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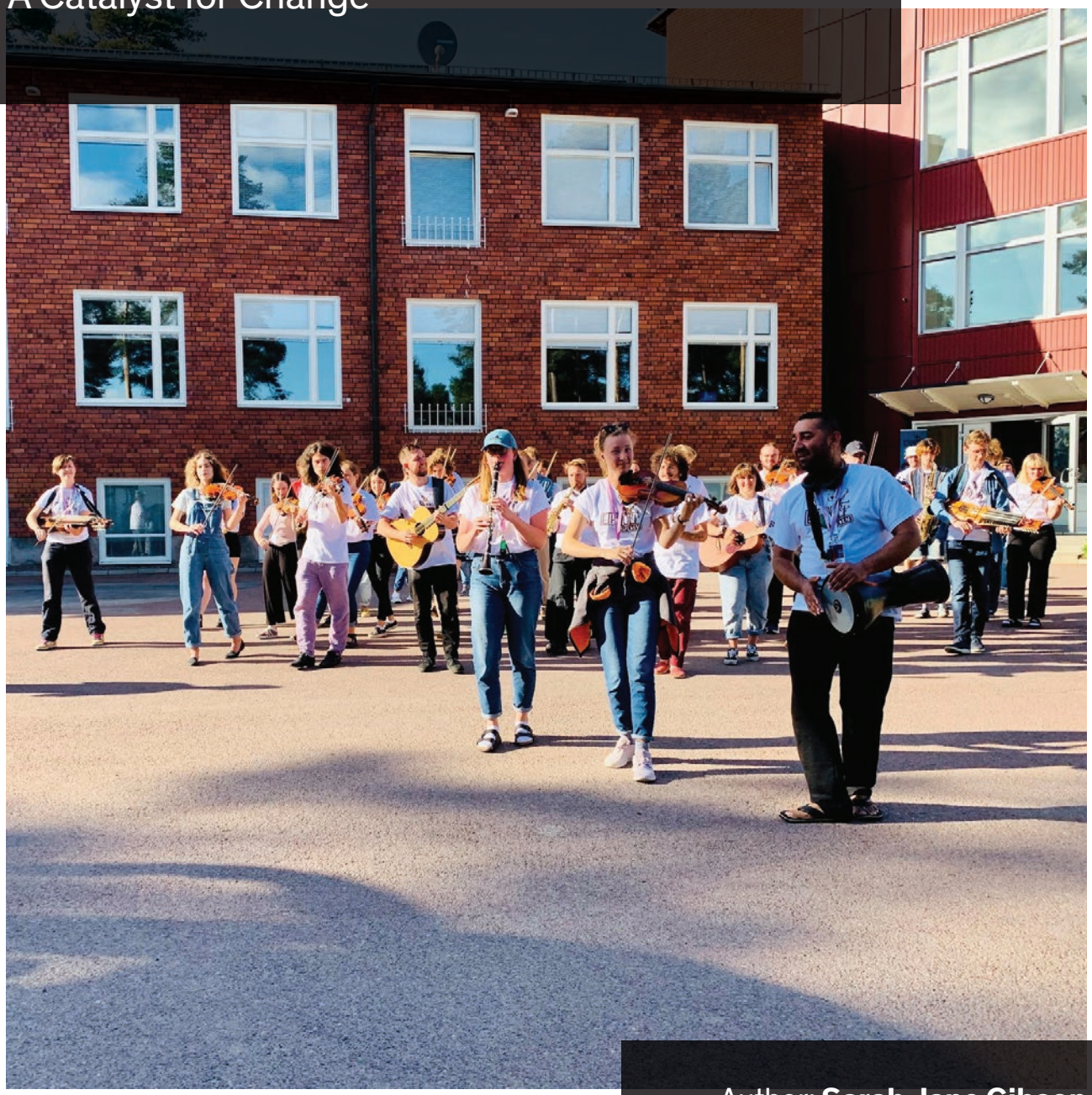
# Case Study: **Ethno Sweden**

## A Catalyst for Change



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ETHNO RESEARCH

International Centre for Community Music

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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.

JM International
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a time where borders between people appear to be strengthening, music projects that enable positive interactions between people from diverse places serve a vital need. Ethno Sweden, the oldest and largest of *Jeunes Musicale International's* folk music programmes, provides such an opportunity. This weeklong residential music camp aims at connecting young folk musicians from around the world by providing a space where they can learn traditional music practices from each other.

This research is placed at a junction between ethnomusicology, community music and pedagogy as it addresses concepts of identity formation in relation to musical encounters that are facilitated by an artistic leader through a particular pedagogical approach. Based on this case study I suggest that through the creation of an atmosphere of openness and respect, participants at Ethno camps are enabled to learn from one another in such a manner that it changes their understandings about the world around them and develops personal confidence and happiness.

After a brief overview of the literature and an explanation of the methodological approach, findings will be explored within the Ethno-research strands of inquiry: experience, pedagogy and reverberations. The *experience* of the camp is explored by investigating how the organization of Ethno Sweden creates an atmosphere of openness and respect. Following that the *pedagogical approach* of the camp is interrogated through a consideration of the formally organized group workshops and the informal jamming sessions. Finally, *reverberations* are explored by considering the impact the camp has had on the lives of its participants, as they explain how they attribute changes in their lives to attending Ethno camps.

