

The musician as researcher: Enhancing the role of music in local communities through research

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A wide field yet to be explored

Communities

- Refugees, inmates, homeless people, people living in urban or rural areas, older adults

Contents

- Singing, group music making, songwriting, listening to music

Methodologies

- Interviews, focus groups, field notes, questionnaires, physiological measurements

Impact

- Positive effects on dimensions related to health and wellbeing
- Positive effects on providers (Ascenso, 2016; Dons, 2019; Gande & Kruse-Weber, 2017; Perkins et al., 2015; Smilde et al., 2019; Triantafyllaki et al., 2012)

Art for Ages

- Department of Research and Development, Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana, Lugano (Switzerland)
- Centre for Performance Science, Royal College of Music (London)
- Centre of Competence on Ageing (Manno, Switzerland)
- Department of Business Economics, Health and Social Care, University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Southern Switzerland (Manno, Switzerland)
- Residents in nursing home and music university students
- 10-week group music making programme
- Singing and drumming
- Classical, jazz, pop, folk, world music



The elective seminar linked to Art for Ages

Preliminary training

- Professor in sociology
- Lecturer in nursing science
- Music university teacher

Ageing processes from sociological and medical perspectives (2 hours)

Introduction to repertoires and instruments for group music making in nursing homes (4 hours)

10 Music sessions in nursing homes including

Rehearsal (60')

Group music making with residents (45')

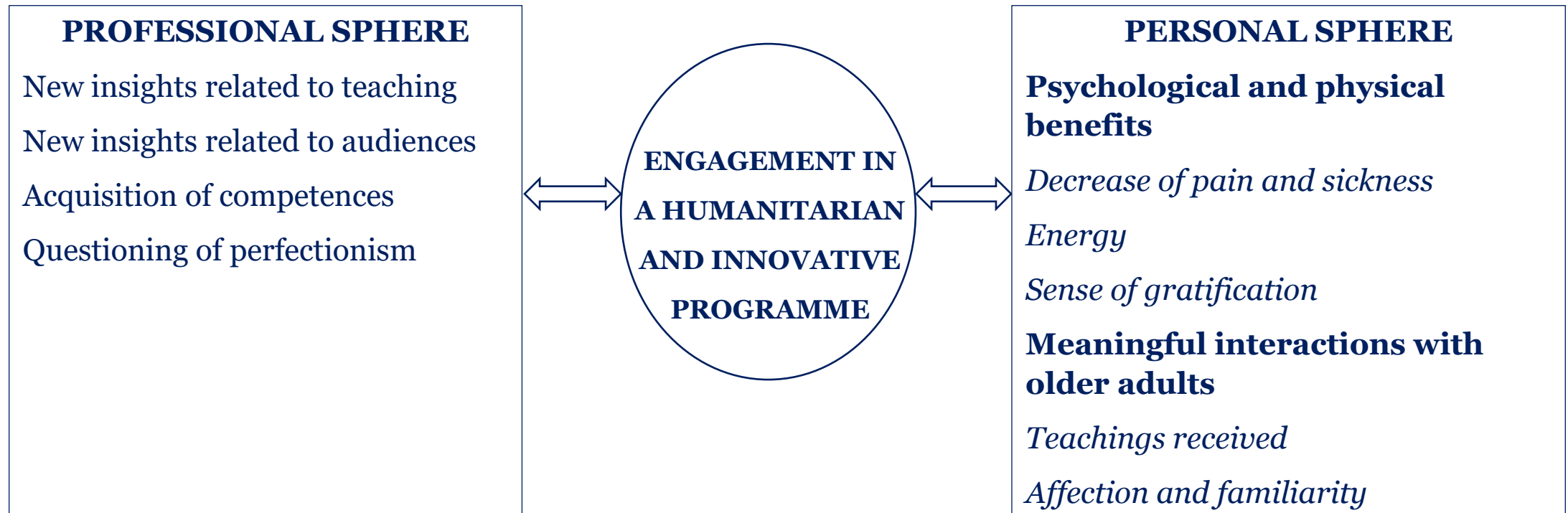
Debriefing (30'-60')

Art for Ages

- 9 students
 - 2 semi-structured interviews
 - Weekly oral diary
- Research questions:
 - How do higher education music students experience group music making activities in nursing homes?
 - What effects on their health, wellbeing and career preparation do they perceive as a result of doing these activities?



