



# **Good Vibrations: Music and social education for young offenders**

**An evaluation of the musical and social learning processes that young offenders engage in during a Good Vibrations Javanese Gamelan Project and its potential for inspiring desistance from crime**

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Jennie began to play Javanese Gamelan as a result of her PhD research into learning ensembles. Through a local community gamelan, she came into contact with Good Vibrations and was struck by the similarities in the learning processes of the Good Vibrations projects and the ensembles in her PhD research. Since then, Jennie has developed a specific research interest in the Good Vibrations project and the shared learning processes that exist between musical learning and social and emotional development.

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

This report outlines the findings of an evaluation of a Good Vibrations Javanese Gamelan project that took place at Swinfen Hall Young Offenders Institute in December 2011.

In total, 19 students participated in the project; however the actual number in each session fluctuated during the week. This was mainly due to pre-arranged appointments with professionals such as dentists, healthcare appointments and other internal meetings. Apart from one, the students that participated in the project were in Good Vibrations target group, young men:

- With open ACCT books<sup>1</sup> and/or
- On violence reduction programmes and/or
- Otherwise vulnerable/hard to reach/reluctant to engage

The evaluation looked at the project from the point of view of music education, identifying individual and social factors generated through musical development that also are attributed to desistance from crime. These were divided into two categories as follows:

- Individual Agency:
- Personal Identity
  - Diversity
  - Motivation
  - Hope
  - Self-determination
  - Personal strengths

- Social Interactions:
- Professional relationships
  - Peer relationships
  - Personal relationships
  - Sense of belonging
  - Ownership

Evaluation data was collected in a number of ways. It was collected via participant observation involving the evaluator spending the week with the project and actively participating in a tutor role. Following this, the evaluator returned to Swinfen Hall six weeks after the project ended to interview participants. Finally, Good Vibrations provided access to all internal evaluation data collected during the week. This included participant questionnaires, facilitator questionnaires and focus group data.

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<sup>1</sup> The Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) system helps to identify and monitor those at risk of self-harm and suicide in prisons. An open ACCT book is part of a care plan that provides support for prisoners at risk of harming themselves.

## **Musical Development**

In terms of musical development, it was found that the project provided a thorough curriculum which allowed development to take place both individually and at an ensemble level. The particular areas of progression in musical development were:

- Pulse and ensemble skills
- Understanding of construction of melody
- Understanding and control of dynamics
- Composing and improvising

Through the development of these, participants needed to develop listening, observing, negotiating and team work skills in order to transfer their own individual musical development into an ensemble performance.

It was found that participants went through a process of development on an individual level first and gradually became more aware of and able to control their contribution to the ensemble as they progressed musically. It was this that enabled participants to begin to develop the attributes associated with desistence from crime.



## **Individual Agency**

During the week there seemed to be a genuine shift of self-concept shown through a change of language from negative self-feedback to more positive self-feedback. At the end of the week, they became more able to focus on positive aspects of the learning and to evaluate what they had done in way that was not taken as personal criticism.

During the project participants became increasingly more motivated, as they could see the results of their own musical development and the progress made by each other. This inspired a sense of hope in the participants and many started looking beyond the project and considering how the project might influence them in other aspects of their life at Swinfen Hall and beyond.

Self-determination was seen on numerous occasions and many participants overcame personal challenges to succeed in the project, this enabled participants to see their own personal strengths.

## **Social Interactions**

Participants built strong professional relationships with the facilitator, the prison officer involved and the evaluator. These relationships were crucial to success of the project. The relationship between

the facilitator and the participants enabled participants to develop trust and respect, which in turn empowered the participants and led to strong team work through discussion and negotiation.

Peer relationships were built during the week through a mixture of the necessity to work together within the musical ensemble and through modelling by the facilitator. Participants were able to work together and put aside differences in order to produce a good musical outcome. This led to a strong sense of community and ownership of the project. Participants felt proud of their work and had a keen sense of achievement.

Throughout the week participants spoke of personal relationships outside of Swinfen Hall. Many were keen to let family members know of their achievements and all were happy to be photographed so they may be seen by people outside of Swinfen Hall. This strengthened their connections with life outside of Swinfen Hall.

## **Case Studies**

The case studies demonstrate different outcomes of different individuals within the project.

The first case study highlights how important it was for the student to complete the week even though he became very frustrated on a number of occasions and constantly reported that he did not like the music. The second highlights the enormous personal impact the project had on the student in terms of his approach to life in prison and his sleeping patterns. The third highlights how the project had enabled the student to engage with a sense of himself, the fourth how the student overcame his personal feelings for others in the group for the benefit of the musical outcome and the fifth demonstrates how he overcame his nervousness of working with others.

All of these case studies show the impact of the project and all highlight outcomes that could not be seen during the project week.

## **Conclusions**

It was clear that the processes of musical development are shared processes with the development of aspects of individual agency and social capital considered to be integral to desistence from crime. Not only did the music allow participants to develop positive self-concept, communicate with each other and work together, through engaging in musical development, participants also engaged in personal and social development.

The facilitator was crucial in modelling both positive musical values and also positive behavioural values. The positive behaviours demonstrated by the facilitator was passed to the participants, allowing them to develop respect for one another, be open to negotiation, resolve difficulties between themselves and ultimately produce a coherent musical product.

The opportunity for reflection provided by the six-week follow up interview was crucial in sustaining the positive outcomes of the project. Through the interview, participants were able to voice their

reflections on the project and relate this to their current activities. It helped them to see what the project had helped them to achieve, reinstate the sense of pride gained through the project and articulate what the positive outcomes were for themselves.

This evaluation gives a snapshot of a project at Swinfen Hall where some powerful outcomes can be seen. There is strong potential for the skills and behaviours developed during the week to be applied to the desistance process and this alone affirms the worth of the project in terms of not only a positive learning experience for students, but also as a potential turning point in participants' attitudes and behaviours.

## 1. Introduction

*'When we engage with music, we involve our inner emotional world (whether as listener, performer or composer) and foster expressive behaviours and creative imagination. We also experience music as a form of language, as a symbol system, as patterns of sound in which we perceive organisation and meaning, and as part of our individual, group and community identity. Music education, therefore, embraces both education **in** music and education **through** music.'*

(Welch and Adams, 2003; 4)

We are all musical. All people have the biological, physical and emotional make up to be musical. Moreover, neurological research has shown that being musical is part of our human design (Welch, 2001). Being able to connect with music is a fundamental human capability and music provides a forum in which to communicate, express and develop identities. It is not surprising then that music has been used as a tool for engaging people in social activity where spoken communication may present difficulties or confrontation. When Silber (2005) examined the impact of a women's prison choir on social harmony, she recognised that a singing community was a community

*'where challenging interpersonal moments, present in any group interaction, are softened by the musical framework'*

The music acted in some way to diffuse group tension. This has also been found in previous research examining the impact of the Good Vibrations Javanese Gamelan project. Caulfield, Wilson and Wilkinson (2010) found that male and female offenders gained confidence in voicing their opinions in group discussions during the project week and that this was taken forward into their prison lives after the project. This was attributed to the catalyst provided by the music, the empowerment the participants felt through ownership of the music and the skilful way the project facilitator respected the opinions of all participants and enabled that group discussion to take place. Furthermore, they report that '*Good Vibrations can provide the starting-block for positive change in offenders*' (p.31).

The power of music on intellectual, social and personal development on children and young people has been well documented (Hallam, 2010), and research has shown that this extends to adults (Henley, 2010; Taylor and Hallam, 2008). McNeill et al (2011) drew together research on arts projects in prisons to discuss whether they can inspire desistance from crime. They present six central themes in desistance theory embedded in the literature, as follows:

1. Exploitation of identity and diversity (Weaver and McNeill, 2010)
2. Development and Maintenance of both motivation and hope (Farrall and Calverley, 2006)
3. Desistance is to be understood within the context of relationships between offenders and professional and personal supporters (Burnett and McNeill, 2005; McNeill, 2006)
4. Support needs to be given to developing personal and social strengths and resources (Maruna and LeBel, 2003)

5. Interventions need to encourage respect and self-determination (McNeill, 2006)
6. Interventions need to be based on social capital, not just human capital (Farrall, 2002, 2004; McNeill and Maruna, 2007; McNeill and Whyte, 2007)

The focus of these themes seems firmly based on the development and recognition of social capital and a sense of community, identity and diversity, building on personal and social strengths as well as discovering agency through respect and self-determination.

This being the case, if music education enables people to develop individual, group and community identity, as stated by Welch and Adams above, and the Good Vibrations project acts as starting-block for positive change, does a Good Vibrations project enable participants to develop the necessary attributes that can contribute to desistance from crime?

This aim of this research was to build on previous studies, contributing to the growing body of evidence of the impact of music projects to offenders, and to discover first of all what the process of learning in a Good Vibrations project is and secondly, the research aimed to uncover aspects of the project that may contribute to inspiring desistance.

By viewing the project in terms of music education, where it is acknowledged that all people are musical, and focusing on the participants as learners, the discussion can be centred on how the students engage in the learning process in order to develop the necessary qualities attributed to desistance from crime. This being the case, participants are regarded as students and are referred to as students throughout this report.

## 2. Methods

This project took place at Swinfen Hall Young Offenders Institute in December 2011. In total 19 students participated in the project; however the actual number in each session fluctuated during the week. This was mainly due to pre-arranged appointments with professionals such as dentists, healthcare appointments and other internal meetings.

Participants for the Good Vibration project are selected in a number of ways. A Good Vibrations facilitator will conduct a pre-visit to the institution and visit offenders on the wings. The facilitator will talk to offenders about the project and they will then sign up as students on the course. The Education team at the institution may be involved in this process. In the case of Swinfen Hall, the Education team were actively involved in this process and there was careful consideration as to who might benefit the most from the project.

The group selected for this project contained some very vulnerable young people. Some students had not been off their wing for a long period of time. Some were certified self-harmers whilst other students were on medication, suffered from mental illness and many suffered from insomnia. All but one of the students were in Good Vibrations target group, young men:

- With open ACCT books<sup>2</sup> and/or
- On violence reduction programmes and/or
- Otherwise vulnerable/hard to reach/reluctant to engage

Working with such a vulnerable group of people demands sensitivity and it was paramount that the students were the priority of the project at all times. Therefore, the research needed to be conducted in an unobtrusive manner that respected the participants and kept to a strict ethical code (British Education Research Association (BERA), 2012 was used). For this reason, I decided that participant observation would enable me to build a relationship with the students in adherence with Good Vibrations' code of conduct for facilitators and be able to respond immediately by stepping back as a researcher should I feel that it in any way interfered with the students personal, social, emotional or educational needs.

