Shifting from offline to online collaborative music-making, teaching and learning: perceptions of Ethno artistic mentors.

Turino's ([2008]. *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.) distinctions between live and recorded fields can act as an effective framework for furthering academic understandings of how music teaching and learning has been impacted by the shift to online musical practice due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. This study investigates the effect this has had on Ethno World, JM-International's programme for folk, world and traditional music. They support youth folk music gatherings in over 23 countries and responded to the restrictions by devising 'The Hope sessions', online tune learning workshops, and the 'Exchange sessions', online folk music collaborations. This research is a hybrid ethnographic investigation of these two programmes. Hybrid ethnography is situated in both a digital and physical environment (Przbylski, [2021], *Hybrid Ethnography, Online, Offline and In Between*. SAGE Publicatiobs.). Data was gathered through online participant observation and interviews with artistic mentors and co-ordinators of the online programmes. Findings reveal a tension between values of inclusivity and aesthetic quality suggesting artistic mentors have needed to adjust their goals, conceptions and roles within the musical practice. These findings provide timely insight into how pedagogical approaches change when they shift from an offline to online context.

Keywords: hybrid folk music collaborations; live and recorded artistic fields; online music learning and teaching

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic effect on the musical practice of a community of musicians who engage in Ethno World, *Jeunnesses Musicales International's* (JMI) programme for folk, world and traditional music (Ethno World N.D.) Ethno World's aim is to "revive, invigorate and disseminate global traditional musical heritage and to promote ideals such as peace, tolerance and understanding" (Ethno World, N.D). They support local organisations in over twenty countries with the co-ordination of 10-day annual residential Ethno gatherings for young musicians aged

between 13 and 30. During the gathering, musicians, supported by an artistic mentor, teach a song or tune from their folk music tradition to their peers. [1] Musicians perform each musical piece as an ensemble in a concert at the end of the gathering. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on Ethno World events. To date, 19 out of 25 Ethno gatherings have been cancelled or postponed.

In response to the pandemic, Ethno World initiated two online programmes: The Hope sessions and The Exchange sessions. [2] The main aim of the Hope sessions was to 'ask people to come and teach the traditional folk music from their country' using the Facebook 'live' platform. They were co-ordinated by an organiser of Ethno India who reasoned that free online classes could enable musicians the opportunity to 'grow in this hard time' (Advik). The Exchange sessions were an initiative by Ethno USA, whose inaugural gathering was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. The aim was to provide some visibility for Ethno USA and to introduce some of the concepts of Ethno to young US musicians (Ryan). Six pairings of musicians from different folk music backgrounds were invited to compose a song that represented the musical cultures they embodied (Rohan).

This investigation is part of Ethno-Research, a three-year international project seeking to explore the hypothesis that Ethno World provides "transformational sociocultural and musical significances for those that engage in its activities" (Ethno-Research, N.D.) Researchers have highlighted the impact that the 'open' and supportive environment of the gatherings have on enabling connections (Birch, 2020; Gayraud, 2020; Ellström, 2020; Gibson, 2020; Higgins, 2020; Mantie and Risk, 2020). [3] The purpose of this paper is to investigate how artistic mentors have responded to the shift

from an offline to online environment. Questions include: how do artistic mentors perceive online teaching and learning practices during COVID-19? How has the shift to an online music teaching and learning environment impacted their understanding of and approach towards the teaching and learning principles of Ethno?

Theoretical Framework: Fields of Artistic Practice (Turino, 2008)

Offline Ethno gatherings are not a musical culture, as they do not represent a distinct musical tradition, such as Irish Traditional music. Rather, they are an immersive musical practice that draws from a variety of folk musics in order to encourage participation and collaboration amongst musicians who attend the gatherings. The focus on musical practice lends itself towards an analysis using Turino's (2008) four fields of artistic practice. Turino (2008, 26-27) summarises them in the following manner:

- **Participatory performance**: no artistic-audience distinctions with the primary goal to involve the maximum number of people in a performance role.
- **Presentational performance:** artistic-audience distinction, where the artists prepare a musical performance for a live audience who do not participate in the music-making.
- **High Fidelity:** the making of recordings intended to be iconic of a live performance.
- **Studio Art:** the use of sounds in a studio or on a computer to create a recorded art piece.

Turino (2008, 26) divides these fields into two broader sections: 'participatory and presentational music' as 'real time musical performance' and 'high fidelity and studio

art' as recordings. Of particular importance to this article is the relationship with performance in 'real time' compared to performances where there is a 'time delay between production and reception' (Turino 2008, 91). Turino (2008, 88) argues that each field comprises distinctive 'musical goals, values, musical roles, practices and styles' suggesting that the 'four fields point to fundamentally different conceptions of what music is and what it can do for people'. He emphasises that it is not that one type of music making is better or more valuable than the other; it is simply that they are different, with different social functions, responsibilities and other sound features that make them work' (2008, 44).

The relevance of this framework for Ethno is that with the transition from offline to online programmes, artistic mentors have needed to change some of their goals, conceptions and roles surrounding the musical practice. At first, this suggested a shift towards a more presentational *music teaching and learning* approach, however, with the decision to record the live Hope sessions and the collaborative recording goals of the Exchange sessions, the aims and values of high fidelity and studio art are also a relevant field of interest.

The flaws of considering a framework such as Turino's are recognised in the literature (Camlin, 2014; Mantie, 2017; Tobias, 2020) Tobias (2020, 42) argues that these 'paradigms are insufficient in addressing the multifaceted ways that people do music in a participatory manner'. Camlin (2014, 106) argues the need to consider Turino's presentational and participatory fields as part of a continuum. He suggests that they be seen as 'complementary states, held in a… creative tension'. Approaching musical fields in this manner recognises that there is a creative "pull" between fields,

with elements from each of them forming part of the musical process (Camlin, 2014, 105).

