

The Big Connection

In the week of April 19 – 25 2006 a workshop will take place, lead by guest teacher Sean Gregory. Sean Gregory is head of the Department of Professional Development of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and is one the pioneers in England concerning the development of creative outreach work. In London's backlog areas, schools, youth centres, community centres, prisons and hospitals he develops creative projects. Together with students of the Guildhall School these projects are brought about and performed. In these projects the audience is participating in a great extend; the audience takes part in the achievement of (often) improvised compositions. What is achieved, concerning the artistic contents, is strongly dependable on the context (e.g. the scenery of the project, the audience, the target group).

By means of the project "The Big Connection" a group of four high qualified graduated students is able to train themselves in creative leadership within several social contexts. The students will lead this to a number of artistic products and make it part of their professional integration and widening of their professional practice. Herewith new impulses will be achieved in the community of Groningen concerning the reinforcement of the social cohesion via musical activities.

In the week of December 5 – 10 a kick off seminar is held, under the auspices of the lectorate "Lifelong Learning in Music", in which an expert meeting is provided with examples of good practices concerning community arts and a discussion platform with interested parties.

There is an open enrolment. Four graduates who are provable talented in developing this sort of creative workshops, in an artistic as well as a social-organizational way, can be selected to take part in the programme. This by handing-in a motivated letter and a realistic project plan, which will be judged by a committee, consisting of: the lector, the coach, a member of the team knowledge experts of the lectorate, the head of Production of the NNC and an external member, and the director of the Groningen Community Music School.

The committee stated above will have interviews with the candidates who hand in good plans. These plans will be judged on, amongst other things, (artistic) originality and spirit of entrepreneurship. In the January 2006 the selection procedure is finished and the coaching will start.

Following, the selected students will be coached for four months by an artistic and business coach, in which also the aspects of marketing will be scrutinized. This coaching will take place in several ways: by means of a kick off seminar, skills training, 'on demand' coaching and training on the job. The artistic coaching can be individually aimed, but will take place in groups, because the aspect of *peer learning* (learning from each other by observing and feed back) is really important. Business coaching will also be given to the group as a whole, in which various students can work on various issues.

During this coaching route a number of four ensembles will be formed by pupils of the Groningen Community Music School completed with students of the NNC. The NNC