

Thematic Issue

Music Education Among Refugee and Migrant Youths: Including, Sharing, Belonging

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INTRODUCTION

The Introduction comprises five Preludes and the presentation of contributions aiming to acknowledge the dialogic nature of its development and the authors' different departure points. In doing so we further assume musical discourses, aiming to imbue our writing with the educating potential of 'listening'.

PRELUDE 1 – (FORCED) MIGRANT YOUTH AND MUSICAL ENGAGEMENTS

Chrysi Kyratsou and Alix Didier Sarrouy

Against a globally persisting pattern of (forced) migration¹ and exile, music teaching and learning remains a significant creative and educational practice among (forced) migrant youth, with the potential to ameliorate suffering and foster potentially inclusive opportunities (Marsh, 2016; Odena, 2022; O'Neill, 2008; Kallio *et al.*, 2021). Access to all art forms, including music, is a right promoted by UNESCO's Global Framework for Culture and Arts Education.² Motivated and committed music educators, as well as the organisations for which they work,

¹ The concept of 'migrant' and by extension 'migration' is used as an umbrella-term to describe diverse types of migratory mobilities, without specific definition under international law (see IOM 2019, p. 132) such as that of 'immigration' or 'refugee'. 'Forced migration' intertwines with 'forced displacement' aiming to highlight the coercive nature of the migratory movement (IOM 2019, p. 77), e.g. refugeehood. Here, by '(forced) migration' we aim to highlight the variably forced nature of migratory movements, acknowledging the diverse but tangible forms of violence and pain they may involve. Furthermore, we acknowledge the co-existence of 'migrant' and 'forced migrant' youth in the music education contexts under examination.

² See UNESCO (2024, online).

attempt to utilise the potential of music as an artistic and creative expression. The actions and possibilities that each musical setting encourages are variable, determined by the intersections among migrant populations, host society members, educational organisations, and the socio-economic-political contexts within which these actions occur (O’Flynn, 2005). The pedagogies underpinning music teaching-learning play a decisive role in materialising visions around inclusion(s) and even expressions of citizenship, as long as they consider the particularities of each context (Hess, 2015; Sarrouy *et al.*, 2022; cf. Kyratsou, 2022; cf. Stokes, 2023; cf. Turino, 2008).

(Forced) migration involves separation and trauma as well as survival and resilience. Individual and collective experiences and narratives of (forced) migration may be radically diverse as they unfold within a dense matrix of human interactions (Clark, 2023; Millar and Warwick, 2018; Nijs and Nicolaou, 2021). Musical engagements, as a form of creative practice, offer a prominent site to explore the intersections of the radically diverse trajectories of individual and collective experiences of forced migration. Furthermore, musical engagements illustrate the multiplicity of ways that these experiences are aesthetically processed and negotiated. Musical instruments, voices and singing practices, instrument techniques, melodies, harmonies, rhythms, ensembles and performances comprise some of the elements of musical engagements. Within this context, the affectivity of musical engagements can be magnified, encompassing any social actors involved, and with a particular emphasis on the teacher-student relationship (Lenette and Sunderland, 2014).

Yet, experiencing music, individually and collectively, entails multi-layered meanings, as shaped by participants’ respective backgrounds. The shared experiences (i.e. music lessons) among (forced) migrant youth, further informed by their diverse backgrounds (i.e. language, religion, and so on), and determinants such as age, gender, and ethnicity set the tone for sociocultural relationships and musical expressions (Pardue, Kenny, and Young, 2023; Ugolotti, 2022; Kenny, 2020; Kenny, 2018). The role of the teacher in navigating this landscape, facilitating learning, and circumventing existing challenges is unquestionable (Kenny, 2022; Sæther, 2008).

The active engagement in music that teaching-learning involves in these contexts allows us to see it as a form of musicking. As Small has argued, musicking is “to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing” (1998, p. 9). Here, we see teaching-learning in their performative and participatory dimensions, wherein teachers and learners enact their part in a mutual and equal relationship: unless teachers become learners, learners cannot be taught; unless learners teach their teachers, they will not learn (Rancière, 1991). In this lies the ‘emancipatory’ (*ibid.*) potential of education. In music education contexts, teachers need to ‘listen to’ their students and ‘sync with’ them and the pace of a group class. Unless they do so, teachers cannot fulfil their role, and they cannot enact their part in the teaching-learning relationship (Kyratsou, 2023a, pp. 158, 165). By attuning to individual and collective needs, teachers can moderate the pace of the group in a way that ensures everyone’s participation (*ibid.*). Learners, on the other hand, are expected to listen to other learners too, (apart from their teacher) coordinating with them in a paradigm that reinforces the equal participation of all and aiming to alleviate any hierarchies that could underpin the teaching-learning process (cf. Kyratsou, 2023a, p. 159).

In music education among (forced) migrant youth contexts, we should not ignore the shadows that (non-)citizenship casts, threatening to impose certain hierarchies embedded in the relevant power structures. Despite its fragmentary and exclusionary character, citizenship understood as legitimate nation-state belonging, remains a prime political means to organise social life, which is usually entangled with certain benefits and privileges (Balibar, 2015; Favell, 2014). In this sense, acknowledging the very human existence is hardly possible in the lack of citizenship (Khosravi, 2010, p. 122; Malkki, 1995). In the music educational settings under consideration, matters of (non-)citizenship are particularly relevant as they relate to the teacher-learner positionalities in the broader social nexus. More specifically, music educators tend to come from the so-called ‘host’ settings, being endowed with citizenship, or with a legal status presumably more privileged compared to that of the various types of ‘non-citizen’, at least from a political point of view. To that end, the music educators’ act of ‘listening to’ their learners, to their group, and choosing to enhance the modes of participation, should be understood as an action suggesting equality and mutuality; not only within the teaching context, but inevitably encompassing their positionality outside of them. In this paradigm, the teachers’ and learners’ affective entanglements may be finely balanced, reinforcing the transformative potential of lessons for all involved (Lenette and Procopis, 2016).

This transformative character intertwines with the individuals’ motivations for joining a teaching-learning initiative, committing to its processes and practices and developing common points of reference that traverse the nexus of participants despite any differences in their individual and collective values. The framework of Communities of (Musical) Practice is useful to explore the participants’ dynamic interrelationships within teaching-learning initiatives. Communities of Practice, according to Wenger, are “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (2015). Kenny, drawing on Wenger’s (1998) framework of Communities of Practice, specifies the framework within the particularities of musicking, by extending it to Communities of Musical Practice (CoMP) (2016). The structure and activity of CoMP are bounded by “mutual engagement (domain), joint enterprise (process/community) and shared repertoire (practice)” (1998, pp. 70-73).

‘Mutual Engagement’ interlaces with a shared desire to get involved in the project, to practice their membership through regular interactions and building relationships that are structured around the goal of the project (Wenger, 1998), which, in musicking contexts, translates as rehearsals, workshops, the occasional meetings of a mutually engaged group (Kenny, 2016). In our case, mutual engagement refers to the commitment to joining music lessons and artistic sessions to teach, learn, and express themselves creatively.