My focus is on the tensions between the standards and expectations of 'real time *music teaching and learning*' and 'time delayed' recordings. Turino's emphasis is on performance, whilst I consider these approaches in terms of music teaching and learning. Firstly, I consider how the artistic mentors in my research adjusted their approach from an informal notion of 'playing music' to a more formal content driven focus of 'learning to play' and understand a tradition (Folkestad, 2006). This change of approach appears to follow a creative tension, or continuum from one of participatory to presentational (Camlin, 2014). Further tensions between the recording field and live performance field are drawn into the discussion due to the collaborative recording opportunities in the Exchange sessions and the recording of the Hope sessions.

Literature Review

Online music learning

When referencing Turino in the context of online communities, the literature has largely focused on demonstrating how they fall within the participatory music-making field as they are 'socially and culturally contextualised in a community', often relating this to Henry Jenkins (2006) and 'participatory culture' (Tobias, 2020; Waldron, 2016, 87; Waldron, 2018,).[4] There are a number of music communities that already engage in online learning (Keegan-Phipps and Wright, 2020; Tobias, 2020; Waldron, 2016; Waldron, 2018; Waldron, Horsley and Veblen, 2020). Online music learning supports people in their practice, particularly in learning pieces on their own (Waldron, 2016). However, Waldron's research also found that 'access to an online participatory culture

did not trump learning and playing in a participatory music making context like a session' (Waldron, 2016, 106). With regard to online communities the importance of situating the learning within a larger context is highlighted (Keegan-Phipps and Wright, 2020; Tobias, 2020; Waldron, 2012; Waldron, 2016). Musicians engaging in online practices appear to be using the online context to reinforce their musical practice offline (Kenny, 2016; Waldron, 2012; 2016).

The "turn" to online musical practice

Coessens (2014, 74) emphasises the impact different physical and social environments have on artistic practice. This is particularly important if one considers the role of the music facilitator as cultivating a particular environment (Higgins, 2012). The sudden 'turn' to online music teaching and learning due to CODID-19 restrictions has resulted in musicians, such as the ones presented in this case report, reflecting on their own practice and pedagogical approach. The recontextualization to a new learning environment or contextual space can become an opportunity to refine practice (Schippers and Grant, 2016). Or, in the case of music teaching and learning, allows music educators to change their approach and attitudes towards music pedagogy (Waldron, 2018; Waldron, Horsley, Veblen, 2020). An adjustment in pedagogical approach when shifting to online folk music learning is identified in the literature with the recognition that whilst some elements of the oral tradition, such as learning by ear or repetition can be maintained, learning can additionally take on an instructional mode (Keegan-Phipps and Wright, 2020; Kenny, 2016; Waldron and Bayley, 2012). This draws attention to notions of formal and informal musical learning (Green 2002, 2008; Higgins and Willingham, 2017; Waldron, 2016). Folkestad (2006) suggests that formal and informal instruction be seen on a continuum whilst the research of Hess (2020, 452)

recognises the importance of acknowledging the value of using both formal and informal music learning techniques. She argues that "educating in a way that provides as many skills as possible may allow students to experience these musical situations as even more profound" (Hess, 2020, 452). Therefore, the literature suggests that shifts in approaches and incorporation of more formal instructional methods are prevalent and may enhance participants music learning experience. [5]

Online music-making collaborations

The benefits of online musical collaborations are identified by Josef, Nethsinghe and Cabedo-Mas (2020) and Kloppers (2010). Kloppers (2010) identifies the importance of good preparation by music educators as well as the need for 'supportive encouragement'. This concurs with the observations of Josef, et al (2020), who noted some frustrations by participants, particularly when it came to technical complications and their unfamiliarity with online engagement. Tobias (2020) also recognises the importance of providing skills to students for effective online engagement. This relates to Camlin's (2014) reflection of the importance for music facilitators to have the skills necessary to support students as they shift between various fields of practice. In the context of this article, this shift takes the form of moving from offline to online musical collaborations and navigating live and recorded fields of practice.

Methodology

What is notable for this project is that both the research participants and, myself as researcher were becoming aware of the need for a reconceptualization of our respective practices as we adjusted to engaging online. My journey into online fieldwork was a response to Ethno World's shift to remote learning programmes due to the restrictions

of the COVID-19 pandemic. My ethnographic research is therefore adaptive in approach (Hine, 2015). I had already experienced offline music teaching and learning at two Ethno gatherings and built offline relationships with Ethno artistic mentors and organisers prior to conducting the online fieldwork for this project. As my offline fieldwork has influenced my online experiences, my research leans towards a hybrid ethnography, which is situated in both a digital and physical environment (Przybylski, 2021) rather than cyber ethnography, where all the data that is gathered occurs online (Hine, 2000). Hybrid ethnography is appropriate for this research project as Ethno World is a convergent community: an online community that is balanced with offline musical participatory cultures (Waldron, 2018).

My methodological approach reflect two particular issues addressed by online ethnographic scholars: ethics and the nature of an online 'field site' (Hine, 2015; Przybyslki, 2021, Sloan and Quan-Haase, 2017). These two issues inter-relate because of Ethno World's decision to host the Hope Sessions on the Facebook platform. I had already established some informal relationships with Ethno participants through this platform and recognised that I needed take an ethical stance with regard to which information shared on Facebook was to be considered private. I therefore decided to limit my materials for analysis to two Facebook group pages: Ethno World and Ethno USA. I made this decision because both pages are open to public viewing therefore suggesting that information posted on these pages was not considered private.

Another unique element with regard to the 'field' and participant observation is that the Hope Sessions were 'real time' events hosted on Facebook. This event was therefore bounded in time and had the expectation of live participation by viewers. Viewers/ participants were playing or singing in the private spaces of their homes following the

guidance of the Artistic mentor. The ‘real time participation’ enabled an immersive experience similar to an offline ethnography (Hine, 2015).