# Ethno Sweden:
# **A Catalyst for Change**

## INTRODUCTION

Ethno is the *Jeunesses Musicales International* programme for folk, world, and traditional music. They are residential music camps for musicians between the ages of 16 and 30, that are organized locally in a variety of countries around the world (Ethno-World, no date). The basic premise of the camps, as described by one of Ethno Sweden's organizers, is that everybody comes with a song and then teaches it to the group (Fieldnotes, 1 July 2019). The camp participants then perform all the songs that have been learned in events at the end of the week. For some participants, the camp has impacted their lives greatly, as noted by Per Gudmundson, the Executive for *Folkmusikens Hus*, the organisation that runs Ethno Sweden: 'Ethno changes people, socially and personally, and also builds their musical careers at the same time' (Interview, 1 July, 2019).

The camp has also created a broad global network for participants. Ella, an artistic leader at Sweden, describes it:

> **In Ethno, it's like 'welcome to our family and our community. And it's worldwide, and it's international, and just by coming to this camp you will see that you will get a family and friends much larger than this group of people' (Ella, interview, 3 July 2019).**

Ethno Research is exploring 'the hypothesis that Ethno music camps provide transformational socio-cultural and musical significances for those that engage in its activities' using three lines of inquiry: pedagogy, experience and reverberations (Ethno-Research, 2019). This case study focuses on Ethno Sweden 2019, investigating how the camp creates an atmosphere of openness and respect which then enables participants to learn from each other. This results in some participants attributing changes in their perception of the world around them, a growth in confidence, and, feelings of happiness to their participation in the camp.

Following a methodology and literature review, the thematic analysis is divided into three sections: Experience, Pedagogy and Reverberations. In the first section, I will focus on how the camp creates an atmosphere of openness and respect. The second section will explore how participants learn from each other, and the final section discusses the impact the camp has had on the lives of some of its participants once they have returned home.

## Ethno Sweden 2019

**Image 1: Lake Siljan at dusk. Photo, Sarah-Jane Gibson.**

**I believe most of the folk music in Sweden is portrayed through the dark forest and the hills coming over the horizon. It's mostly minor and so beautiful and you can see a lake that is reflected on the dark forest. That's what Swedish folk music is for me. (Viktor, interview, 30 July, 2019)**

Ethno Sweden is located in the town of Rättvik, which lies on the Eastern banks of Lake Siljan, about a three-hour car drive North-West of Stockholm. The camp takes place in the local secondary school. Much like the ethnographic description above, Rättvik is located next to a lake which is surrounded by forest, creating an evocative setting for Ethno participants.

Ethno Sweden was the first Ethno camp. It started in 1990 in Falun under the leadership of Magnus Backstöm. Currently, the camp is organised by Peter Ahlbom and Erik Rask, who work for *Folkmusikens Hus*. It is also the largest Ethno camp, comprising up to ninety participants.

The camp ran from Thursday, June 27 to Friday, July 5, 2019. Participants arrived on the first day and departed on the last. Overseas participants had the option of catching a bus from Stockholm to Rättvik. The first five days comprised workshops and social activities and the final two days focused on concerts, the first at one of the largest folk fiddle festivals in Sweden, *Bingsjöstämman* and the other at Rättviksparken, as part of the *Musik vid Siljan* festival. Both opportunities provided participants with a chance to engage with Swedish folk music in outdoor music festivals, drawing attention to the relationship between the music and its natural environment, as described by Viktor in the quotation above. Individual groups also performed in Rättvik on two separate occasions, *Tisdagskul* and *Café Nyfiket*.

Previous participants and leaders at the camp highlighted that not only are Ethno camps around the world distinct from each other, but Ethno Sweden is different every year, depending on the mix of people who attend. During one of my conversations with Peter, he noted that 2019 had a large amount of 'jamming and collaboration', compared to previous years. Thus, I would like to emphasize that this report is not only specific to observations at Ethno Sweden, but the Ethno Sweden of 2019.

## Participants

Ethno Sweden 2019 had 85 participants from eighteen countries, as listed below:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sweden | 37 | Palestine | 2 |
| United States | 9 | India | 2 |
| France | 7 | Australia | 1 |
| Lithuania | 4 | Belgium | 1 |
| Croatia | 4 | Finland | 1 |
| Colombia | 4 | Norway | 1 |
| Brazil | 2 | New Zealand | 1 |
| Estonia | 2 | Germany | 1 |
| Taiwan | 2 | British Isles (including myself) | 3 |

Having a gender balance is important to Ethno Sweden, as the organizers 'want to show the participants that we are equals' (Peter Ahlbom, interview, 1 July, 2019). They are also inclusive of non-binary identities. The camp aims to ensure that there is a balance of musical instruments, so that there are not too many of one instrument.

However, as the camp has space for up to 95 participants, they rarely turn anyone away. The age range is 16–25, making it one of the few Ethno camps welcoming participants under 18.

'The aim of the camp is to bring young musicians from around the world to Sweden' (Per Gudmundson, interview, 1 July, 2019). Ethno Sweden, therefore, has a budget to invite 15–20 performers from outside Europe and are involved in exchange schemes with other camps in order to facilitate the attendance of participants from other parts of the world, including a programme bringing Palestinian musicians to the camp. They request a gender balance with these exchanges, if possible (Peter Ahlbom, interview, 1 July,2019). Many participants will also 'pay their own way' to the camps, as they 'are interested in the Swedish Ethno because it's the biggest and the oldest' (Peter Ahlbom, interview, 1 July, 2019). Ethno Sweden 2019 comprised more foreign participants than Swedish, with 35 Swedes and 50 from other parts of the world.