The ‘joint enterprise’ describes the interactions and processes that manifest the community’s ‘mutual engagement’ to the goal (Wenger, 1998), which in musicking contexts, translates as the ways that participants navigate any challenges that they meet taking on board the particularities of their contexts (Kenny, 2016). The ‘joint enterprise’, in a music-educational context among (forced) migrant youth, may be seen as the learning or the interpersonal barriers, that the participants (teachers and learners) need to navigate so that their goal is achieved. The ‘joint enterprise’ may also involve good practices such as ‘listening to’ each other, making room for individual expression.

Finally, the ‘shared repertory’ refers to what happens when the Community of (Musical) Practice comes together, the agreed courses of action (Kenny, 2016; Wenger, 1998), which in our case involves the repertoires and creative activities structuring the teaching-learning meeting, the special meaningfulness of certain parts of it, and the fashions in which this meaningfulness occurs.

Here, we must note the decisive role of choice: participants in the music lessons and creative activities discussed throughout the Thematic Issue (TI) have chosen to participate in these activities. They choose to make them happen in various manners, aspiring to achieve and enhance their success, as success is understood specifically for each case. This voluntary character further unleashes any transformative potential: participants choose to join the initiative and take its course of development in any direction, facilitating dialogues with their social worlds and their imaginaries and inevitably shaping who they are and who they become (cf. Turino, 2016).

From this departing point, and breaking down mutuality and equality, the key themes of sharing-including-belonging are proposed as lenses to delve into the processes, practices, and their affectivity, occurring within the music educational context. By choosing these themes, we aspire to reveal the complex dynamics that underpin the praxis of music teaching-learning. Sharing, including, and belonging allow the reader’s focus to zoom in on the intimate, interpersonal relationships shaped within a teaching-learning paradigm. Framing the praxis of music teaching-learning through the entanglements of sharing, including and belonging, foregrounds the participating individuals as agentive actors whose choices and motivations get musically entangled, and subsequently their socialities can be possibly transformed. This paradigm is reinforced by the contributions to this TI, and the illustrious insights they offer into the decisive role of participation in materialising music education among migrant youth. Each term is discussed further in this Introduction.

This TI has two objectives. First, it explores the potential of music education as a means of achieving the much discussed ‘(social) inclusion’ of migrant youth, focusing on the everyday practices of musicking in education contexts and considering the wider socio-cultural contexts. Second, the TI explores how sharing, belonging and including may underpin music education, by focusing specifically on the dynamics of the relationship between teachers and learners. The TI explores how the individual and group determinants (i.e., gender, age, class, ethnicity and so on), come into play in music education contexts and inevitably shape the lived experiences of all participants, and by extension, may inform their life-courses. These determinants are socio-culturally framed and thus embedded in the respective power structures within which music teaching-learning takes place. At the same time, we should not forget the capacity of musicianship to erase identity-determinants, and their exclusionary potential (as embedded in the relevant structural asymmetries).

In what follows, each of the key analytical terms of this TI is reviewed, aspiring to trace their in-between entanglements as actualised within the context of music teaching-learning.

PRELUDE 2 – MULTIPLE INCLUSIONS

Alix Didier Sarrouy

The contributions of this Thematic Issue (TI) focusing on current events discuss music teaching-learning among refugees, namely from the Russia-Ukrainian war to

Ireland and the UK (see articles by Kenny and Lukianchenko; Brown and Ranganathan), from the MENA region in Switzerland (Kirschstein) and the Southern USA borders (Amrein and de Quadros). Concerning Europe, asylum-seekers largely originate from Syria, Afghanistan, and Venezuela.³ According to EUROSTAT, around 1 million people applied for asylum in the EU in 2023, a 20% increase from 2022. Applications have risen for three years, approaching 2015–2016 levels. Minors accounted for 24% of applicants (272,000), with 40,000 unaccompanied. Most unaccompanied minors were Syrians (35%) or Afghans (31%). Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, 4.3 million Ukrainians have received temporary protection in the EU.⁴ Apart from conflict and economic issues, climate crisis-induced migration is expected to rise significantly in the coming decades.

The predicament of ‘inclusion’ weighs heavily on migration debates. Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, estranged and excluded from their home settings and forced to flee, seek to be included in the new settings in which they find themselves. As Abdelmalek Sayad reminds us in *La Double Absence* (2014), an immigrant is firstly an emigrant, carrying a culture, life experience, and reasons for moving away. Migrants seek inclusion in their new social worlds to survive and achieve a better life for themselves and their families (Agier, 2011; Werz and Hoffman, 2016). Being between home(s) and potential home(s), ‘diasporic identities’ are formed among peers (Shelemay, 2022), intertwining with a sense of ‘diasporic belonging’ (Ugolotti, 2022, p. 103).

‘Inclusion’ is understood in this TI as a multiple and contested concept (Lems, 2020; cf. Silver and Miller, 2003). The notion has been utilised in different contexts by diverse academic disciplines, serving as a tool for policy-making and concrete actions. This TI assumes a pragmatic perspective of ‘inclusion’. We adopt a comprehensive perspective of the term, envisioning it as an ‘experience’ (Dewey, 2005 [1934]): inclusion resulting from actual and symbolic actions (cf. Goffman, 1961; 2016), bringing together humans to share space and co-facilitate belonging by reinforcing what is common without dismissing individual uniqueness. Under this perspective, ‘inclusion’ cannot be reduced to a singular expression of a human being, living and acting. Rather, inclusion should encompass the singularities of distinct cases and contexts, territories and time-frames. If we accept that differences do not undermine equal individuality, we can understand ourselves as equally ‘outsiders’ (Becker, 1963), each seeking inclusion in the ‘worlds’ of others.

Our choice to acknowledge the multiplicity of ‘inclusion’ – henceforth ‘inclusions’ – stems from our (multi-sited) fieldwork in music education contexts (including Greece, Sweden, France, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland, Venezuela and Brazil). This research demonstrates that music education can facilitate multiple forms of inclusion for migrant youth. However, these diverse and complementary inclusions do not necessarily follow a direct causal progression, as one might expect from a domino effect. For example: the inclusion in a music programme by a young asylum seeker in a refugee camp doesn’t mean their national inclusion through acquiring a legal refugee status; the inclusion in a violin class doesn’t mean inclusion in an orchestra; the inclusion in a melody doesn’t entail rhythmic synchronicity. As social actors in these settings, teachers also strive for inclusion and acceptance by their students, asylum seekers who may have been there for months or even years (Sarrouy, 2023b). When teachers demonstrate sensitivity to their settings, listen to

³ See EUROSTAT (2023, online)

⁴ See EUROSTAT (2024, online).

students as equals, and respect diverse trajectories without reducing students to their living contexts, they can bridge social worlds and encourage mutual inclusion (Kyratsou, 2023a). Likewise, researchers are outsiders whose presence may be contested (*ibid.*, p. 153). Many forms of inclusion may happen (or not) at the same time. Therefore, ‘inclusion’ isn’t singular or unidirectional, but rather multiple. Multiple inclusions may occur simultaneously, all relevant for sustainable results in music education programmes. As a result, the correlation and causal relationships (or their absence) between ‘inclusions’ should be explored.