However, working with the students at this level also gave me a unique insight into the dynamics of the group. By becoming part of the group I was able to interact with the students, provide musical support and, although they were aware that I was there to evaluate the project, the students interacted with me as a tutor. This gave me a far greater understanding of the inner workings of the project than if I had been a non-participant observer, or had conducted interviews or questionnaires without being involved in the week's activities. However, so as to gain a balanced viewpoint of the project, I was also given access to Good Vibrations' internal evaluation data.

All Good Vibrations projects are rigorously evaluated. Students have a pre-project questionnaire, an end of project questionnaire, participate in an end of project focus group and have a questionnaire to fill in if they decide not to continue with the project. Also, the facilitator evaluates each session,

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<sup>2</sup> The Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) system helps to identify and monitor those at risk of self-harm and suicide in prisons. An open ACCT book is part of a care plan that provides support for prisoners at risk of harming themselves.

commenting on the participation of the students and their progress. The focus group is carried out by a Good Vibrations colleague who has not participated in the project, providing objectivity to the evaluation. In terms of this research, this provides a balance between inside research carried out by a project participant, and outside research carried out by an outsider to the specific context.

Participant observation data was recorded via field notes. So as not to distract the students or disturb the flow of the sessions, the main field notes were taken outside of the room. Notes were taken directly after the morning and afternoon sessions. I was also able to talk to students, ask questions and record their answers during session breaks. However, because it was imperative that the research did not encroach upon the project, I only did this when I felt it appropriate.

The participant observation was complemented by follow up interviews six weeks after the project ended. Fifteen students were identified to participate in an individual follow-up interview. However, on arriving at Swinfen Hall to conduct the interviews I was told that there had been a significant movement of people between the wings and across the Young Offenders Institute and the main prison. Therefore it was only possible to locate and interview five students. This is an on-going challenge faced by Good Vibrations with students being taken out of sessions, moving wings during the course of the project causing disruption or even moving institutions entirely, as happened to one student at Swinfen Hall.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner and questions were designed based upon an initial analysis of the field notes, questionnaire and interview data from the project week. The students did not know that I was coming to interview them, so were unprepared, yet during the interview they were able to articulate what they had gained from the project and what has been lasting. The bond that had been created through participant observation between the students and I was still present in the interview. This allowed me to utilise the knowledge that I had of the individuals' personalities to ask the questions in a way that would elicit a good response and not cause any discomfort or distress. Moreover, I felt that through participation in the interview, the students were given an opportunity to reflect on the experience of the project and consider their own learning, which in turn appeared to be beneficial in itself.

It is clear that conducting the research from the inside in this way has enabled me to view the project from a unique perspective and also to collect valuable data that could not be collected from the outside. However, becoming emotionally attached to the project could create a bias in the data. Therefore a cooling off period of three months was left before analysing the data in full.

The data was analysed using the six themes drawn out of the desistance theory literature discussed above. McNeill et al (2011) argue that that desistance involves not only the acquisition of human capital in the form of new personal narratives and agency, but also social capital in a person's ability to develop and maintain a positive view of themselves within a community. Therefore I grouped the themes into two categories:

Category	Themes
Individual Agency	Personal Identity Diversity Motivation Hope Self-determination Personal strengths
Social Interactions	Professional relationships Peer relationships Personal relationships Sense of belonging Ownership

These themes were then applied to the data and a discussion of this is presented below.

On analysing the data it became apparent that the findings related to individual agency and social interactions occurred concurrently with musical development. Moreover, often it was in the musical development that the progression in terms of the desistance theory themes manifested itself, which seems to imply that there was a shared process of musical development, personal development and social development.

This being the case, I have firstly provided a discussion of the musical development that took place during the week. Then I have discussed each of the themes identified in turn in relation to this musical development. These discussions are based on the data from all Finally I have presented five case-studies of the students that I was able to interview after the project had finished. This is in acknowledgment the individual and subjective nature of the desistance process (McNeill et al, 2011). These case-studies provide a holistic view of the project in terms of the individuals and give rich insight into the different ways that the Good Vibrations project can inspire different people.

### **3. Findings**

#### **3.1 Musical development**

The project followed the Good Vibrations module plan for young offenders' courses comprising a mixture of traditional and creative activities. The week culminated in an informal performance of the students' work. The typical Good Vibrations module plan is as follows:

	<b>AM 1</b>	<b>AM 2</b>	<b>PM 1</b>	<b>PM 2</b>
<b>Monday</b>	Introduction Taster	Conduction Traditional Piece	Imbal	Improvisation
<b>Tuesday</b>	Group composition (small groups)	Group composition (all together)	'Free' Improvisation	Song, Dance, talk about puppets, masks etc.
<b>Wednesday</b>	Group decide on contents of play through	Any new items?	Detailed work on pieces for performance	Detailed work on pieces for performance
<b>Thursday</b>	Detailed work on pieces for performance	Detailed work on pieces for performance	Final rehearsal of all pieces for play through	Debrief rehearsal, look at any outstanding musical issues
<b>Friday</b>	Play through (informal performance) and final feedback session			

This project mainly followed this plan, exploiting flexibility within the plan to maximise and address the individual learning needs of the students.

It occurred to me throughout the week that this module plan is not unlike a unit of work that might be found in a secondary school. The plan combines performing, composing and improvising.

Listening and evaluation are integrated into these activities. The students learn traditional Javanese pieces as well as explore their own creativity and this is scaffolded by the facilitator.

The students also learn about the wider context of Javanese gamelan and there are opportunities in the week for incorporating dance, song and puppetry. The students at Swinfen Hall were given the option to participate in a dance activity, a song and were also told a traditional story using shadow puppets. These events were significant parts of the week and are discussed in detail below.

#### *Pulse and ensemble skills*

It was very clear that the project was treated seriously as music education as throughout the week the facilitator was always concerned with the musical learning. The activities were focused on musical skills and concepts and it was evident what the intended learning outcomes of the activities were. The activities at the beginning of the week focused on introducing the instruments whilst

developing pulse. The conduction activity gave individual students an opportunity to lead the group and required them to listen and make decisions as to what sounds would best work together and how best to communicate that to the group. In turn, it gave all the students the opportunity to explore the different sounds of the instruments, moving around different instruments during the activity, but also began to develop their ability to watch and react musically to what they saw. The purpose of the activity was to foster a sense of ensemble and begin to develop integrated listening and responding skills.

This notion of ensemble was further developed through the imbal exercise. This activity required students to work in pairs and create a four-note ostinato, each student playing alternating notes. Through this exercise students were engaging with pulse as well as deepening their sense of what an ensemble is. Through a process of listening to each other's work, the students were able to make the connections between their own part and their partner's part. They could hear the overall effect of the ostinato and through a discussion of what they heard, gained a sense of the need for a steady pulse.

It was clear at this stage that the students brought with them different musical experiences and were able to scaffold each other in this process. This enabled the facilitator to gain a sense of the



different musical starting points in the group, which informed his planning of subsequent activities and how he might differentiate the work accordingly throughout the week.

It is useful to note here that this constant assessment of progress was maintained throughout the week. This was done through discussion, questioning (either directly 'did you find that easy/hard?' or through elicitation) and also the use of a digital audio recorder. Not only

did this enable the facilitator to give appropriate support to those who needed it and provide challenge for the students who would thrive on it, but also it gave the students instant feedback and an opportunity for self- and peer-assessment.

These two themes, pulse and ensemble, ran throughout the week and a progression was seen in the students' ability to not only engage with and maintain a steady, communal pulse, but also to react as an ensemble to changes in tempo using aural cues.

#### *Understanding of construction of melody*

The traditional pieces introduced at the beginning of the week enabled students to develop their understanding of melody, how it is constructed and how it can change and develop throughout a piece of music.

When first experimenting with the instruments during the taster session, students were focussing on the individual sounds of the notes. This involved moving from one note to the next to hear the change in sound and finding particular sounds that they enjoyed most. There was a lot of discussion

about preferences for particular instruments, especially the gongs. A number of students found the gongs very satisfying and all wanted to take a turn at playing individual notes.

However, as the week progressed the facilitator moved the students' understanding of the individual pitches forward into an understanding of how melody works. This was done through learning elements of a traditional piece separately, i.e. everyone learnt the 'tune', then the structural instruments learnt their 'tune' and then the piece was put together. The piece was built up through progressively adding each layer at a time.

This provided different levels of understanding for different students. At first, all students were focused on their individual melody. They found different ways of learning the melody including using numbers (given by the facilitator), following mallet patterns (either by watching my pattern or by the facilitator deliberately showing them the pattern) or singing the tunes alongside playing them (initiated by the student). By concentrating on the shape of the melody in terms of the rise and falls of pitch, the students were able to learn, memorise and to some extent internalise the melody. This could be seen through the fluidity of movement in the students playing, moving from a disjointed movement when students were focusing on individual pitch and working out where to go next, to a fluid movement when the sense of where the melody was going was understood.

Once this fluidity in melody had been accomplished, students were then able to look beyond their own melody to see and hear how the different elements of the piece contributed to the melody. A good example of this was in observing how one student gave advice to another student who struggled to put his structural part in the right place. The melody was constructed of four-note phrases. Each four-note phrase (*gåtrå*) ended with a kempul or kenong note, the kempul and kenong alternating between *gåtrås*. The advising student was playing the saron (tune part) and was sat between the kenongs and kempuls. He had accomplished his melody and was listening to the other parts around him. He noticed that the student on the kenong was finding it difficult to place his note (occurring once every eight tune notes) and he stopped what he was playing (knowing that I was sat beside him and would keep the same part going), told the kenong player to listen to the tune that I was playing and then pointed out the sequence of kempul and kenong to him in relation to the tune. Once the kenong player understood this, the advising student returned to playing his melody. Although he had not developed far enough to continue to play his melody whilst instructing the other student, this demonstrates how the student had internalised his melody enough to work out where the other parts fitted in and then be able to convey this to another student.

Throughout the week there were opportunities to build on this understanding of melody and the facilitator was keen to allow students to move onto progressively more complex parts. However, this was never done at the expense of the overall ensemble and the facilitator was sensitive to the need for students to become very familiar with their own part before adding an additional layer into the mix.

#### *Understanding and control of dynamics*

An on-going issue within the group during the week was noise. Through the week, students discussed noise and the need to listen and be sensitive to other parts on numerous occasions. The

contribution to this to the developing sense of community is discussed below, but in musical terms this manifested itself in the ability to control dynamics.

As the students became more familiar with the traditional pieces, they also became aware of how the different parts fitted together (as discussed above in relation to melody). There were many conversations about the need to listen to certain instruments for aural cues, and this related to playing at different dynamic levels. These discussions also demonstrated that the students were becoming more aware of balance within the ensemble. This was particularly noticeable in their own composition where they relied on different aural cues to know when to move from one section to another.

There was a distinct difference in the students' ability to control dynamics at the end of the week. Again, there were varying degrees of individual success in this, but as an ensemble, the students were able to raise and lower the dynamic level, manipulating texture to do so, but also through an understanding of the need for individual control of instruments. This could be seen in the free improvisation exercise where the students produced a very fluid, ethereal and calm improvisation towards the end of the week as oppose to a loud, busy and unsettling improvisation at the beginning of the week.