## Research Design

Reflexive ethnography first requires the researcher to situate themselves within their project, in an attempt to recognize how a researcher's background and experience can impact the field (Barz and Cooley, 2008). Whilst I am an outsider to folk music and not within the age range of an Ethno participant, I was involved in music camps and tours, both locally and overseas throughout most of my time in secondary school as a member of the KwaZulu Natal Youth Choir in South Africa. The choir drew its membership from schools across the KwaZulu Natal Province, irrespective of class or ethnic identity. It also aimed to perform an eclectic blend of music, ranging from South African Traditional song to folk music from around the world and standard Western Classical repertoire. This experience influenced my perceptions of people around me who came from different socio-economic backgrounds, broadening my understanding of the world. Therefore, although not an Ethno 'insider', I could relate to much of what I observed due to my own experiences in the Natal Youth choir.

## Participant observation

Philip Bohlman (2002, p. 4) describes ethnography as 'the common practice of physically being present when others are making music'. For this case study, I participated in Ethno Sweden as a singer. I shared accommodation with the organisers of the camp, at a nearby campsite, in the same apartment complex as the artistic leaders. I was, therefore, not experiencing the same sleeping arrangements as other participants. I shared all meals with participants, attended events and rehearsals and attempted to learn all the songs that were being taught. I performed in one song with the participants at the final concert and at the *Bingsjöstämman* festival.

## Interviews

I interviewed 27 people whilst I was on the camp and followed up with nine interviews afterwards. Due to the high number of participants at Ethno Sweden, interviewing everyone was not possible for the scope of this case study. I did, however, have conversations with many participants in a variety of different settings. Some participants were interviewed at regular intervals throughout the camp in order to follow their progress. The headmaster of the school that hosts the camp, Per Gudmundson, the executive of *Folkmusikens Hus*, Peter Ahlbom and two artistic leaders were also interviewed.

## Ethical considerations

Case studies underwent a thorough ethical review with York St John University. Participants were asked to sign a consent form prior to any interviews or video recordings being made. They were always aware of my position as a researcher and their right to withdraw from participation in the research project. Names of participants and artistic leaders have been anonymized, and Per Gudmundson and Peter Ahlbom have given me their permission to use their real names.

## Literature review

As part of broader research into the English folk music scene, Elise Gayraud (2015, p.116–117) included an examination of Ethno arguing that the challenges involved in learning folk music from different cultures and the 'unique sounds' are 'some of the most rewarding features of the Ethno experience'. Linus Ellström (2016) explored the multicultural context of Ethno camps focusing on the interplay between the social, musical and cultural aspects of the camp, whilst, Lissandra Roosioja (2018, p. 22) argued that the camps, like a festival, 'give support to the participants to stay in a state of suspension, away from their everyday lives'. Cassandre Balosso-Bardin (2018) writes about the Världen's band, a group that was formed due to many of its members participating in Ethno Sweden in 2010. Whilst not directly about an Ethno camp, the article considers intercultural exchanges within this multicultural band. My research develops upon these themes, focusing specifically on how intercultural exchanges at Ethno may be impacting identity formation.

Ethnomusicology research already recognizes that music can enable a re-imagination of identity (Frith, 1996, Rice, 2007, Turino, 2008, Magowan and Wrazen, 2013, Gibson, 2018). These authors generally consider interactions within one particular form of cultural expression, but there is recognition of the impact of intercultural exchange in the literature.

Laurent Aubert (2007, p. xii) writes, 'our discovery of the music of the other is an experience, a transcultural experience from one person to another in which the perception of the other in his or her difference mingles intimately with that of our own sensitivity vis-a-vis the other'. Benjamin Brinner (2009, p. 232) suggests music-making 'may offer a different way of being and acting together, even serving as a catalyst for social change. Caroline Bithell (2014, p. 288) notes that some of these experiences can move beyond an immediate encounter and can have a long-term impact on people, 'materially, psychologically, and existentially'. Bithell (2014) Turino (2008) and Seeger (1987) have all considered the impact musical participation can have on emotional wellbeing. Findings in the literature, therefore, support the argument that intercultural exchange can have a positive impact on people's lives.

This particular research project draws on these aforementioned conceptions of identity formation in music within the parameters of community music, because the camps are spaces that are facilitated by artistic leaders, organizers and volunteers. Lee Higgins (2012, p. 21) considers community music as an active intervention between a music facilitator and participants. For the purposes of this case study, this relates to the creation of a 'safe space, in which the music facilitator attempts to create an atmosphere that is mindful of the participants' range of abilities but also challenging enough to stimulate all concerned (Higgins, 2012, p. 150). Ethno camps are spaces aimed at encouraging people from diverse cultures to learn from each other, and I shall argue that it is the creation of a particular atmosphere by the facilitators that enables this to take place.

This draws attention to pedagogical approaches in the camp and how they interact with ethnomusicological understandings of identity formation within a community music framework. The pedagogical approach at camps could be considered within a continuum of informal learning, of which one particular feature is learning music by ear rather than a musical score (Green, 2002, 2008). Ethno-World describes their pedagogical approach as 'peer to peer', which, according to Claire Howell Major, Michael S Harris, and Todd Zakrajsek (2015) can have a number of understandings. Within the context of Ethno-world, they are referring to participants within the camp, teaching other participants their pieces. However, rather than peers being seen as 'equals', they are considered as experts in their particular musical style. The recognition of each participant's particular musical heritage in this manner may be one of the key factors in enabling successful intercultural engagement (Kymlicka, 1995; Folkestad 2002).

Ethno camps provide an opportunity to explore Lee Higgins and Patricia Sheehan Campbells' (2016, p. 640) suggestion that the 'convergence' between Ethnomusicology, community music and music education 'is extending and deepening the potential of music to engage learning in meaningful ways' further. The following observations from Ethno Sweden 2019 demonstrate how these theoretical proposals are occurring within the camp.

