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Case Study: **Ethno Denmark**

Building Bridges and Making Connections:
Personal Encounters at Ethno Denmark, 2019

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ETHNO
RESEARCH

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Pilot Case Studies
July–August 2019

During July to August 2019, Ethno Research commissioned seven ethnographic case studies at camps located in Europe and the Nordic countries. The purpose was:

1. to ascertain an approach to the fieldwork that would produce discrete stand-alone documents reflecting the uniqueness of each site whilst providing a format to extract, analyze, and understand key themes across multiple sites;

2. to construct an appropriate ethics procedure;

3. to publish and disseminate seven individual case studies and one meta-analysis.

Reflective of the Ethno Camps, the researchers were multicultural in their representation hailing from Croatia, Estonia, France, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, and the UK. The final reports have gone through a light touch editing process and are conceived as a collective work that reflects different languages and different styles of expression. In December 2019, all the researchers met in York, UK, to discuss the experience and to help the core team with planning the next phase. The reports were used as a springboard to determine future strategies surrounding approaches to research methodologies, key questioning, and thematic analysis.

The 3-year Ethno Research project, led by the International Centre for Community Music (ICCM) at York St John University in collaboration with JM International (JMI), is made possible through a grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Music-making, as a human endeavour, can enable deep-rooted connections across profound social and cultural barriers. This discrete case study examines how, with clearly defined facilitation methods that respect individual autonomy, Ethno Denmark 2019 provided a framework in which participants could develop significant connections to themselves and others within the context of a structured music-making experience.

Themes emerging from the data collection, suggest that the foundational community music principles of 'welcome' and 'hospitality' (Higgins, 2012) are crucial to the development of strong interpersonal and musical connections. Within the safe enclosure of a welcoming and hospitable space, musical connections, connections with others and connections to self could be formed at a depth and intensity heightened by the suspension of the every-day within the camp's fixed boundary lines.

The invitation into the Ethno experience was offered by a strong and growing network of previous Ethno participants. Friendship was at the core of these invitations, and this made a significant difference to the 'home from home' environment the participants spoke of, generously facilitated by the host family who embodied hospitality in their interactions with their guests.

As participants engaged in music-making with one another, the connection to the music enhanced understanding of both themselves and others. The sharing of songs enabled deep connection to cultural heritage, with a generosity that created bonds between participants and increased intercultural understanding. The artistic leaders' skilful and sensitive facilitation of peer-to-peer learning gifted an autonomy to participants where personal confidence and agency could be developed. Within the safety of a structured musical space, friendships were formed and nurtured, accelerated in their openness by the intensity of living together. And finally, increased connection to self was identified with a greater understanding of cultural, musical and personal identity.

Building Bridges and Making Connections:
Personal Encounters at Ethno Denmark, 2019

INTRODUCTION

As a project that aims to embrace values of tolerance, respect, peace-building, collaboration, and mutual understanding, Ethno-World is a cross-cultural platform for the development of musicianship in young people, using peer-to-peer learning in the folk tradition as a vehicle for 'Building of confidence and inspiring participants to further develop their musical and creative development' (ethno-world.org). Ethno-World facilitators explicitly use a non-formal pedagogical approach in their practice, encouraging a sharing of songs from the participants, as well as technical musicianship and skills development.

The purpose of this discrete case study, focusing on Ethno Denmark 2019, is to explore two lines of enquiry. These follow the assertion that facilitation of participants' voice develops individual expression and agency and creates strong and lasting connections between 'self' and 'other' within the context of the welcoming and hospitable music-making 'habitus' of an Ethno experience.

The following questions guided explorations for this case study:

1) What approach(es) to music making enables a deep sense of connection to the voice and facilitates a deeper understanding of self?

2) How can the notion of voice be re-claimed where it has become disconnected from identity?

Using ethnographic research strategy and mixed-methods data collection with application of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), this case study will present the emerging themes arising from the questions and situate them within the context of supporting literature to give a solid framework for analysis.

Camp Overview

Against the backdrop of a growing folk-revival amongst young people in Denmark, Ethno Denmark held its first camp in the summer of 2010. Running for four years, hosted at different venues and with a shifting core team, the original manifestation of the camp lacked stability and direction, and in 2015, the organisation of the project broke down and the camp was cancelled.

A former participant of Ethno Denmark, Jonas, had been involved from the start and had a growing vision for the project resting on the principle that stability was key to growth. In 2016 he took over the organisation of the camp, forming a new collaboration with the Danish Youth Council, and creating a strong partnership with Culturarte, a Music School in Køng, Glamsbjerg in the west of Funen, Denmark. These two collaborations meant greater stability in funding, a secure venue, and, as Jonas said in interview, 'it saves so much more energy for us 'cause we are a small team, that we have a stable relationship to a host' (Jonas, interview, July 27, 2019).

The two other organisers are Freya, who came on the project in 2018, and Carlotta, who deals with the finances. As a team, they are very clear about roles and maintaining sustainability. In interview, Jonas said of his vision for the camp:

> **[It's] very important when […] participants from all over the world can choose from so many different […] camps, that you are very clear with your message and what you promise them, and this has created […] this sense of security, for the future when you know what you're working for and when you know exactly what you want to have (Jonas, interview, July 27, 2019).**

The mutually supportive and hospitable environment provided by the host family at the Music School, is a key component of Ethno Denmark as it now runs. Jonas commented positively on this relationship; '[It's] just getting better and better, because they have the same vision about music and living and letting live' (Jonas, interview, July 27, 2019).