### *Composing and improvising*

The three strands of composing, improvising and performing ran simultaneously throughout the week and improvements could be seen in all three of these areas. Performing skills improved through the development of pulse, understanding of melody and control of dynamics within the context of the ensemble as discussed above. What was interesting was the development of understanding of what composing and improvising are.

Improvisation was introduced at the very beginning of the week in the conduction activity. This activity acted as a pivot between composition and improvisation and it was this activity that the students gained their understanding of what the two activities are and how they are different.

The conduction activity required a student to compose a piece based on the improvisations of the remaining group. This gave students the opportunity to not only develop musical leadership skills, but also to gain an understanding of how to select musical motifs and bring them together to form a coherent piece. The composition activity moved through a process of small-group composing to whole-group composing. Students were divided into self-selecting small groups and asked to compose a short piece. By having the compositional process modelled to them in the form of the conduction activity, students went through a similar process of improvising short motifs, selecting which they liked and deciding how to put them together. Each group operated differently in this and their interactions are discussed below, never-the-less they were all able to produce a composition. Each group played their compositions to each other and a discussion took place as to how to put these together. Eventually, the whole-group composition was produced by trying out different versions and agreeing on which the group felt worked best.

The process of starting with the individual note, moving onto the shape of a melody and then moving towards a holistic view of a layered melody, a kind of blossoming effect as seen in the

development of understanding of melody, was also seen here in the group composition. It started with individual motifs, moved onto shaping phrases using these motifs and then these phrases were combined to create a whole piece.

Within the improvisation activity, a framework of lead-follow-observe-oppose was set. The students made decisions as to which direction they would go in, but they would always fulfil one of the functions of the framework in order to provide cohesion. However, where the students struggled in this was in separating out improvisation from composition. The blossoming effect in improvisation occurred more simultaneously than in the composition. As the students had to make their own decisions as to when they initiated change, and this was not directed or facilitated, they had to be outward and inward looking at the same time. This proved very challenging.

After receiving negative feedback from an onlooker regarding one of the free compositions, the students began to lose their confidence with their aural skills and wanted to add elements of composition to provide security. However the facilitator maintained that this was a different activity and by not allowing the students to add elements of composition but instead reaffirm the framework for improvising, he enabled them to regain their confidence and they moved on to producing some of the best improvisations of the week. This was done through a process of recording improvisations and listening back.

By the end of the week the students had a clear understanding of the compositional process, the differences between composition and improvisation, and how the two informed each other.



#### *Using the Sounds of Intent framework to assess musical development*

By the end of the week it was clear that each student had made progress in their musicianship. However, without an in depth knowledge of their starting points, the processes that they went through and then measuring this against the end point, it is difficult to articulate exactly what the progress made was. The play through at the end of the week was an opportunity to share their work with an invited audience of prison staff and friends from within the prison. Whilst this event was a spectacular display of musicianship in itself, it only showed the product of the week and not the process.

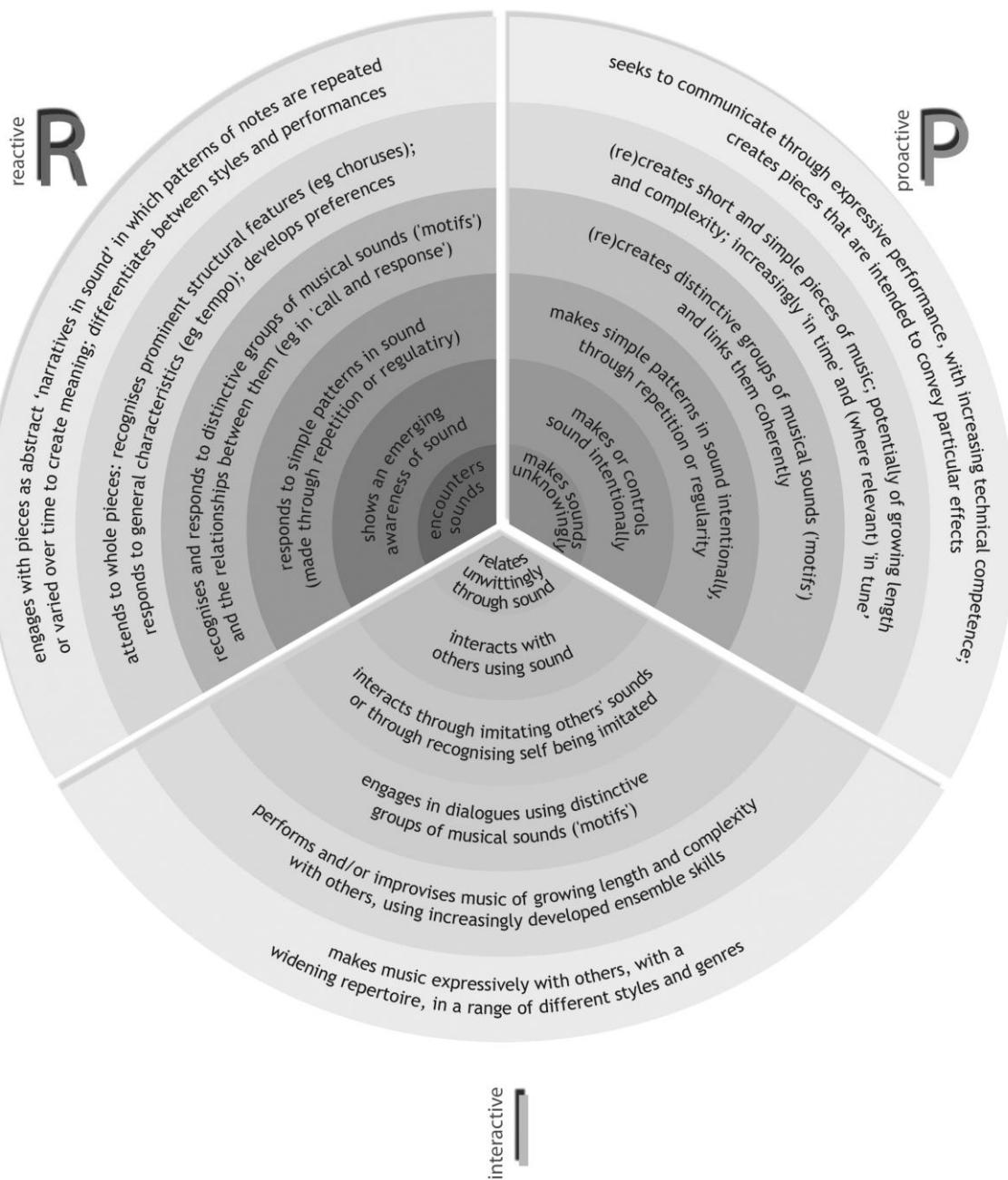
The Sounds of Intent framework has been launched since the project at Swinfen Hall took place. The aim of the Sounds of Intent research project was to investigate and promote musical development in students with differing learning needs. It is a framework of musical development based on a large-scale, longitudinal study of the musical development of students with a variety of different educational needs. Although the genesis of the framework has come from students with particular needs, the framework is focused on early musical development and lends itself to mapping musical development in a variety of different educational contexts, including primary schools and adult learning contexts.

The framework is based on three areas of musical interaction; proactive, reactive and interactive. The framework is shown in figure 1. The blossoming effect referred to earlier can be seen as a

progression through stages P2 to P6 in terms of composition, R3 to R5 in terms of listening and evaluation and I2 to I5 in terms of performing and improvising. Stages 1 are in the middle of the framework and stages 6 are on the outside.

What is interesting within the Sounds of Intent framework is the movement between ‘self’ and ‘others’ as musicianship develops. It is here that we see the connection between musical development and the development of social capital as facilitated by individual agency.

**Figure 1 – The Sounds of Intent framework**



### **3.2 Individual Agency**

#### *Personal Identity*

McNeill et al (2011) state '*learning is not only about acquiring new skills and practices but is also about changes in people's identities*'. However they also acknowledge that people bring different experiences into new learning situations and that identities are fed by, as well as feed into learning experiences.

It would be difficult to ascertain whether a student at Swinfen Hall changed their identity during the course of the project, but there were instances where students revealed their self-concept (what they think of themselves) and self-efficacy (what they believe they can do).

At the beginning of the project the students entered the room and sat down. Their body language was closed, and although many students were talking to each other, it was centred on banter surrounding the instruments such as '*what are they?*' and '*is that what we're playing?*' However, by lunch time the body language had completely changed and the facilitator commented at how quickly the students had let their barriers down. He also commented at how the body language had changed since he saw the students on their wings during his pre-visit.

This was partly due to the encouragement that the facilitator gave the students. For example, one student had spoken to him about playing gamelan with guitar. When the student commented that someone had probably thought of doing that before, implying that his idea was not particularly good, the facilitator replied '*maybe, but they haven't thought about it in the way that you have*'. The effect that this had on the student could clearly be seen. This type of respect towards the students' viewpoints could be seen all through the week and contributed towards the students building confidence in themselves, in turn raising self-efficacy.

The facilitator always talked of the students as musicians. One student commented at the beginning of the week that '*I'm not musical, I'm just doing what sounded good*'. However as the week progressed, the students began to see themselves as musical. They began to recognise that they were making music and this was reinforced by listening to the recordings. On day three one student said '*I never thought I would be good a rhythm but apparently I am. I am much better at it than I thought I would be.*' By the end of the week, all but one of the students stated that they would now call themselves musicians. One student said that participating in the project had made him want to pick his violin back up again and another student said that it gave him the confidence to form his own band, something that he had wanted to do but did not have enough self-belief to do so.

The way the students viewed themselves in the group also appeared to change during the week. At the beginning of the week the students were unwilling to do anything that put them out on a limb. Some of the more confident students volunteered for leadership roles, but they seemed very aware of what the other students in the group would think of them. In general there was a lot of talk in between the music and the students would sometimes mock each other in a playful way. However, by the end of the second day this appeared to change. The facilitator introduced the students to a Javanese dance in the afternoon session. During this session six of the students learnt the dance whilst the others observed. There was no talking between the music and the observers were actively

engaged in the session. The students who took part in the dance had felt confident enough in their selves, and safe enough within the environment to participate in the dance.

This shift was quite striking as on the previous day they had all announced that there was no way that they were going to dance, however after the dance one student commented that although he had '*made a jackass of myself*', he had really enjoyed it. Another student stated that '*I've learnt a lot about myself. Dancing! I lack confidence, dancing put a different part of me into reality*'. The activity enabled this student to engage with a part of himself that perhaps he had not wanted to show to the others.