# EXPERIENCE: CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF OPENNESS AND RESPECT

'Open-mindedness' was often referred to during interviews, with participants describing people at Ethno as 'open, accepting of everyone, no matter your background, or who you are or how well you play' (Nils, interview, 2 August 2019). It was also a term used concerning attitudes towards different types of music (Shu-Ching, interview, 29 August 2019). Ellström (2016, p. 77) suggests that openness is required at an Ethno 'from the start in order to get the full learning experience' arguing that in such a diverse context, 'one has to be open for quick and unexpected changes, dissimilarities and new experiences'. I suggest that the camp is organized in such a way to enable openness and respect amongst participants. In this context organisation refers to 'how people shape their group into a structure, or entity, which has a set of routines and practices that reflect a particular identity and create a community of practice' (Gibson, 2018, p. 56), drawing on Richard Jenkin's (2008, p. 169) definition that 'emphasizes, activity, process and practices'.

The headmaster of the school first drew my attention to the concept of a 'learning environment' within the camp by saying, 'the camp provides 'freedom to act, or to perform, or learn. If you have a learning environment, then everybody is going to do better. It is very important. That's the thing with Ethno. They have this learning climate' (Headmaster, interview, 1 July 2019). This section focuses on how the leadership team within the camp built the learning climate that the headmaster refers to. First, the schedule and residential aspect of the camp will be explored, demonstrating how it focuses on recognizing all participants and encourages interactions between them. Secondly, the manner in which the camp leadership 'models' behaviour will be explored. I argue that it is these two elements that create an atmosphere of openness and respect, which shapes the learning environment of the camp.

## Camp schedule

> **What I think is really important is that it's one week altogether. It's not like you're coming one time in the week together and you play music. You're building something up. In your first days, you're searching and everybody's there and then you're learning the tunes, which is quite exhausting sometimes because there is a lot of information. But, after a while the arrangements start, and you get to know people and then you have the first concert. The first concert is always nice because you feel like everybody's like, "ok, this is what we've learned, now we're going to show it". (Dirk, interview, July 3, 2019)**

Ethno Sweden follows a structure broadly described by Dirk in the quotation above. Participants arrive on a Thursday, and the rehearsal sessions begin on Friday. On Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, four songs are taught a day. On Tuesday and Wednesday, there are group rehearsals, where pieces are prepared for the concerts. Then there are two concerts on Wednesday and Thursday. During the week, smaller ensembles have the opportunity to perform in Rättvik. On the final Friday, everyone helps to tidy up the school and returns home. Dirk highlights the broad process of meeting each other, creating something and sharing it with an audience over a short period of time. Charlotte also draws attention to the process of meeting people and creating something: 'I really like the way that it brings people together from really diverse cultures and backgrounds in a meaningful and fun way that's still constructive. Sure, there are lots of "love vibes", but it doesn't feel super airy-fairy because everyone who's there are focused musicians, and you're creating something. (Charlotte, interview, 27th August) Both these participants recognize the primary purpose of the camp, creating something, which can be related to a 'joint enterprise' or common goal that is shared by all the participants within the group (Wenger, 1998). Within this broad structure, the camp is organized further to enable intercultural engagement.

## Recognising Everyone

Interspersed within the broad process described above are scheduled events, such as dancing sessions, a trance party, beach picnic and craft activities. There are also 'open mic' performances, where participants who have been 'jamming' during the week can share their music. Ethno Sweden begins with a morning radio show, where facilitators interview participants, providing another space for them to present their music. These opportunities are very important because the organizers feel that when people have a chance to share their music, then they start to shine (Field notes, 1 July). Participants will also lead both the dancing and jamming sessions, which is considered quite important at such a large camp. Madison says,

> **I think things like the open mics were really nice for people to share their musical gifts and experiences and feel like you had a little bit of spotlight, in a sense. With 90 people it can also feel easy to get swallowed in it all. There's so much happening all around you that it can be hard to find your own space and role in everything. The open mics and teaching dance were good ways for people to tell more about themselves to the larger group. (Madison, interview, 31 July 2019)**

Another element within Sweden is 'family time'. These are brief meetings for about a half an hour each day for the first few days. People are divided up into small groups. During these sessions, each person is given the opportunity to discuss their feelings. It is another opportunity to ensure that everyone on the camp is having a chance to express themselves and for the leaders to ensure the well-being of participants. Freja, an artistic leader, explains that 'it's because you have to take care of everyone and know where people are at with their feelings. In smaller camps you can talk to everyone, but in this camp it's so big, so you have to have a system' (Freja, interview, 3 July 2019).

For one of the participants, these sessions were an opportunity to connect with people from different parts of the world. He felt the families were 'a good way to divide up groups so that everyone is with people they don't know' (Nils, interview, 2 August 2019). For others, this was a difficult experience, as not everyone is comfortable sharing their feelings with people that they don't know (Fieldnotes, 28 August 2019). However, it is an example of encouraging openness with each other, a key element of building the learning atmosphere of the camp.

Attempting to recognize every person's identity within the camp leads to important considerations within multicultural settings. Ellström (2016, p. 77) suggests that 'by acting as representatives (both musical, social and cultural) from each country, the participant's cultural identity is strengthened and granted a given place in the context [of Ethno]'. This recognition can help people to feel secure in their own identity, potentially enabling people to feel more open to learning about different musical cultures. Göran Folkestad (2002, p. 160) suggests that 'by obtaining security in one's own identity whilst simultaneously achieving knowledge and understanding of others, the possibilities of and prerequisites for a genuinely multicultural society might be created'. Will Kymlicka (1995: 191) also recognizes the importance of individuals having a 'strong primary identity' prior to the construction of a shared identity in multicultural environments. Therefore, the camps focus on giving everyone a chance to express themselves or their music in some way, may be a vital element in enabling intercultural learning.