In addition to this, the organisers were clear that their structures need to support individual participants' autonomy and 'voice' and offer a safe space in which skills development can be nurtured. This necessitates a facilitation style that is not directive, but offers guidance where needed and, in Jonas's words, 'the artistic leaders facilitate an environment where everybody gets to shine' (Jonas, interview, July 27, 2019).

Participants

Participants of Ethno Demnark, 2019, were representative of seventeen different nationalities. Twenty-four of the thirty participants had been to Ethno camps before, some to as many as eleven different sites. In addition to the two organisers, there were four artistic leaders, the resident family of Cultutarte, and a group of local volunteers to complete the team.

Unusual to Ethno camps, Ethno Denmark is less strict on age limit; there were one or two older participants, and participants who had come with their families. Having a mix of ages and generations represented by not only the hosts, but by participants, created a unique 'family' environment that many of the participants commented on. It is interesting to note here that many Ethnos are a lot more prescriptive about the age limit for attendance. There are some clear advantages in this, but also some potential tensions with community music practice, where inclusion and diversity are celebrated.

Method

An ethnographic research method necessitated immersion into the Ethno Denmark experience. I spent six days, between July 26–31, living with and observing the participants in their music-making and free-leisure time. It was important to give enough time to orientation, both for me and for the participants, getting to know individuals informally so as to enable a level of trust and safety where interviews could be conducted and not seen as any kind of threat.

Specific data collection included participant observation, one-to-one interviews, focus groups, field notes, and digital documentation, including visual images and recordings. I created semi-structured interview questions based on the two lines of enquiry, and interviewed ten of the participants during the camp, all of whom had shared and taught a traditional song with the group. I also interviewed the organisers and artistic leaders.

It was also possible to analyse participant data using the spreadsheet the organisers had set up – this gave a clear overview of the camp demographic, who was there, what nationalities were represented, how participants had heard about Ethno and whether they had been to previous camps.

Through the detailed process of coding, transcribed data was analysed and key themes identified as connected to the two lines of enquiry as described above. All interviewees are anonymized and pseudonyms will be used throughout.

In analysis of the initial codes, and construction of themes connected to the two lines of enquiry, four strong themes to emerge were Welcome and Hospitality, Connection to the Music, Connection to Others and Connection to Self and during the following sections, I will introduce and discuss each theme in turn in light of the collected data.

Figure 1: Personal Encounters
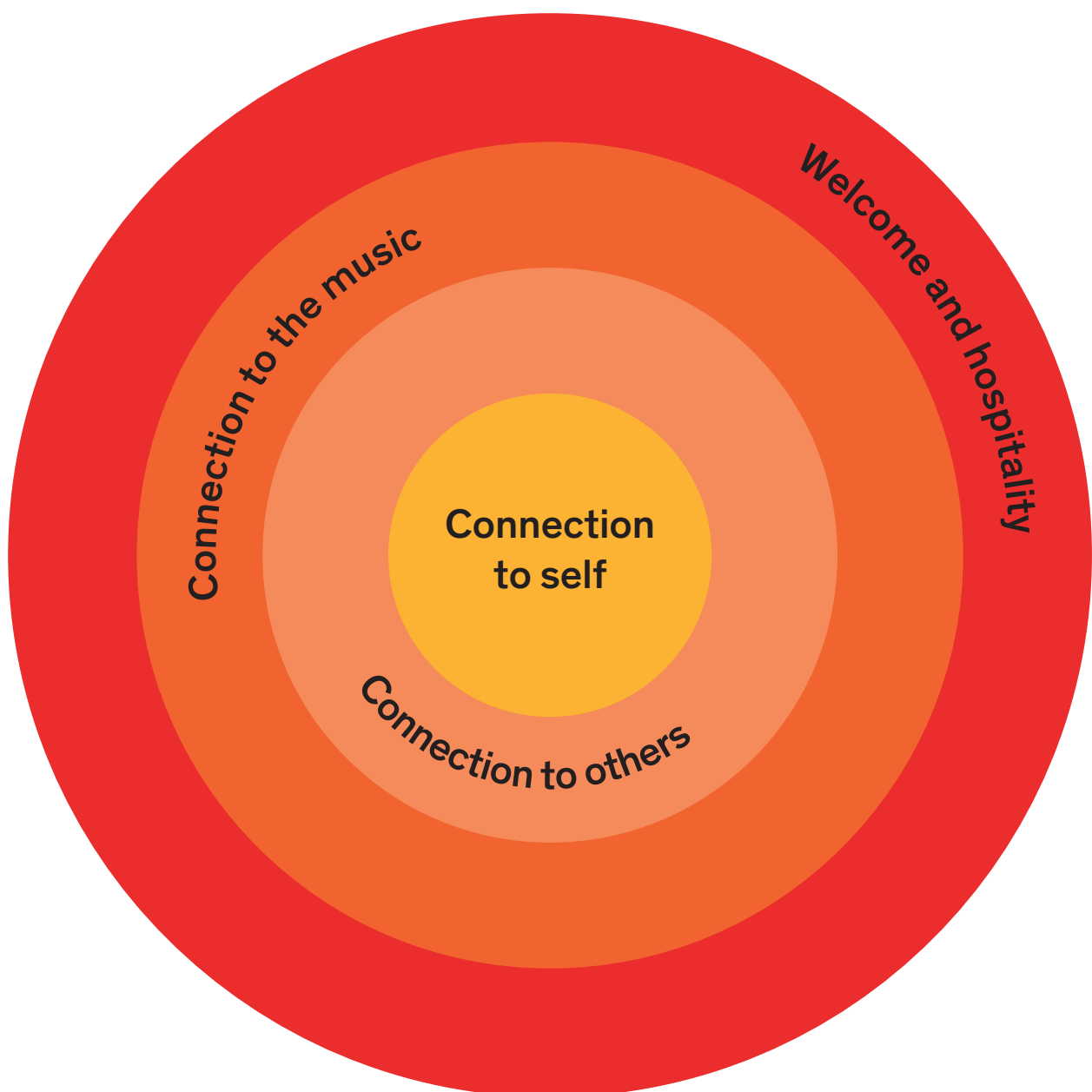
WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY

The Invitation

Every participant interviewed spoke of their initiation into the Ethno community as invited guests, whether as a first-time participant to Ethno Denmark, or a seasoned Ethno-goer. As exampled by one participant; 'So when the forms came I just randomly applied, not knowing much about Ethno, although I have friends who have been going to Ethno for many years […] – [they] would always wish me, "you should come to an Ethno, you should really do"' (Hamsika, interview, July 30, 2019).

This recurring theme was evidenced further by other participants: 'So my friend who was studying at the folk department in the conservatory, she asked me to join this camp in Uganda' (Clara, interview, July 31, 2019).

What was also apparent was the growing network of Ethno participants and their interweaving connections to one another. Where a connection had not yet been made, an invitation to a hospitable encounter was initiated. As an example of this, prior to the camp and on arrival at the train station in Odense, I witnessed a group of Ethno participants in fervent discussion. It was clear that there was a welcoming and inclusive approach in addressing any strangers in the group and this enabled those 'on the outside' to be invited in to the Ethno community.

Another aspect of the cruciality of the invitation was spoken of by a participant who had previously been to a much larger Ethno camp and had found the experience so overwhelming she had not been able to go back the following year. She explains what happened:

> I took another chance in Ethno Estonia and then I met some really great people, […] so we met last year in Ethno Estonia and that's kind of, I got the first Ethno experience, the first time I was like 'wow'. Now I'm back in the spirit and really thinking of doing many, many more Ethnos (Aleksandra, interview, July 30, 2019).

Having built significant friendships, she was then invited by them to come to Ethno Denmark this year, accepted the invitation, and, as a result, is now able to conceive of Ethno as a significant feature of her life.

This example does raise the question of whether each and every Ethno encounter is an open and hospitable one for participants. It was interesting that one of the organisers commented that it can be hard to find your place at Ethno if you are more introverted.

That had certainly been his experience and tied in with what a few of the participants spoke of in relation to experiencing some of the larger camps. However, the building of community within the structures of music-making encounters in Ethno Denmark, especially given the smaller number of participants, certainly seemed to enable the less outgoing personalities to feel welcomed.

Home from Home

The theme of 'Home from Home' arose many times at Ethno Denmark. One participant attributed this feeling very specifically to location:

> [What] kind of brought me back was that […] at Denmark you're […] in a family home on a family property. And […] because the family […] cook for us and we learn tunes from them and that kind of thing, you feel very much part of the place you're staying (Fionn, interview, July 30, 2019).

The hospitality evidenced by the family's involvement in providing accommodation and meals for the participants is clear, and also the importance of their sharing in the music-making experiences. In speaking of the host venue, Jonas commented, '[In] general we felt at home immediately and I think the participants did' (Jonas, interview, July 27, 2019). One of the participants also commented, 'But [it's] just like beautiful, to have the family and the children running round the space is really nice with nature all round. [You] feel at home, I think that's it. You could live here' (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019).

The shared sleeping accommodation also contributes to the sense of 'family' atmosphere and emotional intensity of a 'home' environment: 'And also we live so closely together during this week, this intense week so everyone gets really close also' (Erika, interview, July 30, 2019). However, this close-quarters living was not without its problems, and during the week it was clear that there was a level of endurance and resilience participants had to build. At moments sleep deprivation seemed to threaten the emotional stability for some and cause tensions, however, these were dealt with constructively by the organisers.

The sense in which participants could let go of providing for their physical comforts during the week, had almost a child-like quality: 'And [it's] somehow very relaxing like 'cause you can just, I mean you have some responsibilities, but then you don't have to take care of like what am I going to eat and what am I going to do' (Anja, interview, July 30, 2019). To be able to be reliant on others for providing meals and not worry about day-to-day practicalities, seemed to facilitate this sense of 'home from home'.

One participant also explained how the positive interpersonal interactions (including musical interactions) during the camp helped his experience of those feelings:

> **Yeah, I feel at home here because […] we play all the time music and people are very friendly, smiley, kind here, you cannot find this network in daily life because and I was thinking about that Irish the life becomes like Ethno, because people and music, we have it all the time here (Omer, interview, July 29, 2019).**

It is interesting to note the suggested disconnect from 'daily life', that somehow the Ethno experience is not something that can be found outside of the camp. It could be important to continue to dig into this notion with future research, picking apart whether or not this disconnect is inherently positive or not, and whether elements of the Ethno experience can be translated into the every day.