The multiple ‘hierarchies’ between different objectives of ‘inclusions’ have been further revealed through multi-sited fieldwork research (Sarrouy, 2022; 2023a; 2023b), as individuals strategically pursue personal goals. For migrant students, social interaction in an educational project may be more relevant than the possibility of being included in a choir or a band. For teachers, meaningful human relationships may hold greater value than their salary rate. In the articles of this TI, the detailed ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973) and in-depth interviews highlight how transformative a teacher’s smile or respectful look can foster a socio-psychological feeling of ‘attachment’ (Hennion, 2013) from students to people and places. This supports Fredericks’ work (2010), inspired by de Certeau (1984), on the “importance of the everydayness of belonging and attachment, and the memory and tradition it reinforces [as a] means of appropriation and territorialisation” (cited by Allman, 2013, p. 2).

Each form of inclusion and exclusion can be explained (Rinde, 2022), although not necessarily justified. Research can provide explanations from different disciplinary perspectives, showing possible roots and development paths. Opting for the plurality of ‘inclusions’ embraces the contradictions and paradoxes that characterize our complex world. The plural allows for a subtle and more inclusive range of viewpoints, ramifying towards intersectional scientific analysis. This frame, open to simultaneous pluralities, also reveals power relations and domination factors affecting ‘inclusions’ (Baker, 2023; Parker, 2012). Do refugee students accept being included because they face exclusion from other interconnected local realities? Does being included in an opera performance have more symbolic power than being included in a soccer team? Is the inclusion in an LGBTQIA+ music education programme the only ‘refuge’ for a migrant community who feels excluded from everything else?

Migrants and asylum seekers approach ‘inclusions’ strategically, as specific opportunities may better facilitate legal status and integration.⁵ For example, in Europe, some music programmes operate in spaces owned by Christian groups and

⁵ When examining the concept of ‘inclusion’, we must compare it with its contested counterpart – ‘integration’. The theoretical debate between these terms has a long history and varies both in connotations across languages and in resonances with each country’s migration history. ‘Integration’ is typically viewed as a macro-level, structural process, usually entangled with securing legal status for migrant and asylum seekers, with refugee status being one possible outcome. Integration tends to be exclusionary, imposed top-down without consideration of those expected to integrate (Rytter, 2018; Titley, 2012). In educational contexts, ‘integration’ often manifests as practices that potentially segregate students, such as separate classes for students with refugee backgrounds. In contrast, ‘inclusion’ typically involves sharing educational spaces, rather than creating separate spaces for each particular background or need. The case studies analysed in this TI exemplify ‘inclusion’ as music learning environments with no pre-requisites for participation; provision of free lessons and instruments; welcoming to both local and migrant students; including LGBTQIA+ youth and young people with autism and ADHD. Teaching across the case-studies discussed is conducted in a group setting.

in churches; Muslim students learn music in such symbolically charged places that have high ‘symbolic capital’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Do refugees have better inclusion chances by participating in these symbolically dominant settings? Another strategic consideration relates to the country itself: as case studies show, compared to Sweden or the USA, Greece and Mexico are perceived by most asylum seekers as transit countries (Sarrouy, 2023b). How does the impact of such a ‘transit condition’ affect the actions of teachers and students, considering the long-term commitment that music learning-teaching requires?

When confronting ‘inclusion’, Finnish researcher Tuulikki Laes in *The (im)possibility of Inclusion. Reimagining the potentials of democratic inclusion in and through activist music education* (2017), disputes the very possibility of inclusion within music education. Based on Biesta’s notion of ‘democratic inclusion’ (2009) and Dewey’s pragmatist philosophy of educational democracy and moral imagination (2011 [1938,1916]), the author notes that while democracy seems fundamental for ‘inclusions’, it proves insufficient as ‘exclusions’ are implemented through democratic votes too (Lenard, 2023). There is an ‘inclusion paradox’ (Slee, 2009), driven by ambiguous relationships in music education practices (Boeskov, 2022) since exclusion is structural at the macro and micro levels. Inclusive programmes can become a comforting ‘oasis’ that may also demonstrate the structural violence migrants face daily. Political theorist Iris Young distinguishes between ‘external exclusion’ and ‘internal exclusion’ (2002). A refugee may feel an ‘internal inclusion’ in a music education programme, which reinforces the consciousness of an ‘external exclusion’ from the general population, culture and country. As with ‘inclusions’ there are ‘exclusions’ in the plural too, operating simultaneously. What may mediate the tensions between the two perceptions is what Laes calls ‘activist hope’ (2017, p. 72) since inclusive music education is both “a generative and ambiguous process” (2017, p. iii).

The awareness of simultaneous ‘inclusions’ and ‘exclusions’ provides an analytical frame for critically acknowledging the processes in music education settings (Avenburg *et al.*, 2019). It raises central questions: Who is trying to include whom and into what? What is the extent of diversity for governance, people, methodologies, and goals? How consistent is programme funding? What are the specificities of inclusive education through music learning and playing? (cf. Yerichuk and Krar, 2019) What relational and pedagogical methods in music education programmes promote effective social inclusions? How inclusive is the choice of instruments and repertoire? By acknowledging such questions, it is evident that participation is not inclusion. Paraphrasing Kirschstein’s paper in this TI, ‘social immersion’ without proper mediation might become exclusionary. The plural nature of inclusion concerns all social actors, revealing multi-layered, sometimes contradictory ‘inclusions’.

PRELUDE 3 – SHARING AS MORE THAN GIVING ACCESS

Alix Didier Sarrouy

The concept of ‘sharing’ (Belk, 2010; Filiod, 2018; Price, 1975) is utilised in this Thematic Issue (TI) to explore the pragmatic manifestations of inclusions through music education in migration contexts. Acknowledging that ‘sharing’ is an under-researched concept (Arcidiacono *et al.*, 2018), we aim to contribute to the relevant discussion through this TI.

Present-day work on ‘sharing’ draws from developments in other scientific fields, such as paleoanthropology concerning evolutionary kinship lines and survival

mechanisms amongst members of the same groups, especially between parents and infants (Layton, 2021). In anthropology, ‘sharing’ dialogues with Mauss’ notion of ‘gift-giving’ (1966) and with its utilitarian intent (Graeber, 2001). Sahlins (1972), coined the concept of ‘generalised reciprocity’ to signify putatively altruistic giving, which results from a collective agreement based on trust, avoiding measurements and comparisons. Unlike ‘giving’, with which it closely dialogues owing to its relational nature, ‘sharing’ does not involve any relevant obligations and commitments between the actors involved (Widlok, 2017). In this sense, employing the concept of ‘sharing’ when analysing social interactions in music education programmes can help reveal induced asymmetries and power structures.

