

### **Moving Towards Resilience**

#### **Joint Creation through Music & Movement for Local, Refugee and Immigrant Children**

In an era of constant change and threats from political conflicts, viruses and climate change, children are among the most seriously impacted, due to their youthfulness and lack of social power (UNHCR, 2022). While many seek refuge in European countries hoping for a better future, their struggle often continues, facing difficulties at school, within peer community and their broader social circle. Music has proven to act as a powerful tool to stimulate empowerment, and social bonding (Kenny, 2016).

The aim of this research is to grow as a teaching artist through the development of research-based practices that use the “power of music” to have a meaningful social impact. The starting point is the idea that the integration of joint music making and moving together, can help to build resilience (Nijs & Nicolaou, 2021). The focus lies on the role of bodily movement in music education for groups of local, newly arrived immigrant and refugee children. The following research questions encompass this aim:

*What artistic and educational competencies are needed to design empowering movement-based musical activities? What is the role of co-creation in a child-centered methodology? How can the participatory design of such activities be used to promote resilience?*

The research unfolds in two fronts: first, the development of my teaching artistry through practice-based research, and second, investigating the potential of the participatory aspect in designing movement-based musical activities as a means to promote resilience.

I will present the artistic-pedagogical framework that consists of workshops for children to engage in a creative process using music, movement, composition and improvisation (Nicolaou et al., 2023; Marsh, 2017). These workshops aim to promote a safe space for the children to express their interests in music, welcome their musical memories and teach them to approach the multiplicity of sound and movement with an open mind by incorporating Acoustic Ecology (Etmektsoglou et al., 2019). They include activities such as collective improvisation, body percussion, instant composing, graphic scores, soundwalks and movement-based activities supported by the Laban Bartenieff Movement System (LBMS). The presentation will include audiovisual excerpts from conducted workshops, serving as tangible illustrations of this practice-led research.

#### **References**

- Etmektsoglou, I., Dionyssiou, Z., & Mniestris, A. (2019). *A sound-based education for listening, appreciating and co-creating the soundscapes we live in*. Electroacoustic Music Research and Applications Laboratory, Department of Music Studies, Ionian University. ISBN: 978-960-7260-67-3.
- Kenny, A. (2016). *Communities of musical practice* (1st ed.). Routledge.  
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- Marsh, K. (2017). Creating bridges: music, play and well-being in the lives of refugee and immigrant children and young people. *Music Education Research*, 19(1), 60–73.

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Parallel Session

- Nicolaou, G., Nijs, L., & Van Petegem, P. (2023). Moving in musicking: the evolving pedagogical practice of the artist-facilitator within asylum seeker centers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1177355. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1177355>
- Nijs, L., & Nicolaou, G. (2021). Flourishing in Resonance: Joint resilience building through music and motion. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 666702.
- UNHCR. (2022). Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2021. *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. Available online at: <https://doi.org/www.unhcr.org/62a9d1494/global-trends-report-2021>.



**Georgia Nicolaou**  
**Royal Conservatoire Antwerp – AP University College  
& University of Antwerp (Antwerp, Belgium)**  
**[georgia.nicolaou@ap.be](mailto:georgia.nicolaou@ap.be)**

Georgia Nicolaou (1990) is a Cypriot composer, researcher and educator based in the Netherlands. She is a PhD candidate at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp and University of Antwerp. She received a scholarship within the ERC CoG Grant "MUTE - Soundscapes of Trauma: Music, Sound and the Ethics of Witnessing". N.101002720 (Principal Investigator: Anna Papaeti) to carry out practice-led research with unaccompanied refugee minors in Athens, Greece. Her research focuses on Community Music, Embodied Music Pedagogy and Child-centred Methodology.

She previously studied Composition (BMus & MMus) at Codarts University of the Arts in Rotterdam, Utrecht Conservatory and Ionian University in Corfu, Greece. Besides, she is currently enrolled in the Certification Program of Laban/Bartenieff Movement Studies at EMOVE Institute, and she works as a music and movement teacher and performer for the Belgian organization Musica Impulscentrum. Moreover, she is an acclaimed composer, pianist, and singer. Her works have been performed in prestigious music festivals, such as Operadagen Rotterdam, November Music, Transit and Gaudeamus among others.

**Website:** [www.georgianicolaou.com](http://www.georgianicolaou.com)

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**PhD Supervisors:** Prof. dr. Peter van Petegem (University of Antwerp), Prof. dr. Luc Nijs (University of Luxembourg), dr. Bob Selderslaghs (Royal Conservatoire Antwerp – AP University College)