## Connection

Another important element of the camp is its residential nature. Gayraud (2015, p.119) concludes that this is essential 'because otherwise sufficient intercultural immersion would not be possible'. My findings suggest that it encourages closer relationships amongst participants. Madison felt that this arrangement of sleeping on mattresses in classrooms brought a uniqueness to the camp by 'bringing people together more' (Madison, interview, 31 July, 2019). Sam agreed, reflecting,

> **I think it made everyone a lot closer together. I feel like when you are forced to be in such close quarters, even if you have differences, you have to work them out. I feel like being in close proximity with people makes closer emotional bonds with people. (Sam, interview, 4 September 2019).**

One artistic leader pointed out that, since people are sleeping in this 'draughty cold school room, they see each other from their worst side, because they are very tired', She also felt, however, that 'everyone is in the same boat, which is really important to make an Ethno vibe' (Ella, interview, 3 July 2019). Per directly relates the lack of sleep to assisting in building openness saying, 'tiredness, it is part of the process. It builds trust and openness. It opens the emotions of expression' (Per. Gudmundson, interview, 1 July 2019).

The camp also only serves vegetarian meals, which for some participants was a new experience. These participants spoke about going to the shops to buy meat because they felt their bodies not having as much energy as they were used to (Fieldnotes, 30 July 2019). This was also referenced by Per, 'I think many people when they come, at first, they're "what is this vegetarian food, I love meat, why should I?" But, after a while, they see that vegetarian or not, is unimportant. It's the other things that become important.' (Per Gudmundson, interview, 1 July 2019).

Another facet of the camp that encourages interaction, is physical connection through voluntary massages. Before most rehearsals, there is a warm-up session, where an artistic leader leads the brief session to loosen the body in preparation for the rehearsal. Most of these sessions involve organizing the group into a large circle and massaging one another's backs. This tactile experience can also be considered a preparation for the musical connections that are to follow (Freja, interview, 3 July 2019).

These examples demonstrate how the organization of the camp influences the learning environment described earlier by the headmaster. It pushes participants out of their comfort zones, enabling new experiences, such as eating vegetarian food, thereby preparing participants for the new musical encounters during rehearsals. This preparation is then enhanced through facilitation by the artistic leaders and the camp organizers.

## Learning by observing

Openness and respect are demonstrated by the leadership, rather than explained. Peter reflected on this in an interview:

> **I think the leaders are really important because they are professional musicians. They are really skilled and still they are so happy to meet these young people that are not at all on the same level. You see the way the leaders work with them and the way [the organizers] are changing the garbage cans in the toilet. They can come to us immediately for anything and we will help them with a smile. I think that is rubbing off, the way they are greeted and the atmosphere that is created because nobody is showing off. Nobody is ordering people around or bullying people. There have been incidents and stuff like that, but for many years there's not been any stealing or fights. Not any crisis in those ways. That is also, how come that doesn't happen. Maybe it's because they are really nice people to start with, but, it's something with the attitude that create this atmosphere. (Peter Ahlbom, interview, 1 July 2019)**

Once again, reference to creating an atmosphere is made, but here Peter draws attention to the manner in which the artistic leaders and the organisers behave at the camp. Freja describes their role as 'to be humble and not take space, but to give space to the participants' (Freja, interview, 3 July) Ella elaborates by saying they 'show [participants] what the Ethno vibe is by having a good connections, being careful how you speak about things and how we take care of each other. It's like pressing a button and then stepping away' (Ella, interview, 3 July).

The artistic leaders also emphasize 'showing' participants the 'ethno vibe', which Ella describes as 'trying to get details [in the music being taught], which I think shows how important everybody and their songs and traditions are' (Ella, interview, 3 July 2019). By showing participants how to respond to the participants leading the workshops, facilitators prepare participants for all the nonformal music-making that happens in between the workshops. Peter explains further,

> **Somehow, they expected a teacher, or a course schedule, not the same level of freedom or equality or something. They expected something else is the one thing people say. Because it's not a course in that sense. Then they know that they should teach themselves, but still they expect the leaders to be more leading. And they are encouraged to mix and make music by their own initiative. (Peter Ahlbom, interview, 1 July 2019)**

Per explains that 'there's the music value of expanding borders of making music together, but there's also the very big value in getting young people from different backgrounds, socially, economically and culturally to come together and learn from each other' (Per Gudmundson, interview, 1 July 2019). By creating a learning atmosphere, which I suggest is one of 'openness and respect' participants are prepared for the creative process of learning music from each other throughout the week. This is achieved by the manner in which the camp activities are organized and also by how the leadership within the camp demonstrate these attitudes as they interact with one another and the participants.

## PEDAGOGY: LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

**Image 2: A workshop. Photo, Sarah-Jane Gibson.**

In the previous section, I demonstrated how an atmosphere of openness and respect is constructed in order to prepare participants to learn from each other. In Ethno Sweden, I observed two areas where music learning took place: workshops and 'jamming'. Both settings encouraged learning, but in different ways. Workshops comprised an approach whereby one person, or a group of people representing one country, would teach their tune. This responsibility was shared between 16 groups that had been allocated the task of preparing a song for the final concert. The sessions had a strong sense of differentiation between a teacher and participant. Then there were sessions referred to as 'jamming' which contained many elements of informal learning (Green, 2008).

