensembles as well as the HHO. Two of the respondents commented that they also played other instruments at home for their own enjoyment. Half of the respondents regularly attend symphony concerts and listen to music at home. Many of the returning flutists have positive memories of earlier musical ensemble experiences and mentioned those memories as part of the reason they wanted to return to a musical practice. These findings correspond to other studies showing adults who actively participate in ensembles usually have positive memories of earlier musical experiences and also support professional musicians by attending concerts (Taylor, et al. 2011, 11; Coffman 2002, 201).

6.1.2. Rehearsals and repertoire

All of the returning flutists respondents said that they enjoyed a shorter, intense rehearsal period more than a longer period with weekly rehearsals. They also felt that the intense periods were more effective. Half of the respondents had participated in earlier rehearsal-to-concert periods where the HHO had weekly rehearsals over a longer period of time. Two thirds (66.67%) of the respondents mentioned that playing together and playing through pieces was the most enjoyable part of rehearsals. Two of the returning flutists mentioned improvisation as their favorite, or one of their favorite parts of rehearsals.

Several of the returning flutists commented on rehearsal disorganization and attendance problems as being one of the biggest challenges they faced during the project, echoing my own observations.

> More organization during rehearsals would have increased my feeling of confidence. It would have helped also if parts could have been divided more equally. Now it seemed that some parts were

not covered in rehearsals while other parts had several players. It's not often we get to hear the pieces with all the parts present.

One of the challenges during this fall was putting up with disorganization and a feeling of incompleteness since there were so many rehearsals where only some of the players were present. I did try to take this as a challenge, and a way to develop myself, and trying to concentrate on just my own part in this project.

Our concerts have always gone better than I would have imagined. Rehearsals are often frustrating because there are too few players present. It almost always feels as though we have too few full rehearsals before a concert.

(HHO members from questionnaire)

All of the returning flutist respondents felt that the repertoire the HHO performed was at an appropriate level for the ensemble, with just the right amount of challenge. A few of the returning flutists would have wanted to play more traditional pieces, while others enjoyed the modern works.

During the improvisational periods, I was missing more traditional pieces.

All of the pieces were fun. In my opinion, the modern pieces were fine, but there could always be some traditional pieces included.

Even though earlier I wouldn't have believed I would write this, I really believe all the pieces went well in the concert. All the pieces were fun to play.

(HHO members from questionnaire)

Several of the returning flutists that responded indicated they were surprised at how well the modern pieces worked and how much they came to enjoy and feel comfortable playing them as the rehearsal period progressed.

The best part has been the variety and challenges in the repertoire. Almost all the pieces seemed uncomfortable and difficult in the beginning, but little by little they started to work. It felt fabulous at some point during the rehearsal process to notice that I was playing something I never thought I would be able to play.

(HHO member from questionnaire)

When asked what the biggest challenges in rehearsals were, several of the returning flutist respondents mentioned movement exercises done without instruments:

> In the uncomfortable category, the biggest challenge has been many of the exercises done without the instruments where I sometimes feel silly and stupid, but I suppose this is probably good to increase my confidence in performance.
>
> [One of the biggest challenges in rehearsals was] those choreographed exercises, where the meaning wasn't always clear.
>
> (HHO members from questionnaire)

6.1.3. Perceived effect of rehearsal techniques

All the returning flutists respondents said that improvisation became easier and more enjoyable the more it was practiced during rehearsals. While the returning flutists felt that traditional rehearsal techniques were the most effective way of practicing (mean 4.83 of 5), listening exercises (mean 4.50 out of 5) and structured or directed improvisation (mean 4.33 of 5) were also rated high in terms of perceived effectiveness. The returning flutists respondents rated extended techniques (mean 4.17 of 5) next in experienced effectiveness with free improvisations (mean 3.83 of 5) and rhythmic exercises (mean 3.50 of 5) below that. Practicing with just the headjoint (3.00) was rated lowest in effectiveness by the responding returning flutists.

The returning flutists respondents felt that they practiced more during this project (mean 3.83 of 5) and that the practicing they did during the project was more effective than it had been previously (mean 3.93 of 5). Half of the returning flutists who responded said that they used some of the rehearsal techniques in their own personal practice. Breathing exercises were mentioned most often as the exercise they took from rehearsals into their own practice. One returning flutist did specify that they included extended techniques in their personal practice.