The concept of ‘sharing’ has been utilised by research in the field of economy, specifically with a focus on consumers. Here, ‘sharing’ seems to resonate with the misleading usage of the term by corporations that allegedly position it at the core of their business model (e.g. Airbnb, Uber, car or bike sharing). In such cases, sharing has fallen into the ‘commodification of everything’ trap (Hall, 2023), associated with a system undermining intimate life by tying it to market forces (Polanyi, 1957). As anyone can testify in most capitals worldwide, migrants and asylum seekers comprise the main workforce of such companies, often exploited through precarious contracts (Alencar and Wang, 2022). Therefore, the concept of ‘sharing economy’ is criticised for ‘not being about sharing at all’ (Eckhardt and Bardhi, 2015). Eckhardt and Bardhi (ibid.) make a clear distinction between ‘sharing’ and ‘giving access’ since the principal models of the ‘sharing economy’ are based on allowing access to a commodity in exchange for a fee. The reciprocity is financial, the low cost is the advantage, and it doesn’t imply commonality since there is no requirement for bonding between provider and receiver. Such critical perspectives on the concept of ‘sharing’ are particularly appropriate when analysing case studies based on free music education for migrants and asylum seekers, as giving access to music learning may not ensure inclusive and reciprocal sharing.

Arguably, an understanding of what ‘sharing’ actually involves becomes more complex. Focusing on music education among (forced) migrants, sharing’ can take various forms, which may potentially ground the meaning of the action in an interaction of genuine equality, distancing it from the fraudulent corporate claims. ‘Sharing’ can underpin co-existing in the same room to participate in the group music lesson, standing next to each other to use a music stand, or taking turns to play a musical instrument. ‘Sharing’ may pertain to the emotional expressions, the circulation of feelings, and the exchange of ideas and knowledge.⁶ ‘Sharing’ can refer to a common identity with someone else, a sense of ‘belonging’ to a nationality, an age group, an ethnicity, or an expression of sexuality or gender. The latter type of ‘sharing’ may be contested or even associated with trauma. This is exemplified in the conflicting experiences of (non)-sharedness where being of the same cultural background or gender may intersect with unequal positionality or even violence, since the same culture or gender may not serve as a sufficient trigger for other types of sharing – quite the contrary in some cases of trauma. Conversely, an individual, i.e., a music teacher, who has personally experienced migration, may be motivated to share their space, knowledge or food. Such perspectives on sharing are particularly relevant in the multicultural contexts of music education involving young migrants and asylum seekers, where there is an increased risk that policymakers, programme directors, and teachers may create an ‘even’ or ‘gender-

⁶ Sharing as proximity (cf. Koelsch, 2013).

neutral' image (Pittaway and Bartolomei, 2018) – one that dismisses individuality and devalues personal agency. Ultimately, the shared reality of forced migration intersects with each individual's unique experience, complicating how the tools and goals of music education are expressed.

Belk's seminal article titled 'Sharing' (2010) assumes as one of its main analytical focuses the concept of 'family', as the primary social group in which 'sharing' typically occurs, starting with the mother-infant attachment and encompassing all members. Biological and emotional ties, related to social and cultural factors, are at the core of this sharing. Belk examines 'family' as one setting, but such ties extend beyond the domestic sphere into other relationships, like friendship, kinship, and circumstantial interactions over time and space. 'Family' should not be idealised, considering the wide range of qualities that the relationships among its members may take, from genuine care to oppression. Instead, the concept of 'family' is used here as a metaphor for the 'ties' and 'attachments' with which it is associated. Based on Sarrouy's multi-sited fieldwork in inclusive music education programmes in Sweden, Greece, Portugal, Switzerland, Brazil and Venezuela, the use of Belk's interest in 'family' as a possible sharing base resonates in a phrase often used by students and teachers to define their programme: "The programme and its people are my second family". Hence, an open question arises: How may music education programmes create a potential sense of 'family', taking into account the multicultural and circumstantial interactions that result from forced migration? In other words, how can social settings such as music education for forced migrants foster strong ties and deep attachments? What types of (re)negotiations effectively lead to sharing? As Belk notes, there is much to be explored and understood in settings outside the 'first circle': "the question of sharing outside the immediate family is where the phenomenon of sharing becomes the most interesting and has the greatest social and theoretical implications" (2010, p. 725).⁷

Understanding sharing requires examining its relationship with reciprocity and utilitarianism so that it can be more effectively used. In music education contexts, participants may have less explicit intentions, such as sharing with a utilitarian approach. Two examples: teachers share their knowledge and time, but they also expect results from the students and recognition from their supervisors to advance their careers; students share time and willingness to learn but may expect this to reinforce their social integration and legal status applications. As Westerlund reminds us, "music education needs to return to moral questions about how we as a profession potentially construct 'our life' and 'our values' in educational contexts" (2019, p. 503). This highlights that a reflexive awareness of one's position is crucial for deeper and more meaningful sharing among all involved actors, who face different pressures and pursue distinct goals.

In their contribution to this TI, Pendenza *et al.* examine the complementary concept of 'common ground', where sharing "supports unity and growth through active participation." In the radical diversity that usually characterises music education settings, the idea of 'common ground' is twofold. First, it refers to understanding and acknowledging what is already 'shared' among humans co-existing in this setting. Second, 'common ground' refers to what becomes 'shared' as a result of the dialogic interactions over time and space while musicking (Small, 1998). Music plays a distinctly significant role for each human being, affecting the collective

⁷ Here, it should also be noted that understanding 'sharing' through the analytical lens of 'family' is not assumed by the contributors in this TI.

while resonating differently with every individual (Graber and Sumera, 2020; Nijs and Nicolaou, 2021; Rosa, 2019).

As musician and researcher Peter Gouzouasis writes:

When music and poetry transcend notes and words, finger motions and recitation, and static texts, we come to a deeper understanding that “all playing is being played” [Gadamer, 2004], in the sense that the performing arts lend themselves to constant renewal – of both the artist and the artwork itself – with each interpretation that changes every performance (and performer) of poetry and music. (2017, p. 241)

For all social actors involved in music education, the impacts may be tangible and concrete, symbolic or even mystical (Khan, 2022) and reaching the ‘poetic’ level referenced above by Gouzouasis. It all depends on Who, How, Where, Why, and For How Long. Qualitative research, particularly ethnographic and art-based methods, are especially well-suited for capturing the diversity and subtlety of what is shared (Bartleet and Higgins, 2018; Leavy, 2019).