## Sharing a song

As a representative example of the impact being taught a song by someone from a different cultural background had on both the teacher and the participants, I shall focus on learning the Sàmi song, which was taught on the third day of the camp, bearing in mind Sam's reflection on the effect of sharing something 'close to the heart':

> **I think one of the reasons everyone gets so close so quickly and it's such an important experience for people is that we're all sharing one thing that we're all very passionate about and is maybe very personal and close to the heart and that connection of sharing something that's important is part of that experience of Ethno and why at the end of the week everyone is so sad to leave each other (Sam, interview, 4 September, 2019).**

Lejá, from Norway, was the first Sámi to attend an Ethno Sweden. Before teaching her song to the group, she explained the history of *joiking* and how this musical tradition had been banned for a period in Norway. She taught the song over one day, introducing it to the four sections of the 'Ethno orchestra' (melodic instruments, vocals, winds, and 'chords' and percussion) in separate sessions. She taught the tune by ear through rote learning, the standard approach at Ethno. At the end of the day, all four sections came together in a group rehearsal. Lejá stood in front of the ensemble and explained the arrangement of the song. She reflected upon this later, saying,

> **Now I've [learned] how to arrange the music. I've learned how to direct a big group. That was something I hadn't done before, like instrumentally. Just like knowing which instrument should be there and there because I'm not used to it. I usually come and just sing. (Lejá, interview, 1 July, 2019)**

We then began performing the piece as an ensemble. By the end of the song, Lejá had burst into tears. One participant went up to give her a hug, which then resulted in many more participants stopping to hug each other, demonstrating the emotional release that sometimes occurred within the camp. Sam recalls,

> **I think of when we were rehearsing the *joiking* with Lejá and she started crying and it was so emotionally powerful to see that, especially after she told us the history of how the Sámi people have been oppressed from the government and haven't been allowed to *joik* for a very long time and everyone was doing it. I think about that a lot. (Sam, interview, 4 September 2019)**

Sam draws attention to the history of *joiking*, as explained by Lejá. Lejá's explanation of this made participants aware of the discrimination the Sámi have experienced as an indigenous people. This issue has been explored in ethnomusicology literature by Tina Ramnarine (2013, p.163) with particular reference to *joiking* and its revival amongst the Sàmi and 'role in representing a pan-Sàmi political identity'. Personally, Lejá's sharing of the song brought to life Ramnarine's ethnographic research. Like Sam, it seemed significant to me that *joiking* was being recognized and sung by so many people in a public space. For Lejá, 'it was a strong feeling to hear all of Ethno and the audience joik. That is something that I haven't gotten from my hometown, so it was good fun to see that.' (Interview, July 4, 2019).

**Link to Video 1: Performance of the Sámi song at the final concert. Video, Sarah-Jane Gibson. www.ethnoresearch.org/gibson-video-1-sami-song**

Many people who shared their song in the workshops shared a similar experience of the impact of hearing one's 'song' being performed by such a large group of musicians:

> **When I heard them playing the Taiwanese music it was really touching. And they are really paying attention to it. In Taiwan we will say, if you have a pure heart when you are doing something you like your eyes will shine, and I can see in their eyes they are shining. It's really touching (Shu-Ching, interview, 29 August 2019).**

These experiences and comments reveal the 'meaningful ways' in which ethnomusicology, community music and music education can converge (Higgins and Campbell, 2016). The achievement of an open and respectful learning environment prepared both Lejá and the participants to engage with her piece. Lejá's provision of the social context of her song, enlightened participants to the history of the Sámi and the significance of this piece being performed publicly, whilst the facilitation of a 'safe place' also enabled emotional expression during the rehearsals, further connecting individuals.

One participant commented on the emotional aspect of the camp: 'in a way it's almost a vulnerable place and everyone can have a very raw and authentic experience of someone and you develop a very strong connection with other people because of that and because you're having such an extreme emotional experience' (Andrew, interview, 3 July 2019). Whilst in this instance, there is an element of a 'master-apprentice' model, Green (2008, p. 121) notes that 'learners seem to experience a qualitative difference between being taught by someone who is a peer, regardless of the particular teaching method'.

## Jamming

**Image 3: Jamming at the lakeside. Photo, Sarah-Jane Gibson.**

**[Jams] are very open and free-form because it's people bringing what they have and so it might be that a few people are jamming Irish tunes, but anyone can join in and then we might end up playing Swedish stuff and that doesn't matter and then some will pull out a guitar and do a good cover of a pop song and a few people will groan, but other people will get into it – it's far more spontaneous. (Charlotte, interview, 27 August 2019)**

Lucy Green (2008) describes informal group learning as occurring 'unconsciously… simply through taking part in the collective actions of the group… through watching, listening to and imitating each other'. Thus, the jamming at the camp is easily recognizable as a form of nonformal learning. It is described by one participant as 'the magic of Ethno' (Fieldnotes, 29 June 2019). For many participants 'jamming' was fun, with those people studying music describing how nice it was to 'play for fun, and not just serious music' (Shu-Ching, interview, 1 July 2019) and for those participants engaged in careers other than music, having fun with music because they don't normally have the opportunity to do so (Astrid, interview, July 5 2019). Of particular interest to researchers in music education is the manner in which the creation of an atmosphere by the organisers, followed by the experience of sharing music in the workshops, prepared participants for these nonformal learning encounters. The following interview extracts demonstrate how meaningful the 'jamming' was for participants.