> Practicing the effects has happened mostly at home but I've found that practicing them has also been very beneficial to my normal playing, which is why I rated them as a very effective method. (HHO member from questionnaire)

The returning flutists felt that their confidence and joy in performance had increased during the project (mean 4.17 out of 5). They also felt that their listening and intonation skills had increased (4.00 out of 5). As I previously mentioned, rhythm was another skill where the returning flutists perceived improvement (3.80 out of 5). Finally, respondents rated their improvement in counting entrances (mean 3.67 of 5) and finger technique (mean 3.33 of 5), but even here, half of respondents rated their perceived increase at 4 out of 5.

When asked about their overall experience with the HHO, five of the six returning flutists that responded mentioned the positive and relaxed atmosphere:

> Positive feedback is given often for even the smallest successes. Challenges come in appropriately small pieces, so that anxiety doesn't get too large. The players are all different, which is fantastic.
>
> The ensemble is a fun group who are obviously enthusiastic about playing. There are some very skillful players, and challenging pieces. Everyone is very motivated to play and perform.
>
> (HHO members from questionnaire)
>
> The general atmosphere of the ensemble is fun and it's fun learning new and different things about flute playing. (HHO member from questionnaire)

The returning flutists seemed to enjoy this concert period (mean 4.67 of 5), and felt confident that they were prepared for the performance (mean 3.67 of 5). 5 out of the 6 respondents felt that there had been enough rehearsals to prepare for the concert. Comments also indicated that the returning flutists were pleased with the performance.

> There was a nice feeling during the concert. All of the pieces sounded good. I particularly enjoyed Ihminen onn… when we finally got to hear it with the audience participation.
>
> The concert succeeded much more than I anticipated. It was a joy to play and the church was a wonderful concert venue. I was surprised that the audience seemed so enthusiastic.
>
> (HHO members from questionnaire)

Half of the returning flutist respondents said that their approach to their musical practice changed as a result of their participation in this project. One of the returning flutists mentioned they listened to their intonation in a different way, another said they had started playing flute more in general, and a third said that they paid attention to orchestral concerts in a different way since they started participating in the HHO.

6.2. Professional Flutists

The questionnaire given to the professional flutists who participated in the *Linnunlaulu* concert cycle was much shorter than the one given to the returning flutists. This questionnaire focused on the professional's previous experience using improvisation and extended techniques

in teaching, their impressions of the HHO and rehearsals, as well as any effect this project may have had on how they would work with their own students in the future.

6.2.1. Background

I did not ask the professional respondents for information on their background as teachers in the questionnaire, since I was aware that they were all experienced flute teachers. Most likely due to the rehearsal schedule and length of this project, all of the professionals that participated in the *Linnunlaulu* concert cycle teach in the Greater Helsinki area. I did ask questions specifically about these professionals' experience with improvisation and extended techniques in teaching, as well as their experience with adult flute students.

Three fourths (75%) of the professionals that responded stated they had worked with non-professional adult flutists before. All of the professional respondents had given private lessons to adult flute students. Two of the professional respondents mentioned that they had worked with adult flute students mainly at summer camps. Only one of the professionals said that they had previously coached non-professional adult musicians in ensembles. Of the professionals who have worked with non-professional adult students, two had used extended techniques in teaching before their participation in this project. One of those two professionals had also incorporated improvisation into their private lessons with non-professional adult flutists.

All (100%) of the professional respondents said they used some form of improvisation in their teaching with younger students, 66% said they also used extended techniques. The one respondent who had worked with non-professional adult students in ensembles as well as in private lessons, answered that they did not use extended techniques with either younger students or non-professional adults students. From their further comments however, it seems they may have been unclear about how the terms improvisation and extended techniques were being used in this context:

> I'm not quite sure what is meant by 'extended techniques'? Do you mean all of the notes found on the flute? I have used growling and 'singing' with students of all ages. (Professional from questionnaire)

This same respondent was similarly concerned about the term improvisation:

> It's hard to say, [whether or not I've used improvisation with my younger students] what do you mean by improvisation? As soon as a student learns one note, or gets a sound on a headjoint, we make up songs and rhythms. I have trouble labeling that improvisation, even though it is!

(Professional from questionnaire)

Since all of the pieces programmed on the *Linnunlaulu* concert were composed by Finnish flutist-composers, it was not unexpected that at least some of the repertoire was familiar to the professionals prior to this project. Several of the pieces are performed with younger flute ensembles, especially in the greater Helsinki area, on a somewhat regular basis.