The Hope sessions relate particularly to the issue of the visibility of the researcher (Hine, 2015). The live-streaming event was accessible to the public, however the only participants who were aware of my presence were those people who had accepted me as a Facebook friend. Therefore, not everybody participating in the event was aware of my presence. Conversely, I was also limited to whom I could connect with through the Hope Sessions. I relied on gatekeepers in order to interview some Artistic mentors, but a limitation to the research was being able to reach out to less visible participants of the Hope Sessions in order to compare my participant experience with their own (Hine, 2015).

Research Participants

Five semi-structured interviews with open ended questions were conducted. The interviews ranged in length from fifteen minutes to one hour. Participants comprised of two artistic mentors and three co-ordinators in order to consider their attitudes and opinions about the shift to online practice. The five participants comprised four males and one female, three Indian, one American and one participant from Bosnia-Herzegovina, ranging in age from mid-twenties to early forties. Questions included: what benefits do you see the Sessions offering the Ethno community? How do the Sessions incorporate the Ethno Ethos? Are there any drawbacks to online interactions? (see Appendix One for all questions)

Here is a brief profile of the people interviewed with their pseudonyms:

- Advik: Co-ordinator of the Hope sessions and Ethno India. Has participated in twelve Ethnos. Lives in India and is a Traditional Indian percussionist.
- Rohan: Co-ordinator of the Hope sessions and Ethno Exchange. Former organiser of Ethno India and has been an artistic mentor in over 20 Ethnos around the world. Lives in Belgium. Traditional Indian percussionist.
- Ryan: Co-ordinator for Ethno USA. Has not facilitated or participated in any Ethnos. Lives in the USA.
- Keerthi: Artistic mentor for Ethno Hope sessions. Artistic mentor and participant for Ethno since 2010, mainly Ethno Sweden and Ethno India. Traditional Indian folk singer and percussionist.
- Andrik: Attended Ethno India as a participant. Whilst not a regular artistic mentor for Ethno, has experience teaching the *Sevdah* Folk tradition and works as a Traditional folk musician.

Andrik was the only interview participant whom I had not met offline. The decision to interview him was based on the large number of views his Hope Session recording had received. This was complemented with interviewing Keerthi, whose musical career has been shaped by her experiences at Ethno which began in 2010. Both these artistic mentors were also selected due to their many years of experience teaching folk music complemented by their regular work as professional folk musicians.

Entering the field

Ethno Hope Sessions occurred one to three times a week between April and June 2020. Sessions lasted between 30 minutes to an hour and were hosted on “Facebook Live. I did not comment in the ‘comments section’ therefore limiting my visibility to the presenter and other participants (Hine, 2015). I participated in 9 sessions by singing or playing along to the instructions given

by the Artistic Mentor (Sessions 1; 2; 10; 12; 20; 21; 24; 26). I took fieldnotes as I was participating and also observed what other participants were writing in the 'comments section'.

I cross-referenced information using the Ethno World YouTube page, which contains further written data about the songs and tunes taught in the Hope Sessions. Cyber-ethnographic data was triangulated with the semi-structured interviews conducted via Skype, Zoom or Facebook Messenger. The interviews for the Hope Sessions took place in May and June 2020.

Interviews with the co-ordinators of the Exchange sessions took place in September and October 2020. Cyber-Ethnographic data for the Exchange sessions was gathered during August 2020. This included video footage of interviews with Ethno Session participants and Facebook posts about the Sessions on the Ethno USA Facebook page.

All the participants received a copy of the interview questions prior to the interview. This was due to English being a second language for four out of five of the participants and to allow them time to reflect on their answers.

Triangulation and data analysis

Online participant observation of the Hope sessions was used to triangulate interview data for the Hope Sessions. As the Exchange sessions music videos had not yet been published online, triangulation occurred with Facebook posts about the sessions and recordings of participant interviews with the interviews of the two organisers of the Exchange sessions. Participants who were interviewed were given an opportunity to read the transcriptions and provide further feedback prior to the analysis of the data. In

two instances, there was follow up e-mail correspondence for further clarification of information provided during interviews.

After multiple readings of the interview transcripts, fieldnotes and further observations of Hope Session recordings, I used thematic coding techniques to construct themes based on data. I used NVIVO software for data analysis and the construction of a concept map. This was analysed and refined until the final key themes were identified. These were then shared with members of the Ethno World committee and the Ethno-Research team for further feedback.

Ethical clearance has been granted for the entire project by my affiliated university, and the names of participants in the research have been anonymised.

Case Studies

The Hope sessions

Forty Hope sessions occurred between April 6 and June 28, 2020. They ended prior to the commencement of the first European Ethno gathering: Ethno Croatia. Folk tunes were taught from 28 countries and views of the videos on Facebook range from 362-6.8k as of October 2020. Sessions were presented live via Ethno World's Facebook page. In order to accommodate participants based in the Southern Hemisphere one session was broadcast at a time more easily accessible to them. They ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour and when they were completed, they were uploaded to Ethno World's YouTube page. The YouTube page contains more detailed information about each of the tunes performed, a biography of the artistic mentor, and the lyrics and chords for each tune. The objectives of the Hope session are described as:

- To start online tune-learning sessions by experienced Ethno organizers and artistic mentors.
- To build a spirit of positivity during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To connect Ethno musicians worldwide via this initiative.
- To create a digital library of songs / tunes from around the world that people of all ages can learn from (Ethno World, 2020).

The Exchange sessions

Ethno World were hoping to launch Ethno USA in 2020 but due to restrictions on public gatherings because of COVD-19, this could not happen. The Exchange sessions were suggested as a means to provide some visibility to the Ethno USA programme (Ryan). The aim was to bring musicians who are interested in folk and traditional music together "who might not otherwise have the opportunity to meet' and to "make space for the serendipitous" (Ryan). Ryan was responsible for the pairings and hoped for "interesting and evocative" collaborations that "had complexities to the conversation".

Six musicians were selected, with a gender parity of three male and three female. [6] Two were Indigenous musicians who experiment with music outside of traditional and indigenous forms. Another pairing both shared an Indian cultural heritage, however one is a second-generation Indian immigrant to the US and an experienced Irish folk musician, whilst the other lives in India and is a vocalist who specialises in Indian traditional music. The third pairing was a musician from Brazil and the US who both shared an interest in folk dance music.