Art for Ages: the impact on students



I experienced it as being a bit like voluntary work: an environment of higher music education allowed me to have this experience and for me it was a wonderful experience.

(Carol, 24, MAS in Performance)

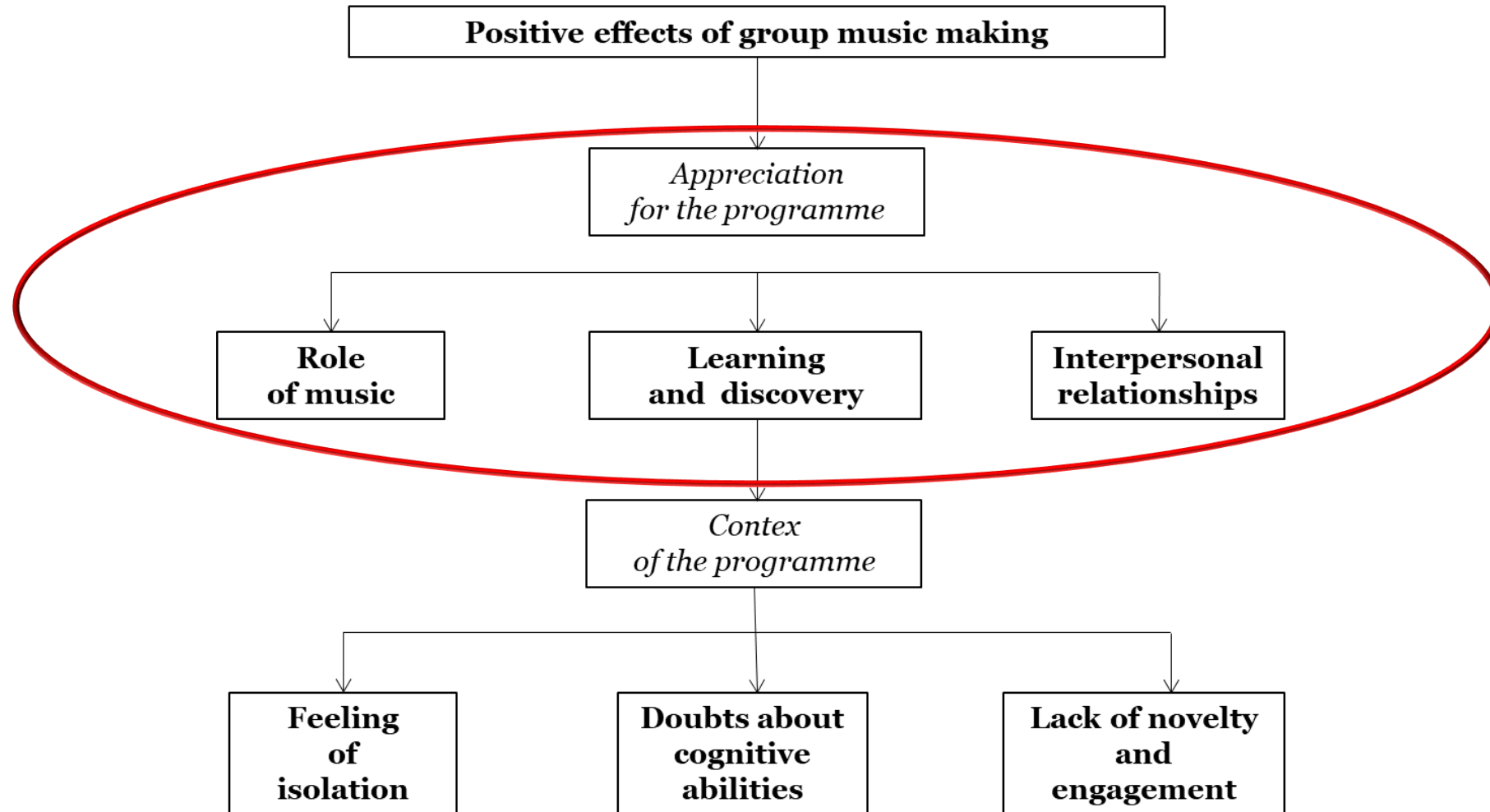
Many times when we are practising, we are only focused on the difficulties and on the huge pressure we have. [...] I used to go [into the nursing home] and would feel more relaxed at the end as I saw that I did something useful with music.