During the week there seemed to be a genuine shift of self-concept. During the feedback sessions there was a change of language from negative self-feedback to more positive self-feedback. At first comments were centred on what the students could not do but it changed to being focused on positive aspects of the learning and the students became more able to evaluate what they had done in way that was not taken as personal criticism. One noticeable thing that could have contributed to this shift was that the facilitator made an effort to learn all of the students' names and always called the students by their first name. This passed on to the students and by the end of the week they were calling each other by their first name rather than their surnames. This shift from surname to first name could be an indication that there was a shift in the way that the students saw themselves in relation to each other, which could potentially contribute to a change of personal identity.

Certainly at the end of the project students agreed that participating had made them feel good about themselves.



#### Diversity

Diversity was managed by the facilitator in the form of inclusive activities. The genuine respect that was generated by the use of first names extended to a respect for the students as they were. All contributions from students were seen as valid and as the facilitator modelled this behaviour, the students imitated it until it gradually became the norm of the group.

During the feedback for the third day, one student commented '*it's good that you explain it in layman's terms. I don't understand that technical stuff.*' This demonstrated that although the facilitator always treated everyone as musicians, he did not exclude anyone by using in accessible language.

The accessibility of the project was also recognised by the students. Many commented on how easy to play the instruments were and one student said '*this is easy music, accessible music. If you had guitars or keyboards, all these guys would be lost.*'

### *Motivation*

The notion of these qualities being passed from facilitator to student could also be seen in how motivation was developed and sustained during the week. During the first conduction session one of the students had found the task difficult, but instead of ending with a negative atmosphere, the facilitator encouraged the student to have another go. This time the results were far more positive and left the student feeling motivated.

At the end of the first day students commented that they were glad to be part of the project and out of their cells. Their motivation for coming was noted on the initial questionnaires and many had come because they had been advised to by the education team, or in order to get off their wing. However, the motivation for coming quickly changed. Many students commented that it kept their stress levels down, and also that it had helped them to sleep. However, for some it was the music and the sense of achievement that made them come back. During the third day's feedback, one student commented '*I don't find it easy to remember stuff. I only needed to be shown once. I've never known a day in jail where I've had so much fun!*' another commented that '*all three days have been good but it's been good to hear everyone getting better at it.*' The students could clearly see themselves and each other progressing and this gave them the motivation that they needed to return each day.

Motivation was also sustained by preparing for the play through on the final day. The students were keen to share what they had been doing and also very keen for it to be good. As the week progressed the dynamic of the project changed from experimental, through to a sense of accomplishment moving to preparation for performance. When the performance was getting closer, the students began to have more meaningful discussions about musical issues such as dynamics. There were a number of occasions during the latter part of the week where the discussions became quite heated. The facilitator was very skilful in knowing when to steer these discussions and when to let them break down naturally. At the end of the fourth day, when the students had moved the gamelan into the performance space and arranged all of the masks and puppets for the audience to see one student gave a very level-headed speech to the group. He talked about the things that they had found difficult during the week and that people should realise that it is difficult but there are a lot of very good things about their playing. He pointed out that rather than focussing on the bad points, they should think about the good things.

This demonstrates a shift in responsibilities during the week. At the beginning of the week the facilitator was giving the 'pep talks', however at the end the students were. This again shows positive behaviour that has been modelled by the facilitator and imitated by the students.

### *Hope*

As the students' motivation increased, so did their sense of hope. The first indication that any of the students had developed a sense of hope for the outcomes of the project was during the feedback on the second day. On this day the facilitator had stepped up the complexity for some students as a result of the feedback on the previous day. One student commented '*today I liked the complexity. I liked that we stepped up a gear. If we have a couple of pieces to nail the concert, [that would be*

*great].*' This student had felt as if he had been given an opportunity to have a go at something challenging and in turn this generated a hopefulness that he would be able to perform well at the end of the week.

On the third day hope was extended beyond the course. One student said '*a big thank you because I'm loving this and hopefully something will continue after the course.*' This was extended further on the fourth day. During the break I was talking to one of the students who had a high level of musical experience prior to the course. He asked me about my role as an instrumental teacher. I explained to him that I visit different schools and teach the flute. He told me that he was a drummer in his school band and he wanted to teach music until '*life led me in a different direction*'. The conversation appeared to inspire some hope in him that he could one day follow a musical path once again.

During the end of course focus group a number of students talked about the sense of pride that they had gained from doing the project and a number of students stated that the project had given them something else to think about, to help '*keep you straight*' and that it had made them feel good about themselves. This sense of hope generated from feelings of focus and pride gave the students the motivation to perform well in the performance at the end of the project.

### *Self-Determination*

During the project the students were given many opportunities to develop self-determination and all students demonstrated the ability to apply themselves to overcome difficulties. Right from the very beginning students showed determination to be successful in the project. One student that particularly stands out constantly commented that this was not his '*sort of thing*' yet he showed immense self-determination during the week. At the end of the first day he said '*it's a good course but I'm not really into this sort of thing. I've given it a good go and I might get to like it. I might get better and better. At least I'm being honest.*' On more than one occasion during the week it appeared as if this student might not come back, but he did as he was determined to succeed.

This self-determination was aided by the facilitator. The patience of the facilitator created an environment where students were given the space they needed to work things out themselves. When they were determined to get things right on their own, the facilitator allowed them to do so. This was apparent on the first day when one student was asked to play the introduction to a traditional piece that they had learnt. He tried a number of times to get it right but at no point did the facilitator jump in and show him what to do. He had sensed that the student needed the space to work it out and so he gave it to him.

### *Personal Strengths*

The project allowed the students to engage with and develop their personal strengths. Every student had a justified sense of achievement at the end of the week and all had overcome different barriers to get to the stage where they could perform their work. These did not manifest until later on in the week. It was clear that a number of the students were suffering from insomnia and they reported

that the project had helped them sleep. It may be that being able to sleep had put the students in the frame of mind where they could capitalise on their personal strengths. One student commented

*'It's good to sit down and play. I got a good night's sleep. I was chilled out. People kept asking me what's wrong I was that chilled. It [the project] was not how I imagined. This is a serious change between different activities. Different from prison activity. In prison, once you do something, you do it that way each time. I'm trying to remember [the music] but using the sound. I get frustrated but keep going.'*

Here the student moves from talking about having a good night's sleep to talking about how different the project is to other prison activities. In discussing how static other activities are, in that once started, they are also done in the same way, he was developing his personal strengths in keeping going even though he was frustrated. The project has allowed him to look at activities in a different light; to see that there are different ways of approaching the same thing. This particular student was always very analytical in his actions and by realising that there are different approaches, he is able to draw on his analytical skills to reconcile his frustrations.

Another example of how the students utilised and developed their personal strengths was in their coping skills. During the fourth day the students started to get stressed about the music as they were becoming more nervous about performing. They wanted to make sure that everything was right. When they ran through their composition, it began to fall apart. Rather than stop the music the facilitator allowed the students to continue and they managed to correct themselves. The facilitator wanted to get them used to coping with the unexpected in performance. During the performance one student started the introduction to a piece playing the wrong tune. He was very calm about it, he worked out that he was playing the wrong tune, stopped and began to play the correct tune. Afterwards I commented that he had coped with that really well. He said that his counsellor, who was a guest at the performance, had said the same thing.

A third example could be seen in the student who had decided that he was not going to participate in the performance of a certain piece because he felt that he could not play it. The facilitator respected his decision and at no point was the student pressurised to perform by either the facilitator or the other students. When it came to the performance, this student did play this piece. After the piece he turned round to me and said that he had got lost but he had come back in again. This gave him the opportunity to engage with his personal strengths and feel a sense of pride for doing so.

There were some students who still did not feel as if they could participate in some items during the performance. One student did not dance. This particular student had been very keen to dance all week and had enjoyed learning the dance. When I mentioned to him after the performance that he had not danced he commented that he '*needed to do it perfectly if I'm going to do it.*' He knew that if he did not get it perfectly right, he would not be happy with himself and there would be personal consequences. Although he did not feel able to participate, he knew why and had the strength to stand back and not put himself in a difficult position.

### **3.3. Social Interactions**

The findings described above demonstrate the potential for developing human capital through the Good Vibrations project. Whilst the project is clearly focused on musical development, ownership and a sense of being in control of the project and personal roles within it were fostered throughout the week. However, these elements were all developed through social interaction. The role of the facilitator in modelling positive behaviour and attitudes was evident and the relationships that developed during the week were crucial in supporting factors such as motivation, hope, diversity and respect.

#### *Professional Relationships*

The relationship that was built up during the week between the facilitator and the students was carefully constructed by the facilitator. During the first activity the facilitator laid the ground rules and set the tone for the week. He was keen to ensure that the students knew that everything was optional. A good example of this is when he explained to the students that people take their shoes off to play gamelan. The first reaction of most students was that they were not going to take their shoes off. The facilitator explained that it was optional and two students took their shoes off but the rest kept theirs on. However, as the first activity got underway, gradually most of the students took their shoes off. When the students came back in after lunch, they all bent down and took their shoes off. Had they been told to do so when they did not want to, the atmosphere of the session may have been different. Moreover, the facilitator was keep to develop ownership of the project from the outset and by doing something as simple as making it optional to take your shoes off, he was able to instil an initial sense of ownership.

After lunch on the first day, the facilitator gave the students a ‘health and safety’ talk. It was kept simple and again was done in a positive way. One student commented *‘that’s the shortest health and safety talk I’ve had since being inside’*. The students were generally surprised that they had not had a long talk about what they must not do.

By the end of the first day it was clear that the students had begun to build up a positive relationship with the facilitator. He demonstrated his knowledge of the instruments and the music in a way that the students had no question about the fact that they were working with an ‘expert’, however he was not afraid to say when he did not know an answer to a question. The students respected this and did not at any time question the competence of the facilitator.

The trustful relationship that built up during the week was also fostered by the way the facilitator managed the group and took on board opinions and feedback. After the first feedback session one study said *‘it’s alien to me to give negative feedback and something be done about it.’* This was something that the facilitator was very aware of and throughout the week, he made it a priority to follow up questions and to bring in things with him that he had promised. A good example of this was when the students asked to hear a piece of music *‘played properly.’* The facilitator went out of his way to bring a CD in for them to listen to and to make sure there was a CD player to play it on.

An example of how the facilitator took on board comments during the feedback could be seen on the second day. One student commented that '*I want to go a bit more complex now. I've found it easy and obviously have to wait because everyone learns at different paces.*' So the next day the facilitator ensured that this student had the opportunity to play a more complex part. At the end of the second day this student said '*I've found my level of complexity now, I'm happy.*' It was apparent that the facilitator was assessing the students' needs and was aware of their abilities, incorporating this into his daily planning and differentiating the activities all the time.

By the fourth day the relationship with the facilitator had been forged. On this day the students started to get anxious about the performance. The facilitator needed to provide feedback on their work so that they could improve what they were doing. However, it needed to be done sensitively due to the raised anxiety amongst the students. The facilitator was honest about the work and he was able to give the feedback and offer the discussion open to the students to allow them to suggest ways that they could improve. The honesty was respected by the students and because they had developed a trustful relationship with the facilitator, they were able to take on board his comments.