The participants were given a clear objective: to compose a song that "created a merger between sounds, styles and genres of the musicians" within a certain timeframe (Ryan). There were three facilitated sessions, but no overarching guidance by an artistic mentor, meaning that participants were not monitored or expected to send a record of what they were doing. Ryan also noted that all six participants did not meet together. He emphasised that the structure of the project was left largely to the participants, admitting some uncertainty to how well that worked, saying that each group responded quite differently, with some meeting together frequently to exchange music, whilst others only met a few times. However, he wanted the participants to "create self-autonomous paths" which he felt was in line with the Ethno ethos.

The Exchange sessions used a scratch track technique. One person recorded a song, which the second person used as a guide for tempo in their recording. They sent these recordings to the facilitators to merge the tracks together. Video and audio were recorded and edited separately. At the time of writing this article, the facilitators were in the process of putting these different elements together. Ryan explains that with some participants, there was a single track from each participant, but that two of the three groups did multi-tracking, meaning that they put multiple tracks together with musicians performing on a number of instruments. The organisers of the Sessions have "cut them and tied them out".

The final songs have not yet been released. The consensus from participants and facilitators is that the end result may not have been what people were initially expecting, with Rohan commenting, "people will use music in different ways, and they collaborate in different ways".

Analysis and Discussion

The Role of the Artistic Mentor

Artistic mentors do not teach tunes at gatherings, rather their role is to support participants who have brought musical pieces to share. Prior to leading a session, the artistic mentor will help the participant to arrange their piece to suit the ensemble arrangement. During the session, the participant will teach, with the artistic mentor acting in a supportive role, by "validating each of the participants' contributions, enabling strong participant autonomy and encouraging democratic exchange through peer-to-peer learning" (Birch, 2020, 15). One artistic mentor explained the importance of "giving space to the participants, rather than taking space" (Gibson, 2020, 15). They, therefore, fulfil the role of "enabling music interactions" (Higgins, 2012, 16).

Rohan reflects that the Hope sessions gave existing artistic mentors their "persona instead of just being an engine that drove the whole effort forward", highlighting another role of artistic mentors at gatherings: ensuring that musical arrangements are ready for performance at the end of the week and "that peer learning does not result in abrogation of responsibility" (Mantie, and Risk, 2020, 45). Therefore, the role of the artistic mentors during the Hope sessions was extraordinarily different compared to their role at the gatherings.

For the Hope sessions, Advik wanted to provide an opportunity for artistic mentors to share their own musicianship skills and experience. He was hoping to give them exposure and opportunities to be invited to different Ethno gatherings saying that, although he has attended 12 Ethnos, it is usually the same artistic mentors he meets.

Keerthi, for example, was amazed by the diversity of musicians within the Ethno Network through her participation in the Hope sessions. She felt the Hope sessions brought the broader community "together virtually" to "share knowledge".

Content driven, not performance driven.

Both Keerthi and Andrik recognised an opportunity to share deeper understandings of the musical tradition itself. Rather than focus on the process of creating a piece of music for performance, as is done at the gatherings, these artistic mentors focussed on delivering content. Andrik explains that he had not done workshop formats before where he goes into the scales and melisma's and the "concrete stuff". The response was so good that he thought that as so many of his gigs were cancelled due to COVID-19 lockdowns, he would start "fundraising for an audio-visual educational package that involves music".

From Keerthi's perspective, the offline Ethno gatherings focus more on a product, whereas the Hope sessions enabled her to focus on "the elements that make a product". She took the opportunity to share the rudiments of her art, exploring "what makes it wonderful, where you can listen to it, why it is important and how to go about it". She felt that she was able to teach the "character that comes along with a composition". Keerthi says that at Ethno gatherings,

> we are always teaching compositions and get into arrangements directly, rather than teaching the roots behind why a composition is a certain way. Breaking down the composition doesn't happen much because you are aiming at completing the session and the song for a concert. The [Hope sessions] are more like a teaching session rather than teaching an arrangement for a concert, which makes all the difference.

The shift to more formal instruction due to the use of video tutorials is noted by Waldron (2012). The fact that artistic mentors also made use of more formal approaches to musical instruction, such as a form of musical notation to support learning is also identified in similar research into online folk communities by Waldron and Bayley (2012), Kenny (2016) and Keegan-Phipps and Wright (2020). Hess (2020) reflects that blending formal and informal approaches can better facilitate learning, arguing for facilitators to find the "both/and" rather than following one approach or the other. For the Hope session artistic mentors, the shift to an online environment provided new opportunities in their approach to teaching folk music and it appears to have been well-received. In this instance, shifting from an informal environment that focuses on the playing of music, to a more formal environment that focuses on learning the music provided new pedagogical opportunities for the artistic mentors (Folkestad, 2006).

The gatherings already have a blended approach of informal and formal musical instruction (Mantie and Risk, 2020). This is largely due to the requirement that participants present a performance at the end of the gathering. The artistic mentors therefore need an understanding of the expectations required for a final performance, reflecting Turino's presentational approach, whilst also ensuring that the manner of learning is still largely participatory by making sure all participants are playing music together and learning from each other throughout the week. Thus, artistic mentors are already experienced in blending two fields of "real-time" performance together. The introduction of "recorded" performance and teaching introduced some new tensions for artistic mentors.

Process or Product?

The Hope sessions did not offer an opportunity to work towards a collaborative goal, which was something that was missed by participants in the sessions (Gibson and Higgins, forthcoming). Collaboration became the aim of the subsequent Exchange sessions in August 2020. Participants in these sessions worked towards a collaborative acoustic video recording. Ryan was the co-ordinator and facilitator for the Exchange sessions. He noted:

> Each group fell along the product to process spectrum in a different way. Some of the songs were very simple, but they spent a ton of time meeting and talking with each other. Some are more complicated, but it was almost industry driven, like: I'll send you my tracks, you send me your tracks, we'll meet a few times, then, cool.