The 'Spirit' of Ethno Denmark

In conversation with one of the organisers, she spoke of the 'spirit' of Ethno Denmark and that while Ethno provides the frame, each Ethno site is unique. This concept seemed to resonate deeply with participants when questioned about their interpretation of the 'spirit' of Ethno Denmark. One commented very clearly that Ethno is more than just a music-making experience and that the social interaction is more important than the music-making. Having been to previous Ethno camps, she also commented, 'Here I don't know, I feel very relaxed' (Mariana, interview, July 29, 2019).

The sense of being 'chilled', 'relaxed', 'calm' was a reoccurring theme. When asked to describe the 'spirit' of Ethno Denmark, one participant responded, 'That it's really cosy – cosy is the first word that comes into my mind, and like with an inner calmness, like it's not as crazy as other Ethnos are, it's not as emotional as others' (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019).

The organisers had obviously reflected carefully on how they wanted the camp to run, and what structures needed to be put in place in order to facilitate a relaxed, supportive and inclusive space. As Freya commented, 'One thing that we have discussed a lot the past year that I find very important is that we have some idea ourselves about what kind of Ethno we want to do, and what kind of vibe we want to give and what kind of atmosphere it's going to be' (Freya, interview, July 27, 2019).

The host family were also mentioned in relation to their contribution to the positive atmosphere of the camp:

> We support each other in what we want from life basically, the things they are doing confirming what we have in mind and the other way around. And they are very extraordinary in the sense that they have this very big family and they have this open house almost, for several foster children. They just seem to have so much abundance of energy and so much love' (Jonas, interview, July 27, 2019).

This sense of 'open house', 'energy' and 'love' very tangibly permeated the camp and the wonderful first meal shared together with the entire Ethno community, hosted by the family, was a powerful gesture demonstrating these ideals.

CONNECTION TO THE MUSIC

The Songs and Their Stories

In giving voice to individual participants as they share their cultural heritage and traditions, the music-making experience at Ethno is set up to encourage a new generation of folk musicians so that songs of the past will not get lost. As one participant explained, '[…] I feel it gets documented in a nice way and it goes in an archive and it spreads their culture and the music even more. Because in India it's like a lot of the old music has been lost […]' (Hamsika, interview, July 30, 2019).

In sharing these traditions, the music continues to live, evolve and grow at Ethno camps, keeping participants closely connected to the contexts in which they were originally played, as expanded on in the following quotation; 'Centering the histories and contexts of musics helps to reclaim appropriated music and honor any erased history' (Hess, 2019, p.80).

Participants are respectful of these traditions and often bring songs that are very meaningful to them, as one participant shared:

> This song is about peace – about stop the wars and making friendships around the world. But this is meaningful song because this composer killed by facist people in 1993 in Turkey, with other very intellectual, open-minded people. I think thirty-five people died there, and Turkish government didn't do anything about this happening, this attack.

> [It] was a meeting between very different religions Turkish people, there was […] other religions, artists and musicians, dancers, writers, poem writers, […] they were very important for direction of Turkey. Turkey could be more modern country, but with these attacks, direction of Turkey changed […]. And he died there but his song is about peace, his song is very meaningful for me' (Omer, interview, July 29, 2019)[i].

Omer went on to explain that, 'In sharing a song from my country in Ethno or other communities, it's important that the song should have something from me … I should show capacity of my instrument or the song […] should show something from my identity' (Omer, interview, July, 2019). **Sharing a song that had such a strong personal connection to him was like providing an intimate window into his cultural and personal identity, and participants commented on how they had been moved to tears as he shared not only the beautiful melody but also the story it represented.**

Link to Video 1: Omer's Song. Video, Catherine Birch. www.ethnoresearch.org/birch-video-1-omers-song

As Omer said:

> [When] I talk about the song I felt very emotional […] and I think also people felt it very well because people also said me I was almost cry with me. Also I was almost cry and hearing this song with other instruments from different countries, it's really awesome! (Omer, interview July 29, 2019).

One explanation for the resonances and connections experienced by participants in this instance, is that, 'Exploring identity […] also involves considering where one's experience connects to the experiences of different groups. When youth share their stories musically, educators facilitate making connections to societal narratives or social movements that resonate across identities' (Hess, 2019, pp. 93–94).

Participants were asked whether they felt anything was lost in the sharing of their song, but the responses were overwhelmingly that they only gained. Omer said, '[I felt] positive, I felt like that I it grows up with me and with my friends' (Omer, interview, July 29, 2019). Another participant commented, 'I think it's more precious to see what we as a mixed group can make it sound like […]' (Alma, interview, July 30, 2019).

Link to Video 2: It grows up with me and my friends. Video, Catherine Birch. www.ethnoresearch.org/birch-video-2-it-grows-up

However, one participant commented on the potential loss of accuracy in pronunciation:

> […] I think that probably some aspect of the pronunciation of things that gets lost, but that's probably already because I'm not a native speaker, or not a speaker at all, that probably already kind of got lost before I got the tune anyway. So I think it's a bit different in this context to someone who's teaching their own language and at some point you kind of have to just accept the way people are pronouncing something if it's a very foreign sound for them' (Eamon, interview, July 30, 2019).