In the context of a music class with humans facing specific physical and psychological challenges such as young migrants and asylum seekers, creating a ‘safe space’ (Hendricks *et al.*, 2014; Sarrouy, 2021) serves as an effective way to encourage individual resonances. In her contribution to this TI, music teacher and researcher Kirschstein writes about finding the right balance of what is shared with students according to the “inequalities inherent in these relationships”, in which “a palpable sense of [her] privilege often led [her] to hold a certain distance.” The same applies to her interlocutors, due to cultural habitus and traumatic experiences, but also to avoid the pitying and salvationist narratives commonly imposed on migrants and asylum seekers. The ‘safe space’ of an inclusive music education programme may also allow for shared, comfortable silences amidst melodies of ‘hope’ (DeNora, 2021; Storsve *et al.*, 2012).

PRELUDE 4 – ‘BELONGING’ AS AN ASSEMBLAGE OF PRACTICES AND MODES OF FEELING, BEING AND BECOMING.

Chrysi Kyratsou

Conceptualising ‘belonging’ may turn out to be challenging, due to the ambivalence that pertains to describing solidly a state of being and feeling. Things can get further challenging, as states of being, tend to be prone to change to the degree that it is more accurate to talk about states of constant ‘becoming’ (cf. Deleuze-Guatarri, 2016 [1987]). Associating ‘belonging’ with the shifting nature of states of being urges us to think over the possibilities for becoming encapsulated in senses of belonging: what states of being resonate with sensing belonging? What possibilities for becoming emerge from sensing belonging? How do senses of belonging transform social relationships and experiences of social order(s)? How do they shape (re)new(ed) states of being?

Seminal research in musicking portrays its socially transformative entanglements (Small, 1998; Turino, 2008; Turino, 2016). These entanglements are seen as integrally embedded in the affectivity of musicking and its capacity to embody social values, encouraging in turn participants’ agentic enactment of a given social order, while simultaneously enabling projections and practical experimentations of visions of alternate social orders (Small, 1998; Turino, 2008; Turino, 2016). If a given social order gets enacted through individuals’ embodied positionalities, then the renegotiation of the latter within a paradigm of sharing and including dialogues with experimentation of alternate social relationships. These experimental modes

of relating while musicking and learning intertwine with senses of belonging as they are the fruit of participants' agentic choices and courses of (musicking) action and commitment to them out of their free will (cf. Turino, 2016). The cases-studies of this Thematic Issue (TI), departing from a multitude of music education contexts, illustrate how senses of belonging are embedded within the music educational processes that foster new paradigms for relationships among participants, and as such, they entail processes of 'becoming' (cf. Moisala *et al.*, 2018). These modes of belonging are rooted in the alternate social world bounded by the time and space wherein musicking unfolds. They promise to infuse the outside-of-musicking social world with the musicking-emerged senses of belonging and the respective paradigm of social relationships entrenched with sharing and including (cf. Small, 1998; Turino, 2008; Turino, 2016).

Understanding belonging as entangled with time and space resonates with Koroļeva's (2019) argument that "the world we live in is constantly changing, as are the people living in and adapting to that world, and 'belonging' is achieved through an active process: in other words, belonging can be imagined as a trajectory in time and space (de Certeau, 1984)" (p. 70). This framing merges the experience-based nature of belonging as located in space and time, and it highlights its non-static character; belonging rather interlaces with individuals' mobilities (understood here literally and metaphorically)⁸, and consequently, it interweaves individuals' respective experiences as located outside and within music-education contexts.

Research into musicking among migrants further situates senses of belonging at the intersection of experiences located across diverse spatio-temporal contexts, while at the same time maintaining a dialogical connection between them. Reyes (2010, p. 127), assuming the concept of 'nonbelonging', examines migrant actors as entangled within the conflicting forces of 'nonbelonging' and their desire to forge belonging in community musicking contexts resonating the conflict in their home countries and their marginal position as refugees in the host countries. Habash (2021) sees belonging as entangled with homemaking in the adversities of exile, and as exemplifying an asymmetric interplay of maintaining identity in the aftermath of displacement. Kyratsou (2023b) argues for the capacity of music to manifest '(non-)belonging', elaborating on music's dual function as reinforcing borders, while enabling their crossing, and by extension, enabling ambiguous belongings to each side of the border. Rinde and Kenny (2021) explore the entanglements of modes of participation for students regarding their availability and accessibility, and the expectations and value with which imbued, and how certain senses of belonging are reinforced. In any case, senses of belonging (or nonbelonging) as materialised through musicking intertwine with the mobilities of the subjects' musicking. Musical belonging operates within the ambiguity that the solidity and porosity of border and boundary-making involve reinforcing (desires

⁸ The concept of 'mobilities' tends to describe the tendency of our lifeworlds to fluctuate and be in a constant state of change and movement, encapsulating their capacity and inherent potential to do so (Salazar and Smart, 2012). It may refer to physical mobilities, eloquently depicted upon a map, which, in turn may be embodied in distinct categories of diverse demographic groups on the move (i.e. migrants, tourists, etc.), who actively defy any imaginary of sedentariness and rootedness (*ibid.*). It may also refer to the existential dimensions that keeping up with the personal aspirations and dialoguing meaningfully with the societal expectations acquires in ensuring that our lives move ahead in a purposeful and fulfilling way (see Hage 2009, p. 98). 'Mobilities' are relevant to our discussion regarding belonging, as they determine essentially the trajectories of migranhood, as unfolded geographically, and socio-culturally, and mediated and reconfigured within the music-education settings.

and imaginaries of) familiarity and affinity, as well as difference or even estrangement (cf. Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 209; cf. Migdal, 2004). Departing from this approach, our TI delves deeper into the actions and practices of musicking that enable belonging.

This TI foregrounds that within the music education contexts under consideration, the renegotiation of participants' relationships encourages modes of belonging that differ from the ones in the outside-of-musicking world. Participants' new modes of relationships are embedded in the processes of 'becoming', as dynamically facilitated through musical action. Participants outside-of-musicking relationships tend to be rooted in the rigid 'being' of their positionalities, which are intertwined with socio-legal status and other factors fueling inequalities. As the case-studies of our TI illustrate, within a music teaching-learning relationship, participants are perceived through this capacity rather than the rest of determinants of their identity, e.g. socio-cultural background, gender, and so on. The latter may enrich the musicking experience with a wealth of experiences and socio-cultural references, rather than prescribe and reinforce unequal social positionalities.