Ryan feels that the focus was on a product, as he gave clear instructions of what Ethno USA wanted: "a two to five-minute song, with both musicians playing, live and edited in a particular way, appearing acoustic, as if the musicians were duetting in the same room, rather than a music video appearance". This is similar to Keerthi's perception of an Ethno gathering, where the aim is a final arrangement, rather than learning the rudiments of a song. However, what appears to have been missing from the Exchange sessions was the "driving force" of the artistic mentor towards reaching a completed product that met a particular standard. Observations at Ethno Sweden, for example, found that "Ethno Sweden provided the setting, created the atmosphere, demonstrated how to interact with one another and then gave participants the space to interact" (Gibson, 2020, p.15).

Exchange Session participants were paired together and largely left without the support of an artistic mentor to "see what happens" and have "space to collaborate" (Ryan). The conclusions by the organisers of this event appear to be that this worked

with some of the pairings, but others may have needed more support. Rohan recognises that sometimes a more dominant sound may have occurred inadvertently. He feels that this is where the artistic mentor could step in, in order to ensure that there is a balanced contribution from both sides and to find out why one person may not be contributing, and then "ascertain how we can support". Ryan explains,

> We could have taken a more facilitated approach in terms of catalysing that intercultural exchange. We left a lot of that up to the participants and I think a lot of that depended on what depth of conversation they were willing to have. I think it's been three very different manifestations of different kinds of intercultural exchange from three different pairings.

He relates this back to his understanding of Ethno:

> Ethno is a very human centred programme. One year a gathering may have a group of musicians who are super focused and want to learn as many songs as possible. And they're all talking about music theory and so on. Then, sometimes, it's groups who just want to hug each other and learn five songs over the course of ten days.

Ryan's comments echo the comment of regular participants at Ethno Sweden, who note how each year does differ depending on the participants (Gibson, 2020). It also demonstrates Rohan's reflection on the organic nature of the Ethno organisation, that it is influenced by how participants wish to shape their experience. The impact of participants in constructing a particular learning atmosphere relate to notions of situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Participants are influenced by the context within which learning occurs. This includes how "newcomers" to a practice learn from those who are more experienced in the field. More experienced practitioners, or "old-timers" direct and support newcomers into the practice, teaching both the practicalities of and the values behind the community of practice (Camlin and Zeserson, 2018). This process

is evident in offline Ethno gatherings which enable participants to learn from one another in an informal manner. They are also guided and directed by the "old-timers", or artistic mentors. The Exchange sessions did not allow for this form of learning strategy, ultimately highlighting the significance of the artistic mentor's role in supporting and directing participants towards achieving the presentational-orientated goals of Ethno.

Making Sense of Online Music Teaching and Learning

Recognition that not all participants or music educators may have the skills or access to social media and digital technology is vital, and the role of the co-ordinator or music educator in developing these skills or new understandings needs to be recognised (Tobias, 2020). What becomes apparent through both online Ethno programmes, as noted by Kloppers (2010) and Tobias (2020) is the manner in which the online music educator develops a supportive role, helping participants "make sense of, negotiate, contribute to, and benefit… from affinity groups related to their musical engagement and learning" (2020, 55). Tobias cautions against the assumption that students will develop critical understanding through their experience, arguing that music educators may need to guide learners in developing critical competencies. Critically, this is achieved at Ethno gatherings by the manner in which artistic mentors model behaviour for participants in various situations (Gibson, 2020). It is also apparent in the way Rohan and Advik supported artistic mentors during the Hope sessions.

During the live Hope sessions, participants could comment in the "comments section" engaging either with the artistic mentor, or with other participants, sometimes typing greetings to people they had met at gatherings or asking questions about the

music being taught. Advik and Rohan acted as facilitators within the comments section by posting lyrics, pneumonics or chord progressions to the pieces being taught. They would also suggest when sections needed to be repeated. This was especially beneficial for Keerthi during her session, as both Advik and Rohan are also classically trained Indian percussionists. She says, "they were posting the rhythmic-formulas as soon as I worded it, so that there was a reference. I did not have a blackboard to write on for people to see, so this was very important." For her, the support from Advik and Rohan was part of the music learning and teaching process. Advik and Rohan were not only supporting Keerthi's teaching but setting the tone in the comments section for what type of questions participants could ask thereby demonstrating how to engage online.

Camlin (2014, 110) argues that in the transition towards presentational performance, community music facilitators need to have "high levels of presentational performative skill and experience themselves, so they are able to understand how to influence the group production of musical qualities". He continues, "those performative skills need to be understood explicitly rather than tacitly, so that they can be communicated and taught effectively" (2014, 110). This is possible for Ethno artistic mentors in offline contexts but was something that they needed to learn when shifting to the context of online sessions.

Camlin's comments can also be related to the shift in teaching approach for the Hope sessions. Andrik noted how there were some artistic mentors who he knows to be great teachers that really struggled because it was not as inspiring "talking to your phone or computer" compared to having people in the room. These concerns were also highlighted by other artistic mentors in the research as they felt uninspired when they

saw low numbers of people watching their live stream (Gibson and Higgins, forthcoming). Andrik emphasised the importance of thinking about the nature of the media differently, saying, “it may only be 15 people [watching you live], but then you realise that we might be seen by 100, 000 people in the next five years on YouTube, and you need to structure it differently”. This was something also recognised by Keerthi, who appreciated the opportunity for future reference by having the Hope sessions available on YouTube.

Andrik highlights a fundamental difference between real-time participatory music and the time-delated recording music fields as described by Turino (2008) emphasising the need to shift ideas about what the audience-performer or, in this instance, the music educator-participant relationship is.