This does raise some questions around whether the sharing of musical heritage at Ethno camps needs an accuracy in presentation in order to avoid cultural appropriation. As Hess, 2019, explains: 'Translation, and engaging with language in the process, enriches musical experiences and fosters meaning-making. In its own way, grappling with language facilitates connecting to the communities from which different musics emerge' (p.74). Without this 'grappling' with language, is there a danger that the music produced during an Ethno camp lacks authenticity and actually moves people further away from their distinct cultural connections?

Finally, it was clear from the interviews that the participants viewed singing together as a strong connecting force. One participant commented that, '[Singing] for me […] in this case [is] the best way also to connect people […] So that's why I think singing it's so powerful in fact' (Mariana, interview, July 29, 2019)[ii]. Another participant reiterated this, stating that, '[Singing] is something that really connects people, more I think than playing' (Aleksandra, interview, July 30, 2019).

Link to Video 3: The Power of Singing Together. Video, Catherine Birch. www.ethnoresearch.org/birch-video-3-singing-together

Folk Music as 'Healing'

Participants spoke of forming deep connections to folk music. One participant described her difficult relationship to the classical music tradition she grew up with:

> [In] classical music it's so much about […] perfectionism, about playing the whole thing and being in time, being in tune, not doing anything variated but like go through with the thing and then Ethno music you can just do something and it's gonna be fine […] It almost, I almost got on the point of not wanting to play music any more and then I discovered folk music more for myself and I stick to it (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019).

One of the artistic leaders had a similar cross-over from classical to folk. Having achieved a very high level of performance on the violin, she found her arms were excruciatingly painful whenever she tried to play. She had to stop performing for a period of months but was then invited to Ethno Uganda by a friend. Sceptical of how she would engage in the experience, she attended and in her own words, 'And then I realised, when I play without sheet music, there was no pain at all' (Clara, interview, July 31, 2019). Clara described that profound experience as the moment she became a folk musician and spoke of the 'healing' she has experienced as a result of such a radical change in musical identity.

Another participant mentioned 'healing' in relation to the growing connections and openness he had experienced at Ethno; 'I guess you start to get more comfortable with that feeling, or with not […] being self-conscious […] and it's sort of just like a […] healing atmosphere in a way' (Fionn, interview, July 30, 2019).

As a final consideration, it was clear that the participatory and inclusive nature of working with traditional music created a free and open space to musically 'be'. The evening jamming and improvisation sessions became longer and of greater importance during the week, developing and enriching the musical bonds between participants. Free improvisation enabled participants to '[…] explore their strengths and ideas in a mutually supportive space, allowing them to develop their musical voices' (Hess, 2019, p.93). In this non-hierarchical, non-judgemental environment, participants could engage in group music-making with no fixed agenda and with mutual support and enjoyment being strong connecting factors. '[I could] also jam and improvise a lot without having to fear that I might sing something wrong or my voice might crack' (Hamsika, interview, July 30, 2019).

Facilitation Methods

At the heart of Ethno pedagogy is the role of the artistic leader. The team are dedicated to validating each of the participants' contributions, enabling strong participant autonomy and encouraging democratic exchange through peer-to-peer learning. As Hess (2019) explains, 'Supportive environments are crucial for creativity' (p.100), thereby enabling deeper connections to form within the group.

Furthermore, 'At the heart of non-formal pedagogy […] is recognition of the validity of that person's voice, and developing musical mechanisms by which to understand, amplify and validate that voice' (Mullen and Deane, 2018: p. 187). This process of 'recognition' was crucial to the artistic leaders. They described the necessity of spending time with participants, carefully listening as a way of demonstrating the 'validity' they were giving to

individual voices. In 'attentive' and 'purposive' listening (Green, 2001) the artistic leaders could guide the creative process more effectively on behalf of the participants. Clara explains this process:

> [In] the first days we, the artistic leading team, have an initial talk with the delegations and some have just brought one song and said 'we want to teach this'. And then we listen to it and then we say, 'fine, is there anything we can help you with?' or 'did you have any ideas for arrangement?' […] and then we just ask questions like this to figure out how strong they are and if they have experience with teaching and get a feeling of how it would be in the workshop; if we should help them a lot with the melody (Clara, interview, July 31, 2019).

Clara also referred to the songs the participants brought and her open approach to their choices; '[Instantly] I was like ok I'm not going to be like an Ethno police and be like "no this is not traditional music so please find something more authentic"' (Clara, interview, July 31, 2019). This also enabled participants to feel more connected to the music, because they were given creative freedom, not only in the choice of song to present, but also in the arrangement of it. As one participant put it:

> I've never known something to be shot down like 'no you can't talk'; […] the only situation is when it's really crunch time, and things have to be […] set in stone and know that the band can actually perform the music (Fionn, interview, July 30, 2019).

This is not necessarily the case at other Ethno camps, and as one participant commented of her experience at Ethno Denmark:

> Here it's especially open, like for everyone with the open rehearsal groups, and often has been like the leaders together with a country delegation fix an arrangement, but here everyone who's interested in arranging can just join even if it's not their country. That is a pretty nice concept, I really like that (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019).

The negotiation and collaboration enabled a journeying together as the music evolved and took shape. As one of the artistic leaders reflected on her contribution to the creative process; '[Am] I adding, am I making something more full and good or am I just adding my own opinion? And […] because we opened up the arrangement settings so we have this more connections with the participants' (Jamileh, interview, July 31, 2019).

The final facilitation approach the participants commented on was that of learning the music aurally; 'I think that's one of the keys. We really don't work with the scores' (Mariana, interview, July 29, 2019).