It should be noted here that the students also developed a professional relationship with myself and by mirroring the facilitator's approach and manner, I was able to maintain a positive atmosphere whilst giving feedback or making suggestions to individual students as I was playing in the group.

What was interesting about this project was the relationship between the students and the prison officer overseeing the project. The prison officer also teaches the keyboard and has developed a scheme of work for keyboard players, culminating in the students taking ABRSM jazz examinations grades 1 and 2. The students have weekly lessons and they are allowed to have keyboards in their personal accommodation for practise. Some of the students on the Good Vibrations project had taken the keyboard lessons, but many had not. On talking to the prison officer at the end of the first day he explained his position as a keyboard teacher and talked about how '*music can draw good things out of people*'. He commented on '*how relaxing the gamelan is*' and '*that it is ideal for this kind of work in prisons*'. Interestingly he also said that he was '*watching the facilitator and looking out for tips for [his] own teaching*' and he also joined in with the music. In terms of the professional relationship this created, he was aware that not many prison officers would have done this.

Commenting that it was all about barriers, he said that '*prison officers don't spend quality time with the lads and that's what they need*'.

There was a strong bond between the prison officer and the students. Coming from a performing background himself, the prison officer was concerned that the resulting performance was of a good quality and that the students could be proud of what they had performed. The feedback given by him to the students was taken very seriously by the students as they trusted his judgement. However, this was sometimes difficult when the focus of the learning was on the process rather than the product. For example, on day three there had been a lot of tension in the group and the facilitator used a free improvisation activity to settle the students. This activity worked very well to calm the atmosphere, but did not produce the best musical product of the week. The prison officer wanted to ensure the students produced a good performance for the play through, but this was not the aim of the facilitator during this activity. This led to the prison officer becoming uneasy about the free improvisation activity as a performance item, which in turn was passed onto the students. However, after some explanation from the facilitator about the nature of the free improvisation and

the difference between that and the conduction activity, and returning to the improvisation framework (lead-follow-observe-oppose), the students were able to focus on the musical aspects of the activity and produce subsequent improvisations that were of performance quality. This gave the prison officer the assurance that he needed that the students would be able to succeed in the activity during the performance. He was clearly proud of what the students achieved and the students were able to express their gratitude to the prison officer for his support during the week.

The relationships that had built up between the students and the professionals involved in the project were crucial to success of the project. I was personally overwhelmed by the warmth that the students showed me at the end of the project and I felt that I had been a part of something very special.

### *Peer Relationships*

The relationship that the students had with the facilitator during the week contributed to the relationships that the students built up with each other. It was clear that the students were

respectful to each other, every student shaking the hand of every other student at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. They addressed each other cordially and were polite to each other. However, this respect seemed to be at a surface level and by the end of the week there was a change in the way the students reacted to each other. The respect appeared to be deeper and more meaningful and there was a keen sense of pride in each other as well as in themselves.

A photograph showing two young men in a room. The man on the left is wearing a red and white patterned shirt and blue jeans, and is shaking the hand of the man on the right. The man on the right is wearing a grey t-shirt and dark trousers. They are both smiling. In the background, there are shelves with various items and another person visible.

This was highlighted by the use of first names, already discussed above. At the beginning of the week all the students called each other by their surnames. Throughout the week the facilitator made an effort to learn everyone's names and consistently called them by their first names. By the end of the week, the students were calling each other by their first names too. The impact that this had on the personal identity of the students is discussed above, but in terms of their relationships with each other, this shows a real shift towards a more personal relationship. There was still plenty of banter between the students but in terms of their working relationship, the project helped the students to respect each other's opinions, abilities and personalities. By the end of the week there was at least one friendship that had been forged as a result of the project. It would be naive to think that through the project all the students became friends, and there were certainly some difficult personalities in the group, but as one of the case-studies below shows, the students were able to put personal differences aside to work towards a common goal. So much so that the chaplain commented on the potential for difficulties with the mix of people in the group, but that these had not come to fruition during the project.

This was achieved by the natural workings of the gamelan and the way the facilitator steered discussions. At first, every student played for themselves. They played loudly and with no regard for what anyone else was playing. However, as the activities continued the students started listening to each other. They had worked out who the key people to listen to were and there was a lot of teaching of others as the students looked to each other for support. Natural leaders emerged during the musical activities and many were happy to fulfil this role. They were acknowledging when someone had done something well and supportive when someone felt as if they had not done something well. Again, this was modelled by the facilitator. In the feedback at the end of the first day, one student comment that '*getting prisoners to interact with each other*' was a really good thing.

The composition activity was interesting to observe in terms of how the students did interact with each other. The first composition activity was on day 2 and the students were split into self-selecting groups. Each group interacted very differently. Group 1 had a definite leader who was co-ordinating the ideas of everyone in the group. Group 2 was very communal and the students worked collaboratively to create their composition. In group 3 there was one leader who was also instructing the others in the group and who provided all the ideas. There was more dialogue in groups 1 and 2 and more instruction in group 3. The leader in group 3 came to this role as the others in his group found it difficult to create an idea. So rather than this being a situation where one student took over in a potentially hostile way, it was done because the others were struggling. After the group composition I commented to the student that he had shown great patience with the other group members and had worked well with them to create their composition. He replied that he had found it difficult but knew that he had to keep calm so that they could get something done. The music had become more important than differences of personality.

Many students commented at the end of the project that they had learnt how to listen and felt that they had been listened to. The importance of this can be seen in the case-studies below, but the role the music played in this was interesting. As the above example of group-work shows, the music became the most important thing. It was through the music that the students were able to engage with each other and form an understanding of the importance of listening to each other's part, and it was the free improvisation that really fostered this. Through the framework of lead-follow-observe-oppose the students were given direction of how to interact in the improvisation activity. It really engaged the students in the process of collaborative creativity. However, this framework also gave the students direction when it came to discussion. By the end of the week the students were able to fully discuss their work and respect the opinions of others in the group. By gaining an understanding of the process of lead-follow-observe-oppose through the musical activities, they understood that it was acceptable to oppose in a discussion without it being a personal criticism. This was apparent by the end of the week in the way the students discussed their work in preparation for performance. They also gained an understanding of the notion of observing rather than watching. This too was apparent by the end of the week.

Moreover, through the music the students began to understand what it is to work together. At the end of the project one student commented that '*on your own, you just make a tinkle with a metallic instrument; with the group with a shared goal you can get something right and create something quite magical.*' Another student commented that the improvisation was the best activity as '*we*

*came together to make music*'. Interestingly the activity that the students found the hardest was the one that enabled them to fully understand the notion of working together.

### *Personal Relationships*

During the week many students made comments about people at home. As the week drew on, these became more frequent and the students were keen to tell their families and friends about their achievements during the week. This was highlighted when the photographer came in as all the students wanted to be in the photographs and all were keen to know that their families could see the photographs. One student commented '*I can tell my mum I'm a model now as well as a musician!*' On interviewing one student six weeks after the course, the first thing he asked about was the photographs. He had told his gran to look out for them on the website and wanted to know when she would be able to see them.

Towards the end of the week students also began talking about loved ones and one student brought in a collection of songs that he had written for his girlfriend. He was very proud of what he had written but I felt it took a lot of courage for him to show these to me. What was clear was that he had been inspired by the gamelan project to think about how he felt about people at home and he had been moved enough to show me the songs that he had written. It was not clear whether he had written them during or before the project week, but the project week had created strong feelings and the student told me that he was going to continue writing his songs as he now felt confident that he could do so.

What was interesting was observing how the students behaved at the performance in front of their invited audience. The students were allowed to invite a friend from their wings as well as any professional guests such as counsellors. There was some worry that many guests would not turn up. The performance was on a Friday morning and often staff do not work on Fridays. However, there was a good audience and the students were very pleased with who turned up.

Watching the audience I could see that they were engaged in what the students were doing. I spoke to one of the student's friends after the performance and he commented that he thought the music was annoying but he could see that the students were all really engaged in it. It was important for the students that their friends saw what they were doing. They were happy to dance in costume in front of their friends and they were genuinely proud of what they were doing. They wanted to lay out all of the puppets and costumes for everyone to see and they were really excited when they saw the gamelan after it had been moved into the performance space. This was a massive difference from the atmosphere at the beginning of the week when the students first saw the gamelan, and they wanted to share their excitement with their friends.

### *Sense of belonging and community ownership*

Through the relationships developed with the professionals working with the students and those that developed between the students, the students were able to build up a sense of belonging and community ownership. The facilitator gave the students a collective identity from the outset,

describing them as musicians from the first activity. Moreover, the students were given a shared responsibility from the first activity. After the first activity a number of students thought that the instruments were too loud and the facilitator pointed out that it is the responsibility of everyone to ensure that they were not playing too loud. He set up the week up as being a shared activity through collective responsibility, shared leadership and shared work. The students soon discovered through the first imbal exercise that if you play too loud, you drown out your partner, and this activity was purposefully introduced towards the start of the project in order to enable the students to discover the nature of the shared work within the gamelan and the consequences of not sharing.

During the feedback at the end of the first day the theme of sharing came out as a positive feature. One student said '*it's lovely to see everyone sharing music together and everyone helping out*' and another said '*this is what life's about and music, sharing everything.*' By the end of the project the students were making shared decisions about the performance, the order of the items, what they would perform, who would introduce each item and how they would move around between each item. The notion of teamwork came through very strongly, one student commenting that '*on your own you just make a racket; with gamelan it's about teamwork. It wouldn't work with just one person*'. This can also be seen clearly in case-study 2 below, but more importantly, the students had a sense of ownership of that team. It was their team.

On talking to the facilitator before the students arrived for the second morning, he told me how he has experimented with different formations of the gamelan. He has tried setting it out in different ways and explained that a circular set up, for example, was too focal. The students focused on whoever was in the middle and it made the inner people feel very exposed. He found that by setting the gamelan up so that everyone's eyes faced forwards, no-one felt exposed and the project worked better. In thinking about how the gamelan is set up, the facilitator considers how the community is created and attempts to diffuse any possible difficulties of people being on the outside and people being on the inside before the project starts. This 'eyes front' formation allowed the students to focus on their individual part but also allow them to feel connected as part of a group.

Interestingly, over the course of the week the students' objectives changed. At the end of the week the students openly admitted that the only reason they had come to the project was either to get out of work, get off their wing or because they had been told to. However, by the end of the week there was a sense of being there because they wanted to and also because they felt that they were needed by the group. This could clearly be seen in the students who had to miss activities due to other appointments. They were concerned that they would miss something important and also that they would let the group down if they were not there.