> **I started playing and I started getting into the groove and I felt so much joy and I was looking at Jamal. Me and him made eye contact and we were just playing and in complete sync and it was so much fun and, in that instant, there was so much joy and I realised that I will play music for the rest of my life. Afterwards, I was talking to Jamal and he was saying, this is the most fun [he's] ever had playing music and I felt it. It was pretty amazing. (John, interview, 24 August 2019)**

Jamal also describes the experience, explaining the interplay between the variety of musical styles that were taking place, and referencing the unique aspect of many different cultural styles playing together.

> **We were playing a piece, near the lakeside, a very standard motif, and we kept playing it again and again. Then people came in with their own instruments and they improvised using their own methods. Improvisation style was very different due to musical backgrounds. Hassan was playing fast tremolos, I was playing more arpeggio guitar, a guy with a saxophone was jumping between octaves – everyone was improvising in their own method from their own musical background and the result is rather unique – because one person can't do all these styles at once (Jamal, interview, 7 September).**

Jamal, once again describes the communication taking place during performance:

> **When we were working with our Eastern band, Habibi's, we hadn't spoken to each other much, but yet we communicate on a very high level and we create a cloud of telepathy. With one sign from one of us, all the others**

> **changed melodies directly. And that is a high state of mind that I aspire to reach again. I spoke a bit with Hassan, the zaz player. That was a very strict relationship at first, but since we share experiences and ideas, now we have a more relaxed and laid-back relationship and now we can jam even better (Jamal, interview, 4 July, 2019).**

What is paramount to all of these comments, is that these experiences were occurring without direct facilitation, yet participants describe remarkable encounters of connecting and communicating through the music. 'Jamming' occurred late at night, often whilst participants were at Lake Siljan, enabling them with the opportunity to engage with one another in an independent setting, providing, arguably, a unique space for young musicians from around the world to connect. This was enabled by the work of the facilitators during the workshops and the organisers in creating a learning environment. One of the facilitators of the camp reflected on the experience he had when he attended Ethno. He felt that the camps helped him with his confidence by learning to approach people in order to jam. He said that all the work that they do during the workshops is preparing for the space for jamming later because people are already learning from each other, so may feel more comfortable to approach people at later times (Fieldnotes, 1 July 2019). Therefore, Ethno Sweden provided the setting, created the atmosphere, demonstrated how to interact with one another, and then gave participants the space to interact, aligning directly with the following commentary on facilitation by Higgins and Willingham (2017, p. 86):

> **by establishing a secure but flexible framework from the outset, it is possible to give control over to the group and to trust in the direction it takes… music becomes meaningful to the participants with the potential to generate an experience that can shape, create and mould identity.**

There is, of course, a delicate balance between providing a free and open space for creativity and ensuring the well-being of all participants. A few people did express concern about this during follow up interviews, especially due to the younger age range of the camp. However, it was evident from some of the commentaries of the younger participants that this was a very important experience. For example, Casper said 'It's one of the most important things I've done in my life so far' (Casper, interview, 2 July 2019) and Ella, now an artistic leader, felt that when she was 16 at the camp she 'appreciated it so much', particularly that she could become friends with older people as well as people from other countries (Ella, interview, 10 September 2019). The freedom given to participants may therefore be an important part of the 'magic' of Ethno and challenges community musicians and educators to create spaces for informal learning without facilitation, trusting their students to work together on their own, and, potentially encounter meaningful learning experiences similar to Ethno participants.

# REVERBERATIONS: BUILDING CONFIDENCE, FEELING HAPPIER AND CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

Various participants throughout the camp and afterwards explained how the camp had changed their lives (Casper, interview, 2 July; Ciara, interview 25 October, Nils, interview 2 July and 2 August). This has also been noted by previous Ethno researchers (Gayraud, 2016). I will focus on three areas as were described by the participants with whom I interviewed: changing perspectives, confidence, and happiness.

## Changing perspectives

> **I think the magic is when you come with your thoughts and views and find that they are changeable. That you have to re-evaluate what you thought was the truth about other people and types of music. The magic is also in the experience of all the possibilities that comes within going into and meeting with something that you didn't know anything about. That it's nothing that you have to be afraid of. That it's a possibility. I think very much that the magic is when they go from the camp, that they have experienced that. (Per Gudmundson, interview, 1 July 2019)**

General commentary by different participants was quite similar in that people can now identify a person with a country, and this leads to them feeling more connected to that place perhaps most succinctly described by Nils, 'You get the feeling that these people aren't very different from me and a personal insight into other people's cultures' (Nils, interview, 2 August 2019). Some participants found themselves deepening their understanding of issues because of meeting people who were going through the lived experience of them. For Shu-Ching, this was becoming friends with refugees from the Middle East.

> **I know the meaning of the word, but for me before I went to Sweden, it was just a word, because I didn't know any refugees, but when I started to make friends with them, it's just like you know what that word means but you never touch it. Suddenly you realise that, and this happened in my life. (Shu-Ching, interview, 29 August 2019).**

These findings relate largely to the literature on intercultural exchange, whereby there has been a negotiation of identity between participants (Brinner, 2009; Gibson, 2018). People from different cultural understandings who work together to create new musical

collaborations can gain a deeper insight into one another. Turino (2008, p. 227–229) suggests that these collaborations can help understand how people from different backgrounds 'make sense of the world'. Gibson's (2018, p. 117) observations of this form of intercultural engagement led her to conclude that 'when people are in a multicultural situation and they are working to relate to each other, they are constantly negotiating meaning, or making sense of how their understanding of the world fits in with a different one.' Based on this case study, I would like to extend this conclusion to suggest that this constant readjustment of perceptions and ideas, leads to changes of personal identity, which for some participants at Ethno manifested as increased happiness and confidence.