> I've used pieces that are similar to the pieces we played with the HHO, even some of the exact same pieces. (Professional from questionnaire)

6.2.2. General Impressions

Most of the comments made by the professional respondents about their general impressions of the rehearsals were positive:

> The atmosphere was relaxed and positive, the returning flutists seemed to feel at home and the [returning flutists] were given plenty of time to learn their parts, without pressure.
>
> There was a good feeling to the rehearsals and the returning flutists were nice. Rehearsals could have been better organized, in particular, parts could have been distributed earlier.
>
> (Professionals from questionnaire)

The professionals were also impressed with the returning flutists and their apparent commitment to the project:

> The [returning flutists] were very excited about their playing and seemed very committed to the project. (Professional from questionnaire)

Half of the professional respondents (50%) commented that rehearsals were sometimes disorganized. In addition to the comments on part distribution, there were also comments on the pace of rehearsals.

> I'm used to a much more efficient pace in rehearsals, but I remembered that in this case, the point was to go at the pace of the amateurs.
>
> I would have wanted to play through pieces more [during rehearsals].

(Professionals from questionnaire)

Only half of the respondents of this questionnaire (50%) answered whether they would use more improvisation with adult students after participation in this project: one positively, the other negatively. The one positive respondent indicated that they had used improvisation with their adult students prior to participation in this project. The one negative response was from a professional who indicated that they had not previously used improvisation with their adult students. 66.67 % of respondents said they would be willing to increase the use of extended techniques with their adult students, one respondent was unsure.

Three fourths (75%) of the professional respondents said that they would take some of the improvisational games from this project to use with their own students. Half of the respondents named specific pieces from this project that they would like to use in their own teaching. One of the respondents gave an extended response on the importance of using both extended techniques and improvisation with adult flutists.

> ...improvement in technical mastery of the flute is often more successful when using improvisation or extended techniques. This is relaxing and can move thoughts away from old playing habits.
>
> (Professional from questionnaire)

One respondent, who had used improvisation in their teaching before their participation in this project, was unsure if they would increase their use of improvisation after participation:

> There is so much talk of improvisation right now that it is probably a good idea to do more! I'm concerned, however, when we will have time to add this to our teaching? The basics are still important! (
>
> Professional from questionnaire)

All of the professional respondents said that they were prepared to do more work with non-professional adult flutists after their participation in this project. Three-fourths of the respondents said they would increase the use of improvisation and extended techniques in their own teaching after participation in this project.

6.3. Reflection

Overall, from the responses given in the questionnaires, it seems that the participants in the *Linnunlaulu* concert felt that the overall atmosphere of the ensemble and rehearsals was pleasant, laid back, and supportive. There were also concerns about the organization of rehearsals, in particular, the distribution of parts, a concern I discussed myself in chapter 4.3.2. It would have been difficult to completely avoid this disorganized part assignment problem due to the difficulty in getting definite commitment from the professional flutists and the need to redistribute parts again several weeks into the cycle. As I mentioned in chapter 4.3.1., choosing repertoire that would have been more suitable to the size of the HHO would also have been difficult, due to the other constraints I had placed on the type of repertoire I wanted to present in this concert.

In both questionnaires, comments indicated that the flutists would have wanted to have spent more time playing through pieces prior to the final performance. Again, part of the reason that this was difficult was due to the conflicting schedules of the returning flutists and professional teachers, which meant there were often parts left uncovered during rehearsals, making reading through entire pieces difficult. Respondents to both questionnaires did mention that they had still felt comfortable in the performance and were pleased with the end result.

6.3.1. Returning flutists and the perceived effectiveness of rehearsal techniques

One of the criticisms that the returning flutists made in their responses to the questionnaire was that they didn't always understand what some of the exercises were for – what skills they were meant to develop. This shows in the ratings given to the different types of exercises as well: more traditional rehearsal techniques that would have been familiar to the returning flutists such as reading through pieces, listening, and structured improvisation were rated high in effectiveness. Using just the headjoint, and free improvisation were perceived as less effective rehearsal techniques and movement exercises without instruments were mentioned by a few of the returning flutists as difficult to understand and some of the least favorite parts of rehearsals.

I believe including movement in rehearsals is a very important part of working with any ensemble, but perhaps especially with a non-professional adult ensemble where members are

coming into the rehearsal space from their busy lives. Movement can be used to redirect focus towards rehearsal space and the way a participant is using their body. (see chapter 3.2.1) It is important perhaps especially for wind players to have body awareness while playing, because of the effects it has on tone quality and intonation.