Technical issues were also evident with the Hope sessions. Advik explained that he had to support all the artistic mentors quite intensely with the technical side of presenting the sessions, and even then, there were sometimes issues with connectivity during the event. He noted that most of the artistic mentors had not produced a live video or session before. This meant that he “had to guide them step-by-step” which often took a whole day. For example, they needed help updating Facebook, setting up the camera, or going live. Advik did say that after the sessions, artistic mentors felt more confident with teaching online. He concludes “through this we are giving them a hope that they can teach online and they can do some live sessions also”. This is perhaps most evident in Andrik’s assertion that after his experience of facilitating a Hope Session, he felt confident to seek funding to create more online music tutorial videos.

Tensions between 'real-time' and 'recorded' musical practice, teaching and learning. As both sessions are recorded and can be accessed at any point in time, issues of videos and recordings needing to be of a particular standard come into play. Rohan notes, "the standard of overall music is visible now, because it's on YouTube". He thinks that this can incentivise some people to bring the "best of what they can do" but it also challenges some of the participatory aims of Ethno.

For example, a festival organiser in New Zealand commented on how when it comes to an Ethno performance at their event, one of the endearing qualities of the group is that the audience can see that Ethno participants are still learning while they are on stage. He recognised that the performance was not about a "polished standard" but a willingness by everyone on the stage to participate and engage fully in a variety of different folk music styles. This was also noted by a participant at Ethno Flanders who described learning the music at the gathering as a process, and that the process was "shown onstage" (Ellström, 2020, 22). Ryan recognises that the Exchange sessions reflect this element of Ethno but has concerns over how a digital audience may receive material that is not presented to a particular standard. When Rohan reflects on the Exchange recordings, he concludes it was an opportunity to enable people, rather than have predefined standards. He says, in reference to one of the pairings:

> A young student may not be able to afford to travel from India to the United States to collaborate with a concertina player. This has now become possible [through the Exchange sessions]. When I listen to that music, I feel that you don't miss the fact that they didn't physically meet. [The composition is] young, it's a little bit tentative, but that's normal for the first meeting. But there is a story there and it's lovely to watch. We want to enable, we want to encourage, we don't have a predefined standard by which we are going to judge. But rather, we want to put it out and share with the world what is

> happening, and if that sparks dozens of other collaborations then I think we are on our way to doing what we do best, which is enabling.

Camlin (2014, 107) argues for the role of the facilitator in supporting the participant across the continuums of participatory and presentational music and the importance of 'undersand[ing] how the land shifts under us as we make that transition'. He notes how:

> The songs remain the same, but the context of their realisation as music is very different' as musicians navigate the gap between a field and that this can cause unease for musicians. Where the emphasis was on everyone joining in, in a participatory context, now, the focus is on the quality of the finished product (2014, 109).

This experience is apparent in both the Hope sessions and the Exchange sessions. The artistic mentors realised that as videos would be present online for an indefinite period, they needed to meet a certain criterion. One aspect of this was less immediate use of repetition. Andrik, for example, knew that it would need to be "like a presentation that people can watch later on". He was aware that if people wanted to hear something "several times" they would "be able to rewind". In the Exchange sessions there is a clear tension between enabling young musicians but also presenting a product of a particular quality. Their hope is to retain the participatory music value of enabling everyone to contribute, but the question remains as to how the audience watching the videos will respond to that approach. Turino (2008, 70) addresses this concern by stating 'the requirements for a good high fidelity recording are simply different from the requirements for a good live performance because the recording is directed to an audience not present and participating in the face-to-face event". This new context does result in a different set of expectations from the audience, and as different standards

apply within fields of music “we need to judge each instance by the appropriate quality measure” (Camlin, 2014, 105).

Implications / Going forward:

Technical Training

Andrik notes how the quality of one’s technological equipment comes into play in a similar manner as production comes into concert, with the quality of one’s microphone, software or internet connection “limiting the whole experience”. He noted how his voice sounded more nasal on iPhone microphones compared to a professional microphone. Rohan has noted how he has invested in more recording equipment during the lockdown and predicts that there will now be future investments by musicians in such equipment.

Ryan and Rohan recognised the need for training in studio music, with Ryan expressing how for both him and the participants there was a lot of “trial and error” as they learned how to work digitally. Further to this, Ryan found that as well as learning to use digital equipment, he was also needing to produce a story by editing and putting various clips together to demonstrate the journey the musicians had travelled together, which he also felt was a challenge.

Rohan identifies that this is a shift in the role of a folk musician, who is now not only someone who plays their instrument, but are required to record their work, which was previously done by a studio. He concludes that “technological training becomes a felt need”, reflecting Tobias (2020, 55) call for “weaving together media and musical skills and understandings”. This is also evident in the interviews with Ethno Facilitators as

they have grappled with the inclusive musical values of participatory music making compared to the importance of aesthetic quality in recorded music or teaching sessions.

Sustainability

Ethno World have shared some concern over the level of carbon-emissions that attending Ethno gatherings can emit. Many participants need to fly to gatherings in order to participate and it is fully acknowledged that the online space provides a more sustainable alternative. The online sessions have been "bridging a gap" whilst gatherings offline have been limited due to COVID-19 travel restrictions (Rohan). In the longer term developing online programmes from an ecological perspective may be prudent for the community. Ryan says,

> I think that over the next fifty years there's going to be need for justification of travel and carbon expenditures. So, I think that [these online projects] are a great way to enhance and enrich what's been happening and create some new tools and frameworks that can be disseminated across the [Ethno] network.

Rohan also recognised that "As the COVID-19 situation unfolded we began to understand that this is a positive change: without travelling we were contributing positively to the environment".

However, there is also emphasis that this cannot replace offline encounters (Rohan; Andrik). Rather the online events and collaborations are creating a "new space altogether" (Rohan). It may be an opportunity for Ethno world to consider building an online community of a similar Framework to the Online Academy of Irish Music (Waldron, 2016), as a convergent space for the Ethno community.