In using this method, deeper connection to the music was facilitated, commented on by one participant as the difference between 'learning by ear' and 'learning by heart':

[When] you learn the tune, you definitely have to learn it by ear […]. But then you like memorise it by heart, maybe for me it's that. That you get a connection to the tune, you can't like immediately get the connection before you've maybe learned it so you have to learn it and then it goes to your heart (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019).

Image 1: Rehearsal in the Music School. Photo, Catherine Birch.

CONNECTION TO OTHERS

Generosity

Apparent at Ethno Denmark was an incredible sharing and generosity across social and cultural barriers, enabling a deep connection to others. Participants' generosity in both music-making and conversation, created bonds of a depth exacerbated by the intense living arrangements of the camp.

One idea responded to by participants was that of singing 'as an act of generosity' (Moser and McKay 2005, p. 125). As well as acknowledging the power of singing together, participants spoke of the part of themselves contained within the sharing of songs and the impact this had:

> [Because] in fact they will learn something from you but they will remember that you brought the song and the tune, like 'I learned this from Mariana'. So in fact of course it's […] musical […] but it's you as a person, so it's much more. It's like through music I know you better, so this is why I think it's this sharing so important (Mariana, interview, July 29, 2019).

Mariana's response that, 'It's like through music I know you better', indicates the underlying connection laid down through the sharing of songs. She also reflected, '[For] me, I like very much how we try, as you said, that we come from different parts of the world and we share something with each other' (Mariana, interview, July 29, 2019). This sharing, offering of a musical gift and offering of yourself, creates a bond between the participants, as an exchange that is given freely and welcomed in the receiving.

The musical coming together of participants is unpacked in the following quotation and offers one possible explanation of the connections formed at Ethno Denmark:

> Ensemble means 'together' in French; coming together is thus intrinsic to the concept of ensemble. The practice of ensemble creates opportunities to build relationships. Dale and Hyslop-Margison (2010) assert that enacting critical pedagogy involves fostering dialogue in ways that create open and trusting relationships between two or more people; monologues, too often the dominant discourse in schools, are closed relationships that demand centralized epistemic authority. One important aspect of dialogue is its ability to build social and emotionally caring relationships between people (p.4) (Hess, 2019, p.63).

The relationship to dialogue, both musical and social, seems to be a key feature of connectivity within the camp experience. Open dialogue, as the 'flow of meaning', enables participants to engage in mutual exchange of ideas, feelings and emotions, within the intensity of the Ethno space, thus enabling a deep connection that would not necessarily form as quickly under other circumstances. As expressed by one participant, 'But also you meet all this people and you talk about everything so […] it makes me feel more understood and connected somehow' (Aleksandra, interview, July 30, 2019).

Intercultural Understanding

'As a human practice, music always emerges from a context. Considering what it might mean to situate and contextualise musics studied in schools allows us to acknowledge the humanity present in all musical practices' (Hess, 2019, p.68).

Although speaking of formal education contexts in the US, Hess addresses a powerful concept that was present at Ethno Denmark; that of acknowledging 'the humanity present in all musical practices'. As participants shared music-making experiences with one another, they developed a deep respect and understanding of the musical, social and cultural differences present in the camp, celebrating diversity and offering a space in which cultural democracy (Graves, 2005) is experienced first-hand.

As many of the participants had travelled to Ethno Denmark from outside of the country, a unique opportunity is created in which differences in language and culture can be experienced and understood. Putnam's Social Capital (2003) unpacks the concept of 'Bridging' – connecting with others who are unlike ourselves. The connections formed at Ethno Denmark, in spite of social, cultural and language barriers, was explained by one participant as, '[It's] so nice that people here are open-minded' (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019).

Levinas encourages each to 'pay attention to the face of the other' (Levinas, 1969) and by so doing, enabling a rich and vibrant diversity in our communities. In spending time in face-to-face communication, listening deeply to one another and crossing profound barriers in doing so, helps participants to ' […] not only […] see themselves but also to connect to others who are both distant and not so distant from their realities while simultaneously recognizing the humanity present in all people and intrinsic to all musical practices' (Hess, 2019, p.81).

Link to Video 4: Paying attention to the 'face of the other'. Video, Catherine Birch. www.ethnoresearch.org/birch-video-4-paying-attention

As philosopher, Hans Georg Gadamer states, 'Knowledge is co-created on conversation; in dialogue the exchange of ideas is mutually transformative and enhances understanding of ourselves and others' (Gadamer, 1989). The 'exchange of ideas' during Ethno Denmark between participants of diverse backgrounds and cultures enabled profound associations to be built.

From Stranger to Friend

'[…] I feel kind of like I've been here for, like I've known these people for longer. And I didn't know anyone from here before I came here' (Anja, interview, July 31, 2019).

We are all involved in the 'search for human belonging' (Williams, 1985, p.76). In observing the close friendships formed at Ethno Denmark, it was apparent that the space is conducive to enabling these strong connections to be formed in a short space of time, despite some participants beginning the experience as strangers.

The creation of social cohesion was one way which seemed to accelerate the process of forming connections. Group warmups, massages, jamming sessions and shared mealtimes contributed to this, and as one participant commented, 'Like on Ethno you open up a bit more and also […] it gets really cuddly thing on Ethno often' (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019).