(Lisa, 24, MA in Performance)

All morning I didn't feel physically well, and I thought I should stay home and rest. Instead, after the session I felt so much energy, I felt much better physically and mentally, very active and happy [...]. I think that these activities not only improve the wellbeing of the residents but also our wellbeing.

(Natasha, 24, MA in performance)

Art for Ages: the perspective of residents





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Music and Words: features and training

- Focus on listening to live performances
- Balance between familiar and unfamiliar repertoires
- Space to make comments, ask questions, and share emotions and memories triggered by music
- Music in the community: concepts and approaches (2 hours)
- Ageing processes from sociological and medical perspectives (2 hours)
- Individual tutoring (4 hours)

Concluding remarks

- In what ways artistic research can inform community-based musical activities?
- Which areas of this field should be investigated more in depth?
- How to create learning environments able to strengthen musicians' role in local communities?

The importance of developing interdisciplinary collaborations

- Methodological and extra-musical competences
- Contexts and approaches
- Artistic contents

The “musicians as makers in society”

...we look toward a partnering of artistic and social values in order to enable HME to respond dynamically to societal need, and to continue to engage with the depth and integrity of established musical traditions and their craft.

(Gaunt et al., 2021, p. 1)



Musicians as “Makers in Society”: A Conceptual Foundation for Contemporary Professional Higher Music Education

Helena Gaunt^{1*}, Celia Duffy², Ana Coric^{3†}, Isabel R. González Delgado^{4†}, Linda Messas^{5†}, Oleksandr Pryimenko^{6†} and Henrik Sveidahl^{7†}

The potential of music on health and wellbeing

*Because they operate simultaneously on the individual and social, as well as physical and mental, levels, **arts-based health interventions** are uniquely placed to address the full complexity of the challenges that **being healthy and well** are increasingly recognized to present.*

(Fancourt & Finn, 2019, p. 6)



To conclude

It woke me up. It led me to remember why I make music: it's to be in front of other people who are looking at you, and you have to give them a glimpse of something beautiful.

(Ellen, 22, MA in Pedagogy)

Everything related to art and able to reach your hearth is always welcome. If we take art away from life, what's left?

(Tina, 86)

Publications

- Paolantonio, P., Cavalli, S., Biasutti, M., Eiholzer, H., Williamon, A. (in review). Building community through higher music education: A training program for facilitating musical engagement among older adults. *Frontiers in Psychology*
- Paolantonio, P., Cavalli, S., Biasutti, M., & Williamon, A. (2022). Group music making in nursing homes: Investigating the experience of higher education music students. *International Journal of Community Music*, 15(1), 113-140, doi.org/10.1386/ijcm_00054_1
- Paolantonio, P., Pedrazzani, C., Cavalli, S., & Williamon, A. (2021). Music in the life of nursing home residents. *Arts & Health*, doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2021.1942938
- Paolantonio, P., Cavalli, S., Biasutti, M., Pedrazzani, C., & Williamon, A. (2020). Art for ages: The effects of group music making on the wellbeing of nursing home residents. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.575161

THANK YOU!
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