This is something that Keerthi feels may be a next step for the Hope sessions. She felt the purpose of the Hope sessions when they started “made perfect sense”, however if it was to continue, it needed to be renamed with “a serious purpose of sharing and receiving material”. Keerthi also felt that people might become more “immersed” in the session if there were a donation, saying, “it should be popular enough that people are ready to invest their time and money to it”, which she felt may take time. Advik also contemplated asking for donations, but he felt that the money should be used with “good intention” such as supporting new Ethnos or planting trees to offset the carbon emissions participants may use by flying to different gatherings.

Conclusion

Using Turino’s (2008) fields of performance as a framework, I have analysed Ethno artistic mentors perceptions of the shift in practice due to the “digital turn” caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Artistic mentors have found the experience enabling, as the Hope sessions provided an opportunity to develop confidence teaching online, increase their network and create opportunities for collaboration and learning. They also gained a deeper awareness of what constitutes their practice.

Artistic mentors recognise that the “digital turn” revealed what was possible to achieve from one’s home, but also that it cannot replace the offline experience (Rohan). This corroborates previous research findings that suggest on Tobias, 2020line communities support offline experiences (Kenny, 2016; Tobias, 2020; Waldron, 2012; Waldron, 2016,). Online musical practices are not replacing offline encounters, but they have the potential to enhance those experiences and maintain sustainable connections whilst offline meetings are not possible. The online meeting space is also enabling

collaborations to occur that may not ever have been possible offline, which opens many possibilities within music education, particularly with regard to creating opportunities for intercultural collaboration (Kloppers, 2010; Josef, Nethsinghe and Cabedo-Maset, 2020). The experiences of these artistic mentors and organisers demonstrate the catalysing effect of engaging with music through social media for new imaginative contexts (Tobias, 2020; Waldron, 2018).

Tensions between "real-time" and "delayed-time" conceptions of musical practice further support the "multifaceted nature of music making" argued by Tobias (2020, 42). The artistic mentors in this research already negotiate the balance between participatory and performance fields of practice at the Ethno gatherings, but now they have needed to reflect on the relationship between "real-time" performance and facilitation as well as "delayed-time" recordings. This further supports Camlin's (2014) emphasis on the need to consider dichotomies of different fields as a tension or continuum and reflect on how they can further develop creativity within practice.

Recognising these tensions further impacts the role of the music educator as they negotiate the best ways of supporting their students in the shift to new fields of practice. Artistic mentors in this study recognise the need for further training in online technologies in order to better support Ethno participants as well as their own musical practice. Students need to be provided with the skills necessary in order to access information and also learn to collaborate successfully in the new space with the support and guidance of a music educator (Kloppers, 2010; Tobias, 2020). Ultimately, re-contextualisation can enable a re-imagination of practice (Schippers and Grant, 2016). This can be seen as an opportunity to improve music teaching and learning approaches

in order to better achieve pedagogical aims, particularly as music educators act as bridges between musical fields of practice for their participants.

Endnotes

1. There are two leadership roles at an Ethno Gathering: The organiser and the artistic mentor. The organiser is responsible for managing the daily running of the gathering. The artistic mentor ensures that tunes are taught effectively by Ethno participants and arranged musically for a successful final performance. The number of organisers and artistic mentors varies according to the size of the gathering. Both leadership roles also have a pastoral responsibility to ensure the well-being of participants. The use of the term "artistic mentor" is a recent occurrence within JMI and Ethno World. Previously the term artistic leader was used. The Ethno Global co-ordinator explained that the term is a translation of the Swedish term *Kursledare* but that different Ethno gatherings also use the terms "mentor" and "facilitator", depending on "local sensibilities" (Ethno Global co-ordinator, e-mail correspondence, November 2020).

2. Ethno World are currently working on a third online tune-learning resource: The Music Book.

3. For more detailed research into the gatherings, see 'Ethno Research Pilot Case Studies' (2020) available at www.ethnoresearch.com

4. "Participatory culture" refers to people contributing material towards a social media group, rather than simply consuming material already available to them (Jenkins, 2006)

5. Online learning is recognised as a non-formal learning environment because students have control over their learning, rather than a formal learning environment such as a school (Higgins and Willingham, 2017; Waldron and Bayley, 2012).

6. There was also consideration of a non-binary identifying person.

References

Birch, Catherine. 2020. 'Case Study: Ethno Denmark. Building Bridges and Making Connections, in *Ethno Research Pilot Case Studies.* York: York St John University.

Camlin, David. 2014. 'Whose Quality is it anyway? Inhabiting the creative tension

between presentational and participatory music. *Journal of Arts and Communities.* 6 (2+3). 99-118.

Camlin, David and Katherine Zesersen. 2018. 'Becoming a Community Musician: A Situated Approach to Curriculum, Content and Assessment' in in *The Oxford Handbook of Community Music*, edited by Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Lee Higgins, 711-755. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Coessens, Kathleen.2014. 'The Web of Artistic Practice: A background for experimentation' in *Artistic Experimentation in Music: An Anthology*. Edited by Darla Crispin and Bob Gilmore, 69-81. Leuven (Belgium): Leuven University Press.

Ellström, Linus. 2020. 'Case Study: Ethno Flanders. Impact: Inside and Outside the Ethno Bubble, in *Ethno Research Pilot Case Studies.* York: York St John University.

Ethno Research. N.D. 'About the Project' Accessed 2 November, 2019. https://www.ethnoresearch.org

Ethno World. N.D. 'Info'. Accessed 2 November, 2019 https://www.ethno-world.org/info/

Ethno World. 2020. *The Hope Sessions: Online Tune Learning*. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqGghaTbakNJe2MssUOOCTRfscuCJ2e58&fbclid=IwAR0irRvpv762wzWHvgwgyEHNUOuGY4URNn0hS9vkXRMVDBQtfCr-lSw8GUE] Last Accessed: 18 August 2020.