This ownership extended from the individual to the group and rather at the beginning of the week students were concerned that they would miss out on something, at the end of the week students were concerned for each other missing something. This was very apparent at the performance. During the evening there had been an incident and the wings involved were locked-down. One student was on one of these wings and we were told that he would not be allowed out to the performance. This student played the gongs, the most popular instrument, and rather than the other students jumping in and trying to take the coveted place of gong-player, they were very upset and genuinely concerned that the student was not going to be able to perform. The students felt that this student was part of the group and the performance would not be right without him. When the

student was allowed off his wing and came into the room, there was a cheer from the students and a real sense of delight that the student could make the performance.

A sense of pride in each other was also seen. As discussed above, one student commented that '*I feel proud for us all*'. This pride surpassed potentially difficult relationships and it was a sense of ownership of the group and a respect for the individuals within the group that allowed this to happen. This ownership was inspired by the shared responsibility as described above, but also by the sense of freedom that the project instilled in the students. As they were making decisions they were free to add their own ideas and many commented on this. One student said that with '*outside courses coming in, usually there's no freedom*' and another said '*we get that little bit of a sense of freedom*'. During the focus group at the end of the project, this also came up with a student commented that what he had liked about the project was that it '*gave us freedom to do what we wanted*'. What the students perhaps had not realised is that this freedom came from the control of the group being passed over from the facilitator to the students by the shared decision making process.

One interesting thing about ownership was that the students never seemed to realise that they were



making their own music. They always talked about making Indonesian music or making Javanese music. They obviously knew that the compositions and improvisations were theirs, but it was always their Indonesian music. Students did comment that it was good to learn about the culture surrounding the music, but links between cultural context and ownership of the music perhaps had not been made.

The students felt very strongly that they had been given their voice in the project and that they belonged to a community by the end of the week. Part of this was attributed to the comfort provided by the music, as one student commented '*you can lose yourself in the music, [it] makes you feel comfortable.*' It was not until the follow-up interviews that I realised how difficult it was for the students to overcome their individual tendencies and personal feelings for other members of the group to create this sense of ownership during the week and the case-studies below provide examples of this.

## 4. Case-studies

The following case-studies highlight five different important outcomes of the week for the students. Revisiting some of the students six-weeks after the end of the project gave them an opportunity to reflect upon their experiences. It was felt that the follow up interview was in itself a vital part of the internalisation process of the project outcomes. During these interviews students visibly changed as they spoke about the project. It was noted that the behaviour, body language and spoken language of the students was very different when visiting them on their wings than it had been when they were in the project (this is also something that the facilitator had commented on about the pre-visits), but during the interview the students returned to the personalities that they had shown during the project.

These five short case-studies have been chosen as they highlight five different outcomes. The first highlights how important it was for the student to complete the week even though he became very frustrated on a number of occasions and constantly reported that he did not like the music. The second highlights the enormous personal impact the project had on the student in terms of his approach to life in prison and his sleeping patterns. The third highlights how the project had enabled the student to engage with a sense of himself, the fourth how the student overcame his personal feelings for others in the group and the fifth demonstrates how he overcame his nervousness of working with others.

### 4.1. Case Study 1

*'if I don't stick to it now, it makes me think I can't stick it when I go out and get ... a job'*

The student entered the room at the beginning of the week quietly. His first reaction was to the instruments. He asked what they were and how we were going to play them. He said that he was not going to sit on the floor. He sat apart from the other students that were in the room and did not speak to any of them at first, however, he joined in conversations about the instruments.

He had participated in 'In Cell Study' and had not done a lot of activity outside of his cell since coming to Swinfen Hall. After the first session he commented that '*I'm not really into this sort of thing*'. However, during one of the activities he was very intensively involved with what he was doing. So much so, that the prison officer in the room commented on his concentration. At the end of the first day he commented that '*it is still not my thing but it's getting alright. I enjoy it a bit and sometimes I don't. It's a good course*'. Even though it was not his thing he was keen to stick with it, showing personal endeavour.

Late morning, day three he got upset as he did not want to sit on the floor and he could not hit the drum softly. His hands were hurting as he was hitting the drum very hard whilst concentrating on keeping the rhythm. Some of the other students got angry with him. One or two of the students would not give him his space and kept on at him about it and the student because quite self-aggressive. He started to tense up, hold his breath and shout at the others in the group. The facilitator managed the situation very skilfully, got the other students on task and after a short space

of time, he joined in again. After the session he commented that he had got stressed and that he did not want to get stressed out on Friday (the informal performance). Although he said that he was not going to give up because no-one else knew his part. He said that the day so far had not been as good but when the conversation changed to the morning's work, his body language changed and he smiled. In the feedback session at the end of the day he said '*thanks for coming in. I've had a stressful morning but a better afternoon*'.

On day four the student returned. The prisoner officer did not think that he would return after the previous day. On this day a photographer was invited in to take publicity photos of the project. As with the other students, this student was very keen to be in the photos. He wanted his family at home to be able to see what he had done and wanted to be in as many photos as he could. This day seemed to be a turning point in the student. He still got frustrated with himself when he could not do something, but the others in the group showed him a great amount of respect for coming back after such a difficult day.

On the last day, in the rehearsal before the informal performance he again got frustrated with himself and said that he was not going to play in one of the pieces. He sat in the rehearsal but said that he would not perform it. However, he did perform it. After performing it he said that he got lost but he listened and got himself back in again. He was clearly very proud of himself for doing this.

During the week, when he was working on something challenging he tended to give up very quickly but then when left alone, he was very quick join in again. His initial reaction was to give up but then on reflection he was able to control himself and continue to participate. Had the facilitator not allowed him his own space to do this, and insisted that either he joined in or that he sat out, he may well have disengaged completely. It appears that this was him finding his own level of participation and allowing him the time needed to assimilate the activity and to work out what he needed to do in order to be successful at it, meant that he was able to find this himself within the activity.

Reflecting at the end of the project in the focus group he said

*'I normally spend 23 hours on the wing. I do in cell education. I don't come out, I get very stressed. This has helped because I've been doing something constructive - I've been learning new skills and about a new culture; it's helped me keep my stress levels down.'*

On talking to the student six weeks after the end of the project he still maintained that he did not like the music. He was very proud of himself because he had stuck to it. He said

*'it gave me something to focus on. I don't like the music, I don't see the point. I never thought, dreamt of doing something like that. It don't sound good to me.'*

However he continued to describe the instruments in great detail and also how you might use the instruments to make a 'baseline' beat and then have some of the other instruments in the background. He clearly had an interest in music, and he had also made links between the Good Vibrations project and his own music but he perhaps had not vocalised this until the follow up interview. He was enthusiastic about the actual music-making process even if he maintained that he did not see the point of the music.

When asked about his work since the project he said that he had moved from 'In Cell Education' and was now on 'Teapot', which is a tea-making job. He said '*I needed a change. I was fed up of doing In Cell but I'll go back to it after a year.*' He then went on to talk about how he wanted to be a joiner and that he wanted to get out and get a job. I asked whether the project had any impact in all of this and he said

*'If I don't stick to it now, it makes me think I can't stick it when I go out and get, I want to go the right way about it this time. So I know I can stick at it when I go out. I really want to go out and get a job. I want to buy my own clothes, it means a lot to me.'*

Whether or not participating in the Good Vibrations project motivated him to come out of his cell and move into a more social job within the prison is difficult to say. It would appear that it could have, however there is no hard evidence for this. However, there is clear evidence that the act of participating in the project was a great personal triumph to this student. He was clearly proud of the fact that he had stuck to it and it had meant a lot for him to do so. He was using the project as a test of his own commitment, and through this he was able to believe that he will be able to be committed to something that he may not particularly like all of the time. This is a clear positive outcome of the Good Vibrations project.

#### **4.2. Case Study 2**

***'Every morning I sit on my bed with a fag and a coffee and just listen. I listen to the birds and the keys.'***

The student was quite jovial when he entered the room. He knew a number of the other students and entered immediately into conversation with them. He joined in with other students talking about the instruments as well as other things that they were doing on the wing.

The student was honest about his reasons for coming on the course. He did it so as to get out of work for the week. However, after the first session he totally engaged in the project. He volunteered to conduct and he wanted to take on leadership roles. At the end of the first day he commented that he had enjoyed it immensely. That he was '*really glad to be [part of the project]*'. This day had been very noisy, both in terms of playing the instruments and people talking. Along with other students, he commented that people should concentrate and not talk when they are not playing.

On the second day this student was one of a number of students who came in the morning reporting that they had had a really good night's sleep. He said that he had been going over the music in his mind and that it had been really relaxing. Not only this, by day 2 he had connected his music with the music that was being made in the project. He said, '*I do a lot of music. Lots of music in general. It's good. I really enjoy it.*' This being the case, he became quite annoyed with people talking during the sessions. He felt that they were not concentrating and that it meant that he was not enjoying it as much.

This student missed some of the sessions due to other appointments and meetings. When he came back to a session after he had been out he always seemed a little agitated. When students were talking about something that had happened, such as the dance, he would respond that he would not

know because he was not there at the time. He was keen to catch up but he was also worried about someone else taking his place. However, by the end of the week when the group roles had been established musically, he realised that his place would not be taken and he seemed more able to relax.

During the week there was a shift in this student's attitude. At first he was concerned with himself. He wanted the others to be quiet so that he could get what he wanted out of it. There were clearly some issues between him and some of the other students and once or twice at the end of the day whilst waiting for movement back to the wings, there had been some 'play fighting' and some banter between him and other students. Other students had mentioned that he was annoying them, however the situation was always controlled by the facilitator. Towards the end of the week he had developed a sense of community with the group. On day 4, when the students were becoming anxious about the informal performance and starting to argue about the music, he called for the whole group to be silent for 2 minutes so that they could all calm themselves down. This was done for the benefit of group more than himself.

This student volunteered to speak at the informal performance. He was very keen to be seen as part of the group and wanted to take on responsibility within the group. After the informal performance he commented that it had been a really relaxing week. That it had been therapeutic and that he had slept really well during the week.

Six-weeks after the project ended his interview was also an opportunity to reflect on his experiences. He said that '*after the project, looking back, I only realised the effect.*' As with case-study 1, the interview allowed the student to vocalise his feelings about the project for the first time since the project. He said that he thinks about the project a lot, about '*how much of a good experience it was, how much it taught me, how it has expanded my life.*' Giving the student the opportunity to talk about this helped him to reaffirm what he had gained from the project.

In the interview he admitted that he had been very nervous about coming and working in a group. He was always more concerned with himself but the project had not only made him feel that he individually had achieved something, but that he was also proud of everyone.'