Another participant commented, 'And also we live so closely together during this week, this intense week so everyone gets really close also, so you get some really good […] friends for life and connections […] for future' (Erika, interview, July 30, 2019).

The following quotation goes some way to explain how, even with cultural divide, the music-making opportunities can help increase the building of social cohesion:

> **The powerful, shared music-making experiences […] seen in community music activities, religious worship, and rituals across cultures and through the ages, entrain energy and emotions, increase feelings of courage, safety, and fellowship, and build a sense of community (Stige, 2012, citing Collins, 2004) (Howell, 2018: p. 49).**

One of the participants reiterated this connection formed through music-making by stating, 'There's something about musicians being together, it's an understanding that you don't find anywhere else' (Alma, interview, July 30, 2019).

CONNECTION TO SELF

Cultural Identity

Participants voiced a strong connection to their cultural identity in their experience at Ethno Denmark. This was expressed by one participant as an emotional connection to her culture:

> For me it's like I'm not living any more in Portugal and so it's quite sentimental that someone that they don't speak Portuguese are singing a song in your mother language. […] I don't know, it makes a little bit emotions I think (Mariana, interview, July 29, 2019).

Another participant spoke of the cultural connection she felt in choosing the song:

> I had many other songs, I was not sure maybe I should choose this and then it's not the music I normally play, but I found it right actually to present this song and I find it right also for myself to […] just research more and to connect with what's like part of my country as well (Liliana, interview, July 30, 2019).

One of the artistic leaders was clear that cultural identity is intensely personal to each participant:

> Sometimes there can be this feeling. But for me […] it's so much about the individual participants, and what they, like how can we make them feel that what they bring, what they like, so your own sense of your culture is very much a personal thing (Clara, interview, July 31, 2019).

As another side to this, a different participant spoke of her difficulty to connect to the Finnish song her and another participant shared. From a minority culture on the west side of Finland, Erika grew up speaking Swedish, and identifies very clearly with her roots. As a result of this, she explained, 'I think like for me it didn't personally represent me' (Erika, interview, July 30, 2019). She also stated:

> I mean it's kind of an identity thing for me 'cause obviously as a Swedish speaker it's kind of my identity with that kind of culture. And also since we're a really small minority we kind of always fight for our rights to have our own language kind of. So yeah, I wasn't very comfortable with teaching a song in Finnish actually (Erika, interview, July 30, 2019).

When asked if she saw her identity at Ethno as distinct from her identity in every-day life, she responded:

> I mean not maybe different but I think also when you are here you kind of think about your identity more 'cause you're surrounded by many different people. And then you, when you teach a tune you want to like represent your country and yourself kind of. So then you, I think you have to like identify that also, so maybe then you think about it more than you usually do (Erika, interview, July 30, 2019).

There seemed to be differing opinions from participants around the question of their sense of identity. Some recognised that at Ethno they were able to be more 'free' and 'open' but didn't seem to be able to sustain that in their everyday lives. For other participants, they didn't see any distinction in their identity at Ethno, that they saw themselves in the same way both inside and outside of the camp.

Musical Identity

Participants highlighted a deeper connection to their musical identities through personal growth and learning. The ownership and autonomy they spoke of had a direct impact on a sense of their own value and agency, enabling a deeper connection to themselves in their lives outside of the Ethno experience.

One participant explained, 'I found my voice somehow and started to dare to sing' (Aleksandra, interview, July 30, 2019). She went on to explain;

> So having done that I started to feel confident singing in front of other people so that helped me also here to be able to sing in front of other people and to teach a song, 'cause teaching a tune is easier when you're an instrumentalist. But trying to teach a song when you don't really feel as a singer, but starting to find your way in singing so it was a nice experience (Aleksandra, interview, July 30, 2019).

Another idea reiterated by participants, was that of acceptance:

> [In] classical music you have this […] competition all the time and people like looking at you and […] 'ah she's not a good player' and you don't have this here. People are like 'yeah, that's great what you're doing'

> and it's encouraging and I think this […] general acceptance, does change also and helps people to find their place and to find their place in the Ethno but also in the rest of their lives so that's also what I said I did become more self-confident here, on Ethnos generally (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019).

It is interesting to note that she also attributes her growing self-confidence through Ethno to the confidence she experiences in her life outside of Ethno. Monique explains, 'At first I just became more confident playing in front of people […] also talking […]. Also I noticed doing my studies too I feel confident, having classes for the students 'cause I dare to talk in front of other people' (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019). She concluded, 'And also it changed me in perspective like how I feel about music, how I dare to play in front of people, so I became much more confident playing' (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019).

Another participant was clear that his skills development had increased through being at Ethno. He said, '[There's] always a […] new level to […] develop through Ethno' (Fionn, interview, July 30, 2019). He went on to explain:

> I think definitely in terms of the singing it's been quite good for me to sort of get practising singing in big groups and also more recently with teaching songs to sort of push my comfort zone a bit with singing and doing solo singing (Fionn, interview, July 30, 2019).

A different participant backed this up by saying, 'It's why I'm always excited about Ethno. You really go to another step' (Mariana, interview, July 29, 2019).

If '[…] exploring identity also involves considering what one's musical voice and language might be' (Hess, 2019, p.92), it's interesting that the participants' connection to their musicality at Ethno has opened up new possibilities and reimagining of themselves that enables greater individual autonomy and expression in their lives outside of the camp. Following up with participants in the months and years following attendance at Ethno Denmark could add a particular dimension to the research and enable a more detailed analysis of this notion that the development of their skills and confidence impacts on their wider lives. Words spoken during the intense and emotional camp experience might be viewed in a different light in a more 'ordinary', every-day space.