Approaching 'belonging' as a sensorial matter describes it as fleeting in the same fashion that any affective experiences may be transient and yet transformative; its temporary duration is being outlasted by its lingering effect, protracting the actual experience long after its end. It's no coincidence that in an attempt to frame 'belonging', and conceptualise it firmly, we may resort to mapping the individuals, communities, contexts and conditions that foster senses of belonging. After all, belonging tends to be relational (Nicolaou *et al.*, 2023; Kyratsou, 2023b), and as such it emerges at the intersection of (emplaced) networks of relationships. This TI further reinforces this approach, emphasising the teacher's/facilitator's crucial role to that end (Pendenza *et al.*; Kirschstein; Kenny and Lukianchenko; Brown and Ranganathan; Irurzun). In doing so, this TI aspires to contribute to the discussion around 'belonging' by offering a grounded, multifaceted approach, derived from the dense layers of the music education paradigm among young refugees. Belonging is considered in terms of the (asymmetrical) relationships pertaining to the teaching-learning matrix, the (inequal) accessibility to (learning) resources, the emotionality and emotivity that are entrenched in musicking and their entanglements with cross-border place- and home-making.

Scholarly work has argued for the complexities pertaining to 'belonging' as an analytical term. Antonsich (2010) critically engages with the diverse approaches to and uses of 'belonging', arguing that their lack of uniformity and the radical multidimensionality of the term, urges for more nuanced conceptualisation. Acknowledging the high versatility of the term's usage, Antonsich schematically distinguishes between approaches that associate 'belonging' with identity, and those associated with citizenship (*ibid.*, p. 645). Antonsich, elaborately discusses approaches to belonging that frame it "as a personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness) and [...] as a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion / exclusion (politics of belonging)" (*ibid.*).

Despite the differential aspects between the two conceptualisations of belonging as identity and as citizenship, and their interconnections and connotations with the private and the public sphere respectively, as well as the vernacular and intimate as opposed to the formal and institutional, the common ground between the two approaches should not be ignored. The latter is determined by the politics coming into play to demarcate identities and endow citizenship. Furthermore, in both cases,

territoriality appears as a requirement and as direct consequence of enactments of identity or citizenship, imbuing them and being imbued with meaningfulness. The ‘banality’ of ‘belonging here’ (ibid.), is very specifically grounded. Yuval-Davis has offered a thorough examination of the territoriality that belonging materialises, as established through the politics that underpin everyday practices, and the intersectionality that the conflation of different factors (i.e. race, gender, class, etc.) instill (2011). What kind of practices facilitate the negotiation between the two modes of belonging, as codified in identity and in citizenship, and how are they political? Taking on board the discussion around ‘sharing’ earlier on in the Introduction, how does sharing blur the territorial delineations between the two? Accordingly, how can ‘sharing’ reframe our thinking around belonging, as intimately and/or formally experienced and expressed? And as far as ‘citizenship’ as the primordial form of legitimate belonging within the jurisdiction of the awarding nation-state (Nyers, 2006; Khosravi, 2010; Malkki, 1995) is concerned, how can practices of sharing foster modes of belonging that could serve as alternative modes of the nation-state citizenship? The last question is relevant, as this TI focuses on refugees, who, by default, having crossed the international borders of their home-country, they have also lost any privilege with which their citizenship endowed them, finding themselves in conditions of crisis.⁹

Kyratsou (2022) has discussed the antagonising modes between conventional citizenship and the so-called ‘musical citizenship’ (Stokes, 2018), as the one fostered through musical engagements, focusing on music educational contexts. Debating the changing understandings of ‘citizenship’, and their pertinence to musical imaginaries, Stokes urges to consider the social worlds, affinities, connections, practices and enactments that are facilitated through music and enable us to re-think ‘citizenship’ (2018), as well as how concepts of ‘citizenship’ play out critically and get challenged through musical engagements (2023). Further developing with an emphasis on the inequalities underpinning citizenship as embodied in the teachers’-learners’ paradigm of (non-)refugees, Kyratsou (2022) outlines the emergent potentials to reclaim visibility, audibility, emancipate and lead a meaningful existence while being stuck in the legal-limbo that asylum-seeking involves. The limitations posed by the rigid socio-political structures, as the latter were seen in the COVID-19 pandemic, further underscore the conditions required for this potential to manifest (ibid.).

Reflecting over the concept of ‘mobility’ and how it entangles with ‘belonging’, discussed earlier, we can argue for the potential of ‘musical citizenship’ to reconfigure our understanding of conventional citizenship, and in doing so, to exercise a critique on the respective modes of belonging. As Kyratsou and Salazar (2024) argue ‘reconfiguration’ is a term infused with the qualities of ‘crisis’ and ‘critique’ that enables someone to wonder about the subjects whose social realities have been subject to presumably radical change, and who attempt to regain their sense of control and of meaningful living (and moving) through their agentive actions. If a ‘crisis’ marks a radical shift in the equilibrium of a certain order, ‘reconfiguration’ entails ‘critique’, by means of a ‘critical response’, a reckoning as to what has happened, and decision-making over what has been done, and will have to be done, to rebalance” (ibid., p. 413). This TI shows how belonging fostered

⁹ Here we do not disregard the limitations of the privileges usually associated with citizenship, as determined by its intersections with factors, such as class, gender, etc. (see Balibar, 2015). However, an extensive discussion of this matter is out of the scope of this Introduction.

through musicking in educational contexts challenges modes of (non-)citizenship, allowing navigations of exclusionary contexts, and negotiations of relationships

This TI offers elaborate answers on the ways that musicking in education contexts enables the negotiation between the two modes of belonging (understood as identity and as citizenship), by foregrounding the decisive role of sharing, participating, and collaborating. These practices enhance empowerment and participation. Consequently, they encourage re-claiming modes of presence and action that negotiate the (non-)citizenship divide between teachers-learners, further fostering a potential for inclusivity. In doing so, the discussion offers practical examples of how the inequalities underpinning the (non-)citizenship divide, are negotiated in the music education contexts, and how the agentive practices of sharing and including reconfigure senses and modes of (non-)belonging. This understanding adds a further layer to the entanglement of belonging with mobility, by showing how individuals circumvent non-citizenship exclusions through musicking in educational contexts and exercise their social and existential mobilities.

As long as any experience unfolds in a specific temporality, we should not ignore the temporal dimensions of belonging. In other words, when does someone feel belonging? Across the temporal spectrum of Past-Present-Future, when are senses of belonging located? How do they dialogue with the subject's other experiences, as unfolded in other locations and temporalities? This TI offers privileged understandings to that end. After all, participants' (encompassing refugee students, and citizens music teachers/ facilitators) experiences within music education settings tend to balance between what actually happens in each given teaching-learning instance and what has happened outside it, in other locations, socio-cultural contexts, and times. To that end, this TI traces senses of belonging within processes and practices of everyday life, and everyday music teaching-learning. As such, we can understand the interplay of sharing-including-belonging as a critique of the exclusionary modes of non-citizenship, and as a means of reconfiguration of the given inequalities.

PRELUDE 5 – CONCEPTUAL TRIAD TO ANALYSE ‘SOCIAL SURFACES’

Alix Didier Sarrouy

After establishing an analytical framework for each concept individually, we propose joining them together. To do so, and although this is a social science journal with the broad scope of Music and Arts in Action, this Thematic Issue (TI) proposes an interdisciplinary approach involving mathematics, physics and geometry. The goal here is to harness the tools of these scientific fields to imagine and even visualise the possible interconnections between the three concepts. The objective is to find alternative viewpoints on the triad including-sharing-belonging, drawing on the qualitative metric possibilities developed by sciences that are more adaptable and poetic than one might initially assume.¹⁰ Let's delve into this together.