## Confidence

Growth in confidence is discussed by participants who attribute it directly as a result of their attendance. For example, Shu-Ching says,

> **In this Ethno you have to open your mind and you have to say your opinion to the group, so I think it might change people to open their mind and say their opinions to others and have a conversation and cooperate (Shu-Ching, interview, 29 August 2019).**

For her, learning to express her ideas and opinions in Ethno has allowed her to express her opinions outside the camp more confidently. For others, there has been a growth in confidence in approaching strangers. John says, 'I'm more in tune and understanding of that people crave that kind of emotional connection and because of that it's been easier for me to talk to random people' (John, interview, 24 August 2019. This is something that Sam also relates

> **I was nervous going into it because I was worried about meeting new people and trying to make friends with new people. I haven't had to do that in a while. It went really well, and it's made me a little more confident or willing to talk to new people, especially in everyday life. Especially, I've noticed in new classes, it's been a lot easier to engage with my classmates. Everyone at Ethno was so friendly, so that made it very easy at the camp (Sam, interview, 4 September, 2019).**

Sam identifies that the atmosphere at the camp enabled a different manner of behaviour, because people were so friendly, and this has now been transferred to interactions outside Ethno.

### Happiness

What was also interesting was participants' reflection on how their attendance at Ethno has made them feel happier. Both Nils and Ciara reflected on this with me in their interviews:

> **The reason I return to Ethno every year is because it makes me feel good to be here. For quite a few years I lost my sense of self and direction in my life and every time I came here, I regained a little bit of it, and I felt like being myself when I was here, and I was very happy. And every time I went home after the end of the camp, I took a little bit of that happiness with me. And, after going here five times, I am very happy with my life, every year. (Nils, interview, 29 June 2019)**

> **I'm more willing to try things. I'm quite a perfectionist; however, Ethno has made me more keen to try things, musically or other things, even if I'm not sure they will succeed, and I'm much happier noticing the progress that I have made, even if it's not all the way. I'm much happier accepting where I am which I really like, and to try things that might not work (Ciara, interview, 25 October 2019).**

What is interesting is the manner in which Ciara relates her growing confidence as a musician to influencing other areas of her life, such as her happiness, aligning with Turino's (2008, p. 18) suggestion that 'the arts are a realm where the impossible or non-existent or the ideal is imagined and made possible, and new possibilities leading to new lived realities are brought into existence in perceivable forms'. Something that Bithell (2014, p. 288) noted in singers who travelled to Village Harmony singing camps, suggesting that 'camps and overseas travel, as prolonged "time out" give participants the time and space to experiment with living differently', which can ultimately result in people returning from the experience and 'living differently'. For both Ciara and Nils, this has resulted in greater acceptance of themselves, and ultimately, becoming happier.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this case study, I have demonstrated how creating an atmosphere of openness and respect enables people to learn from each other in such a manner that it changes the perspectives of some participants and leads to feelings of greater confidence and happiness. In order to make these claims, I have drawn upon my research on Ethno Sweden 2019 to demonstrate how personal growth and development operates within situations of participatory music-making.

I explained how the camp environment is organised in order to create a setting that encourages engagement with new ideas and pushing personal boundaries, and also how the organisers, volunteers, artistic leaders and past Ethno participants demonstrate the attitudes of the camp through a process of modelling the behaviours that are expected for the duration of the camp. This prepares participants for the main focus of the camp, which is to learn music from each other, which I demonstrated through a description of sharing a song in a workshop and the 'jamming' that subsequently occurs during free time on the camp. I then presented interview evidence from participants reflecting on the impact the camp has had on their lives outside the camp, and how it has developed confidence, feelings of happiness and feeling more connected with people from other parts of the world.

From a theoretical perspective, the camp draws attention to the relationship between applied ethnomusicology, music pedagogy and community music as theories of identity formation through music converge with interventions, through the field of community music, and processes of teaching and learning in music pedagogy. The unique setting of the camp as a space comprising diverse cultures provides remarkable insight into identity formation through musical participation, particularly as the cultural cohorts and formations, as described by Turino (2008), are temporary settings, with participants returning to home environments as far-reaching as Taiwan, Palestine, Colombia and Sweden. Ethno Sweden has provided a unique opportunity to explore the personal development of musicians from a variety of cultural backgrounds and the subsequent impact this has when these musicians return home. The camp also provides a unique opportunity to explore the learning approaches that enable optimum engagement with diverse musics and people, a pertinent issue for music educators who already acknowledge the complex connection between musical identity formation and music-learning (Green 2011). It is evident that much of the success of the camp is due to effective intervention by the facilitators of the camp, relating to Higgins's (2012) theories of community music as an intervention.

More broadly, the camp demonstrates an example of intercultural engagement that has led to some of its participants changing their perspective about people who come from different backgrounds. Ethno Sweden enabled some of its participants the opportunity to explore new ideas about themselves and the world around them. For some, it encouraged new friendships with people from unexpected parts of the world, whilst for others, there were personal realisations about their place in the world and their hopes and ambitions for their lives. Thus, perhaps most pertinent to the research is the impact the camp has on the lives of the participants once they have departed the camp. For many this appears to manifest as a growth in confidence, particularly in the area of approaching other people, be it to engage with them on a

musical level, such as becoming part of a new band; or on a personal level, whereby participants approach people they may not normally feel comfortable doing so. This shift in understanding also extends to a feeling of connection with other parts of the world. Now that participants know people from different countries, they feel a deeper connection to places and people that at first glance may appear to be quite unlike them, suggesting that Ethno is providing an important space for developing intercultural understandings that continue to impact the lives of some participants long after the final song is sung at the end of the camp.

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