It is possible to see throughout the narrative in this report of times when I started an exercise by giving a limited amount of explanation so that the returning flutists did not have any preconceived ideas about the 'correct' way to perform it. The movement exercises often fell into this category. Instead, I held discussions after the first time we did the exercise, where I directed the returning flutists' attention to the technique, or motion, or feeling I was hoping they would be aware of. I did this so that I could see how the returning flutists responded to the prompts without knowing what I was expecting from them. In reflective discussions, I could involve the returning flutists themselves in the definition of the exercise as it continued. There were times when the returning flutists were not able to answer where their awareness was during an exercise, which also gave me important information. There were other times when I did give directions before the first performance of an exercise but the directions resulted in the returning flutists overthinking the exercise, as in the statue exercise I explained in Chapter 5.2.3.

In other cases, the returning flutists' observations during these discussions reported something I had not considered when I started the exercise. These observations could change the way the exercise progressed and ended up being beneficial to the ensemble in ways I had not anticipated. A movement exercise described in Chapter 5.2.5. was an example of this. I expected this exercise to be a simple awareness building exercise, but through discussion, it became clear that the exercise allowed the returning flutists to redefine their identities within the ensemble. If I had explained the exercise more fully before we started or put too many limits on it from the beginning, it's possible that this discussion would not have arisen. The director should consider well the amount or type of instruction given before any exercise, depending on the needs of the ensemble. Planning themed rehearsals in the later concert-to-rehearsal periods of this project also helped this explanation dilemma somewhat, as it gave the returning flutists a general idea of what the exercise was about, without telling them what I was hoping to see.

What does come through in the comments and ratings is that the returning flutists mainly enjoyed the project and mostly felt comfortable during rehearsals. They also shared that they enjoyed the concert and were somewhat surprised at the positive reaction from the audience to the pieces performed. The fact that a majority of the returning flutists felt that their

confidence and enjoyment of performances had grown during this project, and that they noticed a positive change in the way they approached their musical practice is an indication that rehearsals were effective. All but one of the returning flutists responded that they would like to continue in the HHO after the end of this project, and not only has that happened, but the size of the ensemble grew in the rehearsal-to-concert periods following this project.

6.3.2. Professionals' observations on rehearsal techniques

The professionals who responded to the survey were somewhat critical of the pace and organization of rehearsals. As I mentioned above, the problem of part distribution, and the resulting confusion during rehearsals also came out in the comments given by the professional teachers in their own questionnaire. A few of the comments also mentioned the difficulty some of the professionals had with adapting to the laid-back pace of the HHO rehearsals. I also noticed this in my own journal entries. For the most part, however, the professional flutists did understand that these rehearsals were not intended to move at the pace of a more professional ensemble. It should not have come as a surprise that planning a project of this size over the length of time this concert cycle required with two different groups of adult musicians with different schedules caused difficulties in planning and execution.

These answers supported the notes I took during rehearsals that suggested that many of the professionals did find the rehearsal techniques different to what they had used in their own teaching prior to this project. They also seemed genuinely interested in how the returning flutists responded to the reflective exploration in rehearsals. Especially those professionals that did take the time to attend rehearsals early in the cycle, or attend longer weekend sessions, seemed to enjoy participating in the rehearsal techniques. The comments in the questionnaire do also indicate that the professionals noticed how the rehearsals were geared towards the returning flutists, and their need for support.

There is indication that the professionals were interested in the techniques used during rehearsals. One professional who had not used improvisation as part of their teaching prior to participation in the project said that they would be willing to incorporate it after their experience. Other professionals that had used improvisation did indicate they would be likely to take some things back to their own rehearsals. It would have been interesting to see if these results would have been different, and perhaps more enthusiastic, if the professionals had participated from the

beginning of the project and were able to see the development of the ensemble through the use of the exercises.

7 Conclusion

I believe that this project clearly shows that returning musicians are both capable and interested in developing their musical abilities to embrace modern performance techniques, and work with composers to present new works. All of the repertoire programmed for the Linnunlaulu concert had been composed within the past 30 years, and most of the works contained elements of improvisation and required the performers to use techniques that were new for the returning flutists. The amount of time and energy that the returning flutists put into preparing this repertoire clearly shows their investment in the ensemble, their desire to continue to learn, and the effectiveness of the rehearsals to provide an environment for exploration and development. This, underscored by the responses given in the questionnaire, indicates that the returning flutists enjoyed their participation in the ensemble and felt confident in their performance.