*It made me feel like I'd achieved something. I did that. It made you proud of yourself. Proud of everyone. We all pulled together and pulled it off.'*

He spoke about the group composition and that '*it just kind of clicked. Came together*' and he reiterated how it made him sleep:

*I can't quite put my finger on what, but I know I slept like a log. It's that beat, that repetitive beat, going over and over in your head. It would just come back and then you would just drop off.*

The music stayed with this student, as he explains:

*When I went back to my wing I would go over and over it. I would go over it with my knife and fork in my hand [beats with hands to demonstrate]*

Perhaps most importantly, he acknowledged that the music meant that they had to work together. He said

*'I am able to listen a lot more. What other people are saying, that was something that I struggled with before. I used to be 'I don't care, I'm here for one person and one person only'. You can't be like that. In order to get anywhere in this world you've got to listen. Good Vibrations taught me that. It made me appreciate life a lot more. I get up in the morning now and just sit in silence for a minute and listen. Listen to the birds and the keys and everything around me. I sit on my bed with a fag and a coffee and just listen. I don't switch the TV on any more. I used to sleep with the TV on, I don't do that now. I'm from the city, there's lights and sounds all the time through the night. I'm not used to silence so I had to have the TV on to go to sleep. Now, I don't do that. I've learnt to be myself and to listen more.'*

When asked directly if this was a result of the Good Vibrations project, he said 'yes'. When asked what he would say to someone who was not sure whether they wanted to do the project he said '*just roll with it because I can guarantee it will be one of the best experiences you have inside.*'

This student was working in graphic design during the project and he has since moved to being an orderly. Being an orderly involves social skills and the ability to work as a team. Whether or not the Good Vibrations project helped him move into this position is difficult to say, however it is clear that this student made a dramatic change in his attitude during the week. He said that after the first session he thought '*wow! I want to do this because I like this. It was a chance to open my ears a bit more.*' There is clear evidence that he shifted from being concerned with him as an individual to him as a social being with a social responsibility. There is clear evidence to show that the project allowed him to listen to others and respect their opinions more. This could be because of the communal nature of the music, the skill of the facilitator or a combination of both.

However, perhaps the most important shift has been in his sleeping patterns. Insomnia in prisons and the effect this has on the mental health of prisoners has been well documented (Elger, 2009), but since the project this student has been sleeping and is able to start his day in a calm, reflective manner. Addressing this problem through Good Vibrations now means that the student can focus on other areas of his life in a positive way.

#### **4.3. Case-study 3**

***'It was an incredible break from such a horror. Being trapped in here with no way of moving on. It lifts you up and gives you perspective.'***

This student was very confident when he arrived in the room. He was interested in the instruments and how they were played, telling us that he plays the guitar and is actively musical at Swinfen Hall. He was keen to play and take on a leadership role in the first activity and wanted to push himself musically. He was very capable and commented at the end of the first day that he would like to try something a little harder.

On the following day, he took a complex part in a traditional Javanese piece. He seemed happy that he had been allowed to do this and wanted to try and work out his part, although was happy to accept guidance from the facilitator. He was keen to explore everything associated with the music, including the dance, masks and costumes. He considered how he could integrate his music with the gamelan and talked about bringing his guitar and ‘down tuning’ it to match the gamelan notes.

When this student worked in smaller groups, he tried to work with others who he considered to be good musicians. This was evident in the way that he organised his composition group. However, he was aware that not all of the students had his level of musical understanding and he was keen to help other students. He used technical musical language, and seemed to want to demonstrate his musicianship through explanation and discussion of the music.

Later on in the week, it became apparent that it was very important to this student to produce a performance that showed his musicianship. He was always involved in discussions about the music and was keen to offer his comments to others, although not all of the students responded to his comments. He was a key personality in the group and here, it could be clearly seen where the improvisation model of lead-follow-observe-oppose was applied to discussion. At the beginning of the week, he was keen that the others agreed with his point of view and sometimes this caused some tension in the group. However, by the end of the week he agreed to disagree and came to accept other people’s point of view. This was something that the student commented on six weeks later when reflecting on the project:

*‘I’ve listened a lot more. For a while in prison I’ve not listened to people. This [Good Vibrations] has reopened that channel. It’s only looking back now that I see that. It’s one of those things, it may not seem significant at the time, but you take something with you. For me, it was cooperating with each other, which means listening.’*

Whilst the student was very confident and open during the project week, he was different when visited on the wing. His body language was visibly different when he entered the interview room and he didn’t use any eye contact when talking to begin with. When asked what he remembered about the project he said:

*‘Beautiful, strange and easy to play music. It was beautiful. Just the sounds. If there was a structure there was a real background hum. A reverberation. A vibration. It’s the only word for it, vibration. It was an incredible break from such a horror. Being trapped in here with no way of moving on. It lifts you up and gives you perspective.’*

And when asked if he agreed that the project gave him something to focus on, he said:

*‘Yes. All of it. Something better than the day to day. Something more meaningful than the day to day.’*

When talking to the student after the project, on his wing, the affect that the project had on this student’s outlook was clear. This student is obviously engaged with music. He is involved with different kinds of performance at Swinfen Hall and also listens to music when in his personal accommodation. The music lifted the student and gave him something meaningful to focus on. He could see the reasons for using gamelan in this kind of project:

*'There were these moments when playing, when everyone stopped looking and just listened and just played. It fitted together. A lot of people wouldn't have called themselves musicians, they didn't know what bars were or what 8 beats was. Musically, it was something new.'*

He also had a sense of pride in the achievements of the week, acknowledging the difficulties of having a transient group:

*'We had a week without any coherence – there were people coming in and out, missing sessions, but the performance worked.'*

He attributed this to the group working together and listening to each other, also that the project had developed these skills:

*'Even though a lot of us didn't know each other, we were working together. [I listened to other people more]. Prisoners rarely do. You just shout a lot in here, that's what you do. It built a real sense of cooperation. Again, we worked together and pulled the performance off.'*

Along with other students, he also commented on how relaxing the project was, that he could sleep and that it kept his stress levels down;

*'Yes, that week I wasn't stressed at all, which is rare in here. I stress about everything. I'm stressed all the time.'*

Interestingly, during this discussion the student became more alert, his body language changed and he began to use eye contact when talking about the project activities. When I asked him if he thought about the project, he became animated saying

*'Yes. Mainly the dancing, wishing I could have done it with the mask on. It was spooky, quirky – I really did like it. I'm into mythology. I love the idea of different cultures using natural forces and making Gods out of them. Natural forces as Gods. That's what the dance is about.'*

So not only did the music affect this student, but he also engaged with the cultural context. However, it is difficult to ascertain what the longer term impact of the project is for this student. He was still involved in musical activities at Swinfen Hall and when asked whether the project has made him want to do more music, he said

*'I do a lot anyway. We've got a concert coming up. It made you want to branch out, look at alternative music. I tried to tune my guitar to the notes, unsuccessfully. I should have brought it down during the week. It was an interesting sound but I couldn't get the intervals right.'*

*'I've got a rehearsal with the band. We haven't done it for a while. [another student] is in it too, he's leading it. He's leaving soon and we have a concert and [the prison officer]*

*has given him the responsibility for it. It will be interesting to see what happens [to see if GV has had an impact on how he is with his band].'*

When asked what he would say to someone who was unsure of whether to participate in a Good Vibrations project, he said

*'I would say tell me again tomorrow and then if you don't want to do it you don't have to. Because you won't. You wouldn't ask tomorrow.'*

*'It's one of the best spent weeks I've had since I've been in this jail. The jail doesn't do enough things that lift you up or build your confidence. It's lifted me out of somewhere, not a very nice place that I was in.'*

With this case-study, the most striking thing to me was the change in the student from during the week, when he was confident, to when I saw him six weeks after the project. This change could be attributed to anything that may have happened during this period of time, but the visible change noted in the student from the beginning of the interview to the end of the interview would give support to the importance of allowing students time to reflect on the project afterwards. The student reported how the project had lifted him out of somewhere, and this seemed to be replicated in the interview by talking about the project. This demonstrates the important function of a reflective session held at a six week interval after the project has ended.

#### **4.4. Case-study 4**

***'I wasn't really comfortable working in groups before.'***

The student in case-study 4 was another exceptionally musical student. Again, this student fully participated in the musical life of Swinfen Hall and had taken all opportunities given to him. He had taken keyboard lessons at Swinfen Hall and had been entered and passed ABRSM jazz piano grade examinations. However, his musical experience mainly centred on being a drummer, as he explains:

*[I play] bits and bobs in chapel. I work with [the prison officer]. I did his keyboards. I did an exam. Grade 1. Grade 1 and 2 I did. I'm a drummer though. I should be doing a concert with him next month. I play on Sundays.'*

This student did not attend for all of the week and missed a number of sessions. Being a drummer, when he was in the group he made a very positive contribution and was key in helping the other students develop their ensemble skills. However he was very quiet when he was in the group, and at times I was concerned that as his musicianship was of a high level, he was not being challenged and maybe he would be bored. He did not participate in all of the performance items and when I asked him afterwards he said that it was because he had not rehearsed them. He recognised how proud the other group members were on achieving what they did in the informal performance and as he had not attended all week, he perhaps felt that he did not want to take someone else's place in the performance items that he had not rehearsed.

When speaking to the student six weeks after the project, it was clear that he was inspired by the music:

*'The music side of it [the good vibrations project] was kind of inspiring. It gave me ideas, musical ideas.'*

And it was not just the musical part of the project that inspired him:

*'Also how to organise bands. Lots of times there is just one person's idea. I can see how you can draw on other people's ideas.'*

Although this student was quiet, he seemed very confident. Interestingly, when I interviewed him this student reported that he was not confident with other people and that the opportunity to work with other people in this way was one of the best parts of the project:

*'Just the main thing was working with other people. Sometimes being in here I feel uncomfortable with other people. This was very relaxed. It was comfortable.'*

He reported a number of times that the project had made him feel comfortable and that it was relaxing:

*[It was] very therapeutic. Kept me relaxed.*

*Very relaxing. This was the biggest part of it.*

*Yes, it [kept my stress levels down]. It was comfortable.'*

In turn, this helped him to develop teambuilding skills and be confident to work with others in the group. He attributed this ability to work together to listening to each other:

*'I'm not sure it would have worked if we'd not listened. It's part of it in a way.'*

He also recognised that the creative elements of the project helped to bring the group together.