Personal Identity

For some participants, engagement in the Ethno experience helps them connect more fully to their sense of personal identity, as Omer explained:

> So when you play your instrument, you are expressing, maybe emotion – when we play it helps us to voice our emotions. With Ethno, for some people here, they find it easier to be themselves and express their voice at Ethno camps then maybe they do at home (Omer, interview, July 29, 2019).

Another participant explained, 'So I do try to keep true to myself but I do notice that I'm even more true to myself on Ethno' (Monique, interview, July 30, 2019). Liliana spoke of the experience as an opportunity to connect with herself; 'I feel like I'm here just to be with myself, to reconnect with myself (Liliana, interview, July 30, 2019).

This sense of connection to self, and freedom in being yourself was spoken of by one participant;

> […] I've found with Ethno particularly, by like the end of a week or towards the end of an Ethno, […] you feel a lot more comfortable as a person. […] Like after three or four days you're not self-conscious any more and you can be yourself. So it's quite sort of liberating in that sense (Fionn, interview, July 30, 2019).

Alma explains this further:

> I feel like in a folk music community there is room for everyone to just be themselves and I think that is one of the greatest strengths that a community can have and I think that is what lifts so many people up and leading to some self-discovery like you don't have to pretend, you can just be, and that is a whole new world for some people (Alma, interview, July 30, 2019).

There was a clear sense from some participants that the Ethno experience helps open them up, to themselves and others. This feeling of connection to self seems to be one of the reasons why participants keep coming back; '[Ethno is] just like a retreat you know. And then you just feel better about it and you are looking forward to it even next time' (Hamsika, interview, July 30, 2019). It is not clear, however, whether all participants feel this way, and whether this feeling stays with them following on from their experience, or whether it gets lost in the day-to-day business of their lives on the outside.

CONCLUSIONS

The philosophical and ideological notions of 'welcome' and 'hospitality' (Higgins, 2012) within community music practice were the first of four emerging themes to come out of the data collected at Ethno Denmark 2019. Imagining these notions as an outer layer surrounding the building of significant connections (refer to Figure 1), the exposure to these 'acts of hospitality' (ibid.) occurred not just at the outset, but as an ongoing and necessary permeation of the participants' experience.

The importance of the welcoming and hospitable space encompassing every interaction at Ethno Denmark is significant. Embodied by the host family, projected as a vision by the camp organisers, and enacted by participants, 'hospitality' is clearly seen through the importance of the invitation, personal interactions during the camp leading to the 'home-from-home' experience, and the 'spirit' of Ethno Denmark in which participants are encouraged to feel relaxed and supported in a warm and friendly space.

Within the encompassing of a welcoming and hospitable environment, participants formed deep connections with each other through engaging in music-making. The sharing of traditional songs and their stories enabled increased intercultural understanding by connecting participants to the musical and cultural heritage of others. The power of singing together as a connecting force was demonstrated by participants as they spoke of working together on the arrangements. Whether the significance of the authenticity of cultural exchange needs closer examination is something for future reflection and further research.

As participants reflected on their relationship to traditional music, it became apparent that many of them had started as classical musicians but had discovered a deep association with folk music and had found it a freeing and even a 'healing' experience. Specifically, at Ethno Denmark, the sensitive and skilful facilitation methods demonstrated by the artistic leaders created a space in which participants were encouraged to 'shine', developing personal agency and confidence as a result. It would be fascinating to ask participants who did not share a song, whether they felt the same level of personal agency at the camp.

Sharing a part of yourself builds connections. At Ethno Denmark, across musical, social, cultural and linguistic barriers, participants generously offered of themselves and formed deep bonds with one another. The connections created enabled a deeper sense of intercultural understanding, as well as within the context of the intensity of the Ethno experience, an accelerated process of forming close and life-long friendships.

Finally, right at the heart of the participant experience at Ethno Denmark 2019 is a deep connection to self. Through a more considered understanding of their cultural, musical and personal identity, participants were able to speak openly about how their knowledge and understanding of themselves increased through engagement in Ethno's structures, processes and underlying ethos.

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Notes

[i] The name of the song is "Barış güvercini", composed by Nesimi Çimen, with the English translation:

Let friendships happen and let people smile
Peace should spread in the world
Evil shall disappear together with hate
Peace should spread in the world
Let friendships happen and let people smile
No more wars or deaths

Let the world become heaven so people can enjoy
Let's make peace and stop the bloodshed
No more wars and cries
Peace should spread in the world
Let friendships happen and let people smile
No more wars or deaths

[ii] The song Mariana shared is called Coro das Maçadeiras and is in old Portuguese (Maçadeiras were the women that worked with the linen)

Old Portuguese text:

Este linho é mourisco e a fita dele namora
quem aqui não tem amores tira o chapeu vá-se embora

Ai la li la ai la le la ai la le la ó meu bem
Regala-te ó meu amor
Regala-te e passa bem

English translation:

This linen is Moorish and his ribbon flirts
Who here has no love takes off his hat and goes away
If there is no love for the work, because it was a hard work, it is better to leave

Oh my dear
Rejoice with what you have to do
And take care

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