The group of returning flutists that joined the HHO during this program began with different musical backgrounds, varying levels of technical skills and musical experience, and distinct personalities. They were motivated to take part in the ensemble and many of them invested a good deal of time and other resources into their participation in the ensemble. While it does not come up in the data, one of the frequent topics of conversation amongst the returning flutists at rehearsals was looking for new instruments. Several of the returning flutists that spent the most time with the ensemble bought new instruments during this project. In addition to the time and energy they invested in the project, I believe the fact that they were investing in new instruments showed their commitment to their musical practice.

The returning flutists also brought limiting beliefs about themselves and a musical learning environment to the HHO that sometimes made their musical development difficult. Holding on to the identity that each individual returning flutist brought with them to the HHO was important and even helped develop the ensemble into a working community of practice. However, parts of these identities, built of long-practiced beliefs created in earlier learning environments could also get in the way of their present development and enjoyment. Adjusting my rehearsal style to help the returning flutists reflect on and transform these beliefs allowed them to expand their identity as learners and successfully navigate the challenging repertoire we performed. I did this through incorporating improvisation into rehearsals which allowed me to create a space for exploration. Using trust building exercises from theatrical traditions helped the returning flutists build interpersonal connections within the ensemble. These connections

allowed the returning flutists to work together as a community to build knowledge and to use each other as support and sources of information. The community also eagerly spent energy to ensure the community continued in a mutually enjoyable fashion, including investing time and energy into the non-musical organizational aspects of the ensemble.

Understanding that fixed beliefs are best addressed in a reflective learning situation helped me to adapt the reflective improvisational exercises I used in rehearsals to include dialogue that allowed the returning flutists to reflect on their performance and expand the beliefs they held about themselves as learners and musicians. The narrative shows how these reflective improvisational exercises supported the returning flutists' musical development, confidence in performance, and their overall enjoyment of the ensemble experience.

The returning flutists worked best in rehearsals that were well organized, changed speeds often, and included space for questions and socializing, but not so much that it cut into the amount of time available for playing. It was very clear that rehearsals were more than a work environment leading to the enjoyment of a well-performed concert, instead they were an essential part of the enjoyment of participation for the returning flutists. That is not to imply that the returning flutists were not interested in the final musical output. They were very critically aware of their performances and especially their own feelings during performances. The audience response to any given performance was also important to the returning flutists.

Using reflective improvisational work in rehearsals allowed me to address challenges that came up in rehearsals without having to single out individuals or small groups of returning flutists, something which often caused more frustration than development. During the reflective explorations, returning flutists had a chance to explore new ways of working, hear and see the other ensemble members dealing with the same challenges, and reflect on any limiting beliefs that were blocking their development. The more I included these reflective exercises into rehearsals, the less the returning flutists needed to rely on me as the one formal source of knowledge. This allowed me to move more freely between roles of formal leader, observer, and facilitator. Stepping back from a formal leadership role helped the returning flutists to develop their feeling of ownership towards their performances. Giving the returning flutists the space to develop the confidence they needed to take ownership, understanding when I could move between these roles, and having the flexibility to do so when the ensemble needed were the most important skills I needed to develop while working with this ensemble.

I believe the one period leading up to the ensemble's performance on the Finnish Flute Society's Gala concert, where there was a high turnover in ensemble members ironically shows how well the reflective improvisatory rehearsal techniques worked to build community and space for musical development with the returning flutists. It also highlights how important it is for a director to reflect on their own internalized beliefs before trying to create a reflective learning space. During this period, I doubted my trust in the reflective exploration and fell back into a more formal 'telling' style of rehearsal. Once I returned to using reflective exploration in following rehearsal-to-concert periods and developed them further to meet the needs of the returning flutists, there was an observable rise in loyalty, confidence, and enjoyment amongst the members of the HHO. While a small number of returning flutists stayed with the ensemble throughout the entire project, the newer members that joined later in the project were most likely to stay with the ensemble and quickly became actively involved. The final concerts of the rehearsal-to-concert periods following this return to reflective exploration also grew in length, as well as musical and technical difficulty. And most importantly, they were more enjoyable not only for the returning flutists, but their audience as well.