An observable mathematical principle establishes that three non-collinear points are required to determine a 'plane'. In other words, a minimum of three points, not aligned in a single line and thus forming a triangle, are needed to create a plane, as demonstrated by the top of a three-legged stool. By linking three concepts to better grasp the complexity of human interaction within this triangle, we can visualise and

¹⁰ Regarding the adaptability of 'qualitative mathematics,' Claude Lévi-Strauss's 1954 article *Les mathématiques de l'Homme* is a valuable starting point for social scientists. An English translation is available in Lévi-Strauss, Küchler, and Carey (2023).

interpret the broader plane they create, which extends beyond the individual points each concept represents. The three points may occupy countless positions, but their relative proximity doesn't affect the formation of the plane. Nonetheless, these imaginary distances must be acknowledged when applying these concepts as analytical tools in the specific field of music education with migrants and asylum seekers. For example, closer ties between sharing and including may increase the potential for a deeper sense of belonging.

Thus far, we have employed the two-dimensional concept of 'plane' to represent what emerges from connecting the three conceptual points. But nothing concerning 'the social' is linear; it is more complex and dynamic, with curves, height and depth. Consequently, rather than a 'plane', the social reality we aim to analyse through the conceptual triangulation of including-sharing-belonging is more accurately defined as a 'surface'. From a flat triangle in a fixed plane, we have now progressed to a curved triangle on a surface, as illustrated in Figure 1.

One key question arising from this conceptual triangulation concerns sequence. Which of the three concepts/actions occurs first to support the emergence of the others? How significant is their order of appearance? Is the sharing of a music space enough to initiate some form of inclusion? Numerous possibilities exist depending on context, influenced by the social actors involved within temporal and spatial frameworks. Though it may seem visually static, a geometrical perspective of 'social surfaces' can accommodate all possibilities, dynamic by nature, allowing movement across multiple axes.

What makes transposing social realities to geometrical formulations particularly valuable is the ability to quantify through metrics. After observing its shape, a triangle has many measurable features: sides, internal angles, perimeter, and area, among others. Since we are now working with a three-dimensional surface, we can also calculate the relative position of its vertices; analyse how the movement of each vertex affects the position of the other two; understand how these movements alter the perimeter and the area; and examine how such fluctuations affect the existence of each internal point of the conceptual triangle. Furthermore, we might investigate the attractive forces between the everyday perception of each concept, and what tensions may inhibit their full development. For example: What emotions motivate teachers and students to share tools for better inclusions and develop senses of belonging? How might trauma affect such goals? What impact does the governance of each programme have on achieving a sustainable triangulation between the concepts?

Another possible advantage of this geometrical approach is that after having visualised and done the measurements for each surface, we can compare the resulting three-dimensional images. This comparison becomes particularly effective when surfaces overlap and intersect (purple lines in Figure 1), allowing us to better observe common points and shared lines, as well as differences between shapes, sizes, angles, perimeters, and areas. These measurements and comparisons could effectively support our understanding of the impact of practical actions such as music education in contexts of migration and asylum seeking. Furthermore, the qualitative metric possibilities inherent in this approach serve as practical and visual tools to gain some 'control' over the fluid complexity of social interactions.

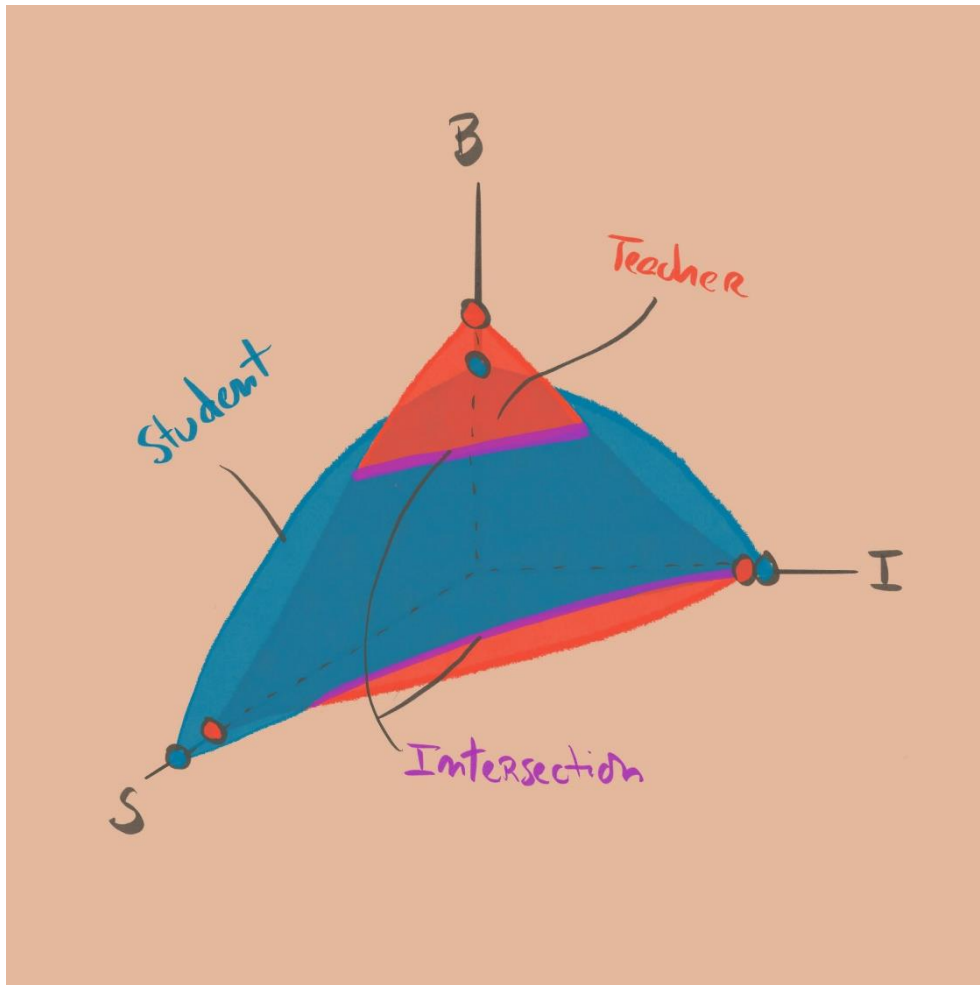


Figure 1. Illustrative sketch of two triangular ‘social surfaces’ constructed from possible data gathered through semi-structured interviews with a migrant student and a teacher from the same music education program. Each triangle’s vertices are positioned along three conceptual axes: S = Sharing, I = Including, and B = Belonging. This visual representation invites readers to critically reflect on the potential meanings of both the differences and the overlaps between the two surfaces, encouraging open-ended inquiry into the relational dynamics they suggest. Credit: Gil Costa

The perception of including-sharing-belonging depends on the ‘locus of enunciation’ (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 5), also theorised as *lugar de fala* by Portuguese-speaking researchers (Ribeiro, 2017). When analysing the same social context using these three structural concepts, the researcher can end up with many different surfaces, one per interlocutor. This means that the order, intensity and forces between concepts are influenced by those who experience, think, and express them (for example, migrant students, music teachers, programme directors, and policymakers). With such information, researchers can compare all gathered surfaces, highlighting relative differences in perception over the same social context, and revealing common sociological patterns. Following this principle, researchers could also compare three-dimensional surfaces from different music education contexts around the world (for example, by comparing two programmes from England and Brazil). Intersecting the resulting visual representations would enhance the depth of analysis for each programme, namely through the revelation of differences and gaps, contributing to pursuing adapted solutions for more sustainable goals over time and space.