Folkestad, Göran. 2006. 'Formal and Informal Learning Situations or Practices vs. Formal and Informal Ways of Learning'. *British Journal of Music Education.* 23 (2) 135-145

Ford, Marcus. 2020. 'Communication, identity, respect: a case study of collaborative music practice in a community music project'. *Music Education Research,* 22 (3) 287-303 DOI: 10.1080/14613808.2020.1763287

Gayraud, Elise. 2020. 'Case Study: Ethno Catalonia. In *Ethno Research Pilot Case Studies.* York. York St John University.

Gibson, Sarah-Jane. 2020. 'Case Study: Ethno Sweden. A Catalyst for Change,' in *Ethno Research Pilot Case Studies.* York. York St John University.

Gibson, Sarah-Jane and Higgins, Lee. (Forthcoming) 'Taking Ethno Gatherings

online: Sustaining inter-cultural musical exchange during the COVID-19 Pandemic'. *Journal of Music, Health and Wellbeing.*

Green, Lucy.2002. *How popular musicians learn: a way ahead for music education*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Green, Lucy.2008. *Music, informal learning and the school: a new classroom pedagogy*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Hess, Juliet.2020.'Finding the "both/and": Balancing informal and formal music learning' *International Journal for Music Education.* 38 (3). 441-455.

Higgins, Lee. 2012. *Community Music: In Theory and in Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Higgins, Lee. 2020. *Key Findings: Ethno Research Pilot Case Studies 2019.* York: York St John University.

Higgins, Lee and Willingham, Lee. 2017. *Engaging in community music: an introduction*. New York: Routledge.

Hine, Christine. 2000. *Virtual Ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Hine, Christine. 2015. *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday.* London, New York: Bloomsbury

Jenkins, Henry. 2006. *Convergence Culture.* New York: New York University Press.

Josef, D, Nethsinghe, R and Cabedo-Mas, A 2020. '"We learned lots in a short time": Cultural exchange across three universities through songs from different lands'. *International Journal of Music Education.* 38 (2). 177-193.

Keegan-Phipps, Simon and Wright, Lucy. 2020. '"Tradition", Vernacularism and Learning to Be a Folk Musician with Social Media' in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Media and Music Learning,* edited by Janice Waldron, Stephanie Horsley, and Kari Veblen DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190660772.013.26

Kenny, Ailbhe. 2016. *Communities of Musical Practice*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Klopper, C. 2010. 'Intercultural Musicianship: a collective and participatory form of music exchange across the globe'. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 1, 48-57.

Lave, Jeanne and Wenger, Etienne, 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation.* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Mantie, Roger, 2017. 'Thinking and Talking about Change in Music Education' *In The Oxford Handbook of Technology and Music Education.* Edited by S. Alex Ruthmann and Roger Mantie. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199372133.013.32

Mantie, Roger and Risk, Laura. 2020. *Framing Ethno-World: Intercultural music exchange, Tradition, and Globalization.* York: York St John University.

Miller, Kiri. 2012. *Playing Along: digital games, YouTube, and virtual performance.* New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Przybylski, Liz. (2021). *Hybrid Ethnography: Online, Offline and In Between*. SAGE Publications.

Schippers, Huib and Grant, Catherine. 2016. 'Approaching Music Cultures as Ecosystems: A dynamic model for Understanding and Supporting Sustainability' in *Sustainable Futures for Music Cultures: An Ecological Perspective* edited by Huib Schippers and Catherine Grant, 333-352. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sloane, Luke and Quan-Haase, Anabel. 2017. 'Introduction to the Handbook of Social Media Research Methods: Goals, Challenges and Innovations' in *The Sage Handbook of Social Media and Research Methods.* London: Sage Publications

Tobias, Evan. S. 2020. 'Envisioning Pedagogical Possibilities of Social Media and Sonic Participation Cultures' in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Media and Music Learning,* edited by Janice Waldron, Stephanie Horsley and Kari Veblen. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190660772.013.3

Turino, Thomas. 2008. *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

Waldron, Janice. 2012. YouTube, fanvids, forums, vlogs, and blogs: Informal music learning in convergent on and offline community. The Journal for the International Society of Music Education 31 (1): 91–105.

Waldron, Janice. 2016. 'An Alternative Model of Music Learning and 'Last Night's Fun: Participatory Music Making in/ as Participatory Culture in Irish Traditional Music.' *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education.* 15 (3): 86-112. Act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Waldron15_3.pdf

Waldron, Janice. 2018. 'Online Music Communities and Social Media' in *The Oxford*

Handbook of Community Music, edited by Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Lee Higgins, 109-130. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Waldron, Janice and Bayley, Jonathan. 2012. Music teaching and learning in the online academy of music teaching and learning in the Online Academy of Irish Music: An ethnographic and cyber ethnographic field study of music, meaning, identity and practice in community. In Proceedings of the ISME commission for community music activity: CMA XXX, edited by Don D. Coffman,

Ionian University, Corfu, Greece.

Waldron, Janice; Horsley, Stephanie and Veblen, Kari V. 2020. 'Introduction: Why Should We Care About Social Media? in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Media and Music Learning,* edited by Janice Waldron, Stephanie Horsley and Kari Veblen. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190660772.013.42

Appendix One: Interview Questions

Ethno Exchange organisers

How were the musicians selected?

What is a digital residency?

How is the digital residency being organised?

How are participants being facilitated?

How are the final premiers being presented?

What was the inspiration behind this idea?

What is the purpose / aim of the Exchange Sessions?

How is it different to the Hope Sessions?

Which aspects of the Ethno ethos are you focusing on?

How do you envision Ethno benefiting from online collaborations?

How do you balance excellence with inclusion?

What is your understanding of intercultural exchange?

How is intercultural exchange achieved through an online platform?

Hope Session Artistic leaders

What was your experience of leading a Hope Session?

What benefits do you see the Hope Sessions offering the Ethno community?

Do you see any drawbacks, or room for improvement?

How do you see the Hope Sessions encouraging intercultural exchange on an online platform?

Additional questions to the Hope Session organisers:

What was the inspiration to start the Hope Sessions?

What is the aim of the Hope Sessions?