*'I don't know, it's a natural thing. I was kind of surprised it came together naturally. On the outside I play drums and I've played with a lot of bands, other musicians. Sometimes it gels but sometimes it wouldn't work. This worked. I liked the composition, it just all came together.'*

So here we see the impact that the project can have on a student who does have a high level of musicianship to start with. Good Vibrations acknowledge that the reason for using Javanese Gamelan for this project is that as it is a musical genre, students are unlikely to have had any experience of it and therefore all students start on a level field. Furthermore, the instruments are easy to play and therefore it is very accessible, but moreover, the social nature of the group encourages active group work. To this student, who has '*been doing music all my life*', but '*wasn't really comfortable working in groups before*', the project gave him a new music-making experience and provided him with relaxation;

*'I've never really used these instruments. There's a lot to it, but at the same time it's quite relaxing. I've never worked with that many instruments.'*

In comparison to case-study 3, who wanted to push himself musically and try complex things, this student was happy to sit back musically but use the project to develop other skills. Also, case-study 3 student wanted to actively take on leadership roles; however this student was happy to sit in the background and not put himself forward. On the surface, it could appear that this student was not engaging in the project, but in fact it was his lack of confidence holding him back from being a more active leader. The project gave him an opportunity to develop his confidence in group situations, as he states:

*'Working with other people was the main thing for me.'*

Musically for him, the project provided him with a new source of musical inspiration that he can draw on, and he talked about the potential for using the musical ideas in his band, as he states:

*'It's a whole different culture, different type of music. It's relaxing, calm. Even if you have experience in music you can gain a lot from it.'*

#### **4.5. Case-study 5**

***'There were people on that course that I couldn't stand. They knew I didn't like them. I avoided putting myself into a situation that could get me into trouble. I'd not do that on other courses.'***

The student in the final case-study provides an example of a student was able to put personal feelings aside in order to work together. At the beginning of the week, this student was fairly quiet. He joined in conversations with the other students, but did appear to be a particular personality in the group. As the musical activities began, he was keen to concentrate on what he was doing and he picked up things quickly.

As the week progressed, this student was a very solid group member. He helped other students out when they found something difficult and he demonstrated a great deal of patience with his composition group. At times, he displayed his frustration at other members of the group, particularly when they were unable to do something musically that he wanted them to do, but he kept this frustration under control.

He was happy to take on musical responsibility, playing the buka (introduction) for one of the pieces in the informal performance, as well as being a person that could be relied upon to lead other students. However, he did not put himself forward for any leadership roles and did not choose to conduct the group.

After the informal performance, he was pleased with what he had achieved and also he commented that he had met someone from his wing that he had not spoken to before, and that they had become friends. He appeared to have gained a lot from the project, but also that he had been a solid member of the group and he had been a clam influence on others around.

When he reflected on the project six weeks later he agreed that the project had been relaxing. He said:

*'I remember it all. Everything. The big gongs, whacking them. The whole thing. I've never done anything like it.'*

commenting that it was

*'Noisy!! Very soothing, very relaxing. It's music. You're not really learning when you are hitting the instruments, just making your music.'*

Surprising to me, he said

*'I was going to leave on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day. I had headache. I said I'd do it though so I did it. When I finished I was pleased that I stuck to it. It was quite different in the chapel than the smaller room.'*

During the project, had had not shown signs that he was thinking about leaving. He was clearly proud that he had continued with the project:

*'That was the most thing. I'd actually done something that I didn't think I'd do. I got out of bed to play these.'*

Along with other students, he commented that the project had been relaxing and that it had helped him sleep:

*'Yes. I slept! I was in bed by 7 each night.'*

Although he said that it had helped him to develop his teambuilding skills, learning to work with each other,

*'It didn't take my mind off my release!'*

When asked if it helped to keep his stress levels down, he said:

*'Not a chance! It was quite frustrating. Sitting on the floor all the time, you need chairs. It was uncomfortable. And I had a headache.'*

For him,

*'It was too much though, half a day would have been plenty. It was too much. 3hrs in the morning would be enough. It means that you are awake and you're ready for it.'*

Again, this was surprising as during the week this student had appeared to be fully engaged with the project and it did not seem as if he thought that it was too much.

However, although making these negative comments, the project had clearly had a lasting impact on him. Even though the students did not know that I was coming in to interview them, they had been talking about the project the day before:

*'I was talking about it yesterday with another lad that was on the project. About the photos. Someone said that they had seen the photos. That they were in the prison. Only one person though. I asked the other lad if he had seen the photos.'*

They were very keen to see these photos and we see here how important they were to the students.

The student in this case-study is interesting as on one level he appeared to have had a positive experience. During the week he was a key member of the group, but not in an explicit way in terms of leadership, in the solidity that he brought to the group. Even though he reported having a headache through the week, he would recommend it to others, saying;

*Go for it. Take the experience. Have lots of paracetamols and your own pillow.*

On a different level, this student had actively made a choice in this project to avoid confrontation:

*'There were people on that course that I couldn't stand. They knew I didn't like them. I avoided putting myself into a situation that could get me into trouble. I'd not do that on other courses.'*

By not putting himself forward for leadership positions, or asking for responsibility within the group, he was participating without the need to be confrontational. He was able to focus on his part in the music and was clearly proud of his achievements, both musically and socially.

#### **4.6. Summary**

What is interesting about these case-studies is how they highlight the difference seen in the students during the week to what was seen six weeks after the project. Case-study 1 appeared to be 'hot-headed' during the week, getting frustrated with the project and passing his frustration on to the others. However, in the interview he appeared very 'level-headed', outlining his reasons for continuing with the project and showing great self-determination and personal strength. Case-study 2 had appeared flippant during the project. He had seemed not entirely serious at first, although this changed during the week. However, the impact of the project was immense. Without speaking to him six weeks later, the effect that the project had in terms of both his sleep and his ability to listen would not be known. Both case-study 3 and case-study 4 showed a reverse of character in the six week interviews. Case-study 3 appeared 'cock-sure' and very confident, yet in the interview he was very depressed and demonstrated little of the characteristic shown during the week. Being such a good musician, case-study 4 had appeared 'aloof' and disinterested at times. During the interview it came to light that this was actually his lack of confidence and the appearance of disengagement was actually his difficulties in working with other people. With case-study 5, where he had been a positive force during the project week, it was surprising to hear him talk negatively about the project in terms of having a headache, finding it uncomfortable on the floor and all day being too much. During the week this student had appeared a strong and solid part of the team. Someone that did not have any cross words with anyone, that helped others in a quiet manner and made friends during the project. However, in the interview it transpired that this was him avoiding confrontation with people that he does not get along with.

What is clear is that none of this would have come to light had the six week interviews not taken place, and it gives an interesting insight into the impact of the project in the medium-term.

## **5. Conclusions**

This research has laid out the learning processes that occur within a Good Vibrations project within a Young Offenders Institute and has analysed these in terms of the attributes that associated to inspiring desistance from crime. In doing so, the following conclusions are reached.

### **5.1. Shared learning processes**

The processes involved in musical development facilitate the development of individual agency and social skills required to inspire desistance from crime. We saw how through engaging with music the individual went through a transformation of being inwardly focussed to being outwardly focussed. This was a gradual transition made possible by the sequence of musical activities and the developmental pedagogy adopted during the project week. Each activity was built on prior learning and acted as a step to the following activity. Within this, the creative elements of the project coupled with directed tasks allowed students to develop ownership and self-differentiate musically, thus enabling them to engage in the project and develop individual capital (in terms of self-determination, pride, hope etc.).

The communal nature of the gamelan means that students have to work as a team musically to produce a coherent musical result. The process of developing these ensemble skills facilitated the development of social capital and there are powerful examples of how students were able to overcome personal issues with other group members in order to produce meaningful music.

At all times, the music was kept at the forefront of learning. The students were aware that they were developing listening, team working and communication skills, but this was seen as a by-product of the music. It was the musical learning that enabled the other learning to take place, and the other learning took place alongside the musical learning. As the music got better, the individual and social skills of the students got better. Without individual and social skills improving, the music may not have progressed as it did. The music mirrored the social functioning of the group. Therefore, the musical development processes are in fact shared processes with the development of individual and social capital.

### **5.2. The facilitator as role model**

What is quite clear in this research is the role that the facilitator plays in modelling the behaviours that the students developed during the week. On the surface, the role of the facilitator in steering the week, steering discussions and providing musical inspiration is transparent and has been highlighted in previous research (Henley et al, 2012). However, it was only by participating in the project that the underlying role of the facilitator became clear. The facilitator was crucial in providing positive examples of how to interact verbally as well as musically. This could be seen in two ways. On a musical level, the space that the facilitator gave students, the way that he gave help to students by either playing with them, singing melodies, pointing out the aural cues or explaining how the music worked was mirrored by the students. The facilitator modelled how the students could provide help and support for each other and this in turn fused the students' own musical

learning. Coupled with this, the framework for improvisation (lead-follow-observe-oppose) provided a powerful framework for discussion too. Here, musical interactions modelled verbal interactions and by referring to this framework in musical terms, the facilitator was able to demonstrate how the framework operates and how it kept the music musical.

On a social level, this framework also provided a model for discussion and the facilitator demonstrated key behaviours in meaningful discussion. With an understanding of how this framework operated musically, the students were able to disagree with each other without confrontation. The facilitator maintained respect at all times, although he did not always agree with what students said. This showed the students that disagreement can be productive and by the end of the week, the students were able to discuss, actively disagree and resolve situations.

Not only did the facilitator model social interaction with this framework, he modelled positive behaviour at all times. He always did what he said and ensured that everyone felt part of the team. The facilitator showed how to give feedback, how to evaluate, how to recognise progress and how to maintain a professional approach to the music. Again, these were behaviours that could be seen in the students by the end of the week. What is crucial in this is that rather than being told how to behave, the students were shown how to behave and this had a positive influence on the students.

### **5.3. Opportunity for reflection**

It was felt that the opportunity that the six-week follow up interview provided was crucial in the reflection process. During the interviews, students visibly became animated when talking about the project. It gave them an opportunity to think about the impact of the project and to voice this. Without these interviews, the impact of the project could have only been seen in terms of how the students acted during the week, but as the interviews show, there were a number of effects that had not manifested themselves during the week, but had been fundamental to the students' development. By conducting the interviews, there was an opportunity to draw these out on an individual basis. This was perhaps the first time the students as individuals had an opportunity to speak about their experiences.

Coupled with this is the importance of the photographs to the students. This reflective process is vital in identifying to the students themselves what they had learnt through the project. It is this identification of positive change that can help the desistance process (McNeill et al, 2011) and is vital if the project is going to have a lasting impact on the students. The photographs could provide further stimulus for reflection, not only whilst still at Swinfen Hall, but also to carry through to release. The students have CDs of their performance, but if these are kept until release, an opportunity for the reflective process to take root is missed.

#### **5.4. Inspiring desistance from crime**

By analysing the data from this research in terms of the attributes associated with inspiring desistance from crime, it is clear that Good Vibrations provides opportunities for students to engage with learning processes that support and can help develop positive outcomes. All but one of the students participating in this project were in Good Vibrations target group (reluctant/hard to reach/difficult to engage). All students participating in the project engaged. The project nurtures positive values, and the role of the facilitator is crucial in this. However, having said this, it is acknowledged that the desistance process is very complex and without long-term tracking of former students, it is difficult to say how much of a contribution the project can actually make. What this research gives is a snapshot of a project at Swinfen Hall where some powerful outcomes can be seen. There is strong potential for the skills and behaviours developed during the week to be applied to the desistance process and this alone affirms the worth of the project in terms of not only a positive learning experience for students, but also as a potential turning point in the students' attitudes and behaviours.

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