These tools, which still require development and adaptation for social science research, could address a persistent challenge for sociocultural programmes using

the arts for educational and inclusionary purposes – qualitative measurement and evaluation. Mathematics and physics have long posed philosophical questions and developed analytical tools that, when thoughtfully adjusted, can significantly deepen our understanding of the concrete relationships between concepts.¹¹ Moreover, since intersectional approaches correlating age, gender, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status are essential, they require scientific research involving inter-trans-disciplinary collaboration. Though challenging for siloed scientific fields accustomed to sharing only among immediate peers, such inclusive work becomes necessary when trying to understand and explain the full scope of social interactions in the delicate contexts of music education among migrants and asylum seekers.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Brown and Ranganathan explore the role of group singing in fostering identity, belonging, and inclusion for a young Ukrainian refugee in the United Kingdom. Using an Indigenous Research Paradigm and a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach, the study discusses how participation in a youth choir shaped the participant's well-being and inclusion into a new social environment. Findings highlight the significance of collaborative action, community influences, and personal development in creating a sense of belonging. Through shared musical experiences, the participant transitioned from a peripheral position to an active role within the choir, reinforcing her self-esteem and cultural adaptation. Brown and Ranganathan underscore the importance of safe spaces, play, and social bonds in music education for refugee inclusion, offering insights into how choir-singing fosters emotional and cultural connections in displaced communities.

Kenny and Lukianchenko examine the role of school-based music-making in fostering belonging and identity among Ukrainian refugee children in Ireland. The study explores how music provides a temporary socio-musical space for refugee children to navigate their experiences of forced migration. Using participatory and arts-based methods, the research highlights three key themes: identity, participation, and future imaginings. The findings suggest that music serves as a bridge between past and present, helping children maintain cultural connections while engaging with their new environment. The workshops also fostered social bonding, enabling children to express emotions, build friendships, and imagine their futures.

Pendenza, Cortesi, and Haddon examine co-facilitators' experiences in delivering ten music workshops for refugees and asylum seekers in York, UK, alongside an informal performance. The study identifies key themes in the facilitators' approach: adaptability, flexibility, fostering unity through sharing, the role of singing as a bonding tool, and strategies for overcoming challenges. Workshops provided facilitators opportunities for growth in adaptability and cross-cultural communication, while participants, who contributed songs and dances, developed

¹¹ In physics, Karen Barad's theory of *agential realism* has been influential and is recommended for its application to educational research (see Murrin, 2022; Rosiek, 2018). In mathematics, the foundational works of Alexandre Grothendieck (2022) and, more recently, Olivia Caramello (2018) are essential references. Additionally, transdisciplinary approaches in psychology have drawn parallels between Grothendieck's notion of *topos* and Lacan's theory of the unconscious (see Connes and Gauthier-Lafaye, 2022).

a sense of equality and belonging. The facilitators' reflective processes underscored the importance of empathy, non-verbal communication, and cultural sensitivity in these settings.

Amrein and de Quadros explore the transformative potential of participatory arts in empowering LGBTQ+ youth refugees in a shelter. Drawing on the Empowering Song approach (de Quadros and Amrein, 2023), it details music and storytelling sessions conducted with displaced queer and trans youth. The methodology emphasises fluid, rhizomatic collaboration, rejecting rigid outcomes and instead fostering co-created emergent narratives. The sessions highlighted queer joy as both a radical act of resistance and a catalyst for reimagining self and community. The facilitators' reflections underscore the importance of humility and openness in allyship, revealing how positionality shapes participatory practices. This article tackles the facilitator's internalised assumptions about participatory music-making, inviting readers to consider the role of narrative and creativity in cultivating inclusive, empowering spaces that honour diverse identities and inspire systemic change.

Kirschstein explores the role of music lessons in fostering cultural participation, empowerment, and belonging among unaccompanied refugee and asylum-seeking youth. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, including observations, interviews, and informal exchanges, the study highlights how music serves as a means of agency and self-determination in the lives of young migrants. Kirschstein introduces the concept of 'musicking ethnography', shifting the focus from observing musical participation to using music as a tool for engagement and storytelling. The research reveals the impact of music lessons on personal growth, social connections, and cultural integration. Kirschstein further critically examines access barriers, institutional power dynamics, and the necessity of rethinking traditional music education models to foster inclusion and equity in refugee communities.

Irurzun offers a historical contribution to the discussion. Irurzun analyses the 1933 adaptation of Wagner's *Lohengrin* by the *Esbart Infantil* of the *Casal Català de Buenos Aires*, designed to foster identity and belonging among radical Catalan immigrants in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Catalan playwright Ramón Más i Ferratges adapted the opera for children, aiming to instill cultural pride and cohesion within the younger generation. Drawing on press reports, memoirs, and community sources, the author explores how *Lohengrin* became a medium for redefining migrant identity and bridging Catalan heritage with local influences. This staging also served as a boundary-drawing practice, differentiating radical Catalans from more assimilated groups. The article highlights the role of cultural performance in immigrant communities, where music and theatre create intergenerational bonds and sustain cultural identity, blending elements from both the homeland and the host society.

The discussion concludes with Chrysi Kyratsou's interview with Nikos Ziaziaris, offering a music facilitator's critical perspective and rich first-hand experience-based insights. Nikos Ziaziaris, drawing on his long experience as an opera-performer and as a facilitator in various music educational programmes aiming for 'social inclusion', reflects on his practice and the contributions to this TI, elaborating on the tight entanglements of sharing, belonging and including. Ziaziaris discusses the gestures that defined the teacher-learner relationship and their transformative potential for all involved, and the contexts and individual initiative in materialising (or not) the transformative potential of music lessons.

As Guest Editors of this TI, we would like to express our gratitude to the contributors who invested their time and energy in preparing the thoughtful pieces that structure our TI. We have learned a lot from their work, and we hope that the process has been equally rewarding for them.

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