7.1.1. Looking Forward

As this project was able to focus on only one small returning flutist ensemble, it would be advisable to continue testing and developing the rehearsal techniques with a wider range of returning flutists and directors using the techniques with their own ensembles. It is hoped that further studies will be carried out that follow how other ensembles use these rehearsal techniques to develop their own communities of working. It would also be interesting to see how professionals would respond to working in this way if they had more time to experience the exercises and be able to follow an ensembles' progression over a longer period of time. The confusion that at least one professional participant indicated in the questionnaire about what I meant by improvisation in this project indicates that it would be beneficial to more clearly explain how this type of trans-stylistic explorative improvisation differs from genre-based improvisation and how it can be used to develop general musical and technical skills.

A visual library of videos showing how the exercises look in practice, including examples of how to interact with and question the ensemble, would facilitate these further studies. While a visual library was originally planned for this project, it became apparent in practice that gathering visual material that would clearly show the progression of the exercises and the results they

produce would have involved a production that would have harmed other aspects of this present project and therefor was best left for future work.

It would also be interesting to know how a group of returning flutists would rate the different exercises after a different concert program. In this project, the returning flutists rated exercises using extended techniques as a more efficient method of rehearsing than rhythmic, free improvisation and headjoint exercises. One returning flutist specifically pointed out that since it was necessary to practice the extended techniques to perform the programmed pieces, they began to understand the benefits of working with them. So, it very well could be that programming works for performance that included other challenges, such as programming rhythmically or technically difficult pieces, or performing a concert of free improvisation would cause different types of reflective exploration to be perceived as more efficient ways of working.

There is a possibility that in this project, some of the challenges that arose during rehearsals were due to cultural norms. In addition to my roles of researcher, participant and observer in this project, I was also an outsider as my cultural background was different than the returning flutists who participated in the HHO. I came to Finland from the United States as a graduate student and while I have lived here for more than 30 years, I am removed enough from Finnish culture to understand that some of the responses I got during rehearsals may have been due to cultural norms. Holding limiting beliefs about learning is certainly not a trait limited to Finnish adults. However, other social interactions and the way the ensemble came together as a community may have looked different in a different cultural setting. It would be interesting to see other studies that address the cultural context of adult learning. Would it be easier in another cultural setting for an ensemble of returning musicians to develop community and embrace roles within that community from the beginning that would have helped to solve some of the organizational challenges I faced? Did my different cultural background have any effect on how the returning flutists interacted with me in the beginning of the project? These might be interesting aspects of returning ensemble development that would be interesting to research further.

Part of the future development of these rehearsal techniques will hopefully include continued cooperation with composers willing to understand both the needs and possibilities of ensembles for returning musicians. As I have already stated, this project shows that returning flutists can perform new works that include new techniques. An expanded repertoire of pieces that use new musical vocabularies could provide more incentive for returning flutists to expand

their repertoire of technical skills. This could not only help to expand the returning flutists' own beliefs in the own musical skills, but also provide more interesting programs to a wider audience.

It is my hope as well that this study helps to continue a conversation about the importance of providing high-level, goal-oriented musical instruction for students of all ages. It is also my belief, born out of my experiences during this project, that including returning non-professional musicians in learning situations that also include younger learners is beneficial to everyone involved. During this project, the HHO provided many performance opportunities for my younger students at LUHMO that would not have been possible otherwise. The presence of the returning flutists in the LUHMO community was a source of interest to my youngest students. The returning flutists were very interested in, and supportive of the development of my younger students. Several of my former students have taken part in rehearsal-to-concert periods or have expressed interest in becoming members of the HHO after leaving their formal musical studies. While the original idea for this study grew in part out of the work I had done with my younger students, the knowledge I gained during the project have benefited my younger students as well.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire for Returning Flutist Members of the HHO after the *Linnunlaulu* concert cycle

You as a musician

1. **Tell me about yourself as a flutist. When did you start playing the flute, how long have you played, have you stopped playing: why and for how long?**
2. **What peaked your interest to start playing flute again, or if you started playing as an adult, what made you choose the flute?**
3. **How did you hear about the Helsingin Huiluorkesteri?**
4. **Tell me about your own strengths: what do you think you bring to the flute orchestra?**
5. **What has been the biggest challenge for you in the HHO?**
6. **How else do you participate in musical activities besides playing in the HHO (choose as many options as apply)?**

    Options:

    I take private flute lessons

    I regularly attend orchestral concerts

    I regularly attend flute concerts

    I listen to a lot of music at home

    Other: Explain?
7. **Do you, or have you in the past two years played or sang in another ensemble?**
    a. **How have you participated in this ensemble?**
        i. **Played the flute**
        ii. **Sang**
        iii. **Played another instrument**
    b. **Where is the ensemble organized?**
        i. **Music Institute**
        ii. **Conservatory**

iii. **Community school**

iv. **Other: explain.**

8. **How does the HHO differ from other ensembles you have played in?**
9. **What is your general impression of the HHO?**
10. **How many years have you played in the HHO?**
11. **Which was the more effective practice schedule?**
    a. **Rehearsals once a week, for the entire term (17 weeks)**
    b. **Shorter, more intensive rehearsal schedule**
12. **Which practice schedule was more enjoyable?**
    a. **Rehearsals once a week, for the entire term (17 weeks)**
    b. **Shorter, more intensive rehearsal schedule**
13. **How effective do you think the repertoire has been?**
    a. **The repertoire has been mostly challenging, even so challenging that I had trouble keeping up.**
    b. **The repertoire has been reasonably challenging, there were enough challenges for me.**
    c. **The repertoire was too easy, not interesting.**
14. **Any other comments on the repertoire: what was especially fun, or didn't really work?**
15. **What did you particularly enjoy about the rehearsals?**
16. **What has been your biggest challenge in rehearsals?**
17. **How enjoyable was improvisation the first time it was used in rehearsals? (scale from 1: completely unenjoyable to 5: I was excited from the beginning)**
18. **Did improvising become more enjoyable the more it was used in rehearsals? (scale from 1: no change at all to 5: became much more enjoyable)**
19. **How effectively did the improvisatory exercises in general help you to prepare for the (scale from 1: Not at all, possibly hurt to 5: helped a great deal)**
    a. **And the rhythmic exercises?**
    b. **Listening exercises: 'Circle of A', Finding notes, Bending.**
    c. **Organized improvisation: Directed improvisation, improvising over a precomposed piece.**
    d. **Free improvisation?**

e. **More traditional rehearsal techniques such as part rehearsals, playing through pieces?**
f. **Extended techniques such as overtones, different articulations, etc.**
g. **Exercises on just the headjoint**
h. **Listening/Intonation exercises**
i. **Counting/entrance exercises**
j. **Finger Technique**
k. **Rhythm**

Linnunlaulu Concert Performance

20. **How much did you enjoy this performance? (Note: I want to know how much you enjoyed the performance, not how well you think you performed) scale 1-5**
21. **How well did you feel prepared for the concert? Scale 1-5**
22. **Did you feel there were enough rehearsals to prepare for the concert? Scale 1-5**
23. **What was your overall impression of the concert performance?**
24. **Do you plan on continuing to perform with the HHO?**
25. **What type of activities would you like to see from the HHO besides rehearsals and performances?**
    a. **Private flute lessons**
    b. **Theory lessons**
    c. **Masterclasses/lectures**
    d. **Travel**
    e. **Other (explain)**
26. **Do you have any other feedback for the orchestra?**
27. **Do you have other personal goals or wishes as a musician?**

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for the Professional Flute Teachers participating in the *Linnunlaulu* concert cycle

Helsingin Huiluorkesteri (Helsinki Flute Orchestra) concert period review – Teachers

1. What was your overall impression of the HHO rehearsals?
2. Have you taught or worked with non-professional adult musicians before?
    a. Explain how you have worked with non-professional adult musicians.
3. Have you used improvisation as a teaching tool with adults before this project?
4. After your experience in this project, do you think you will begin to use improvisation or improvisatory exercises with your adult students, or increase their use?
5. Have you used extended flute techniques as a teaching tool with non-professional adult students before?
6. After your experience with this project, do you think you will start or increase the use of extended flute techniques as a teaching tool with non-professional adult students?
    a. Please explain more? (How have you used extended techniques before this project, how do you think you will use them after?)
7. Do you think you would be more likely to work with non-professional adult flutists after your experience in this project?

The next few questions refer to your work with younger students:

8. Have you included improvisation in your own teaching?
    a. Explain why you have or have not used improvisation as a teaching tool
9. Have you used extended techniques in your own teaching?
    a. Explain why you have or have not used extended techniques as a teaching tool
10. After your experience here, do you think you will increase the use of improvisation and/or extended techniques in your teaching?
11. Can you tell me what you have learned in this period that you plan to take back to your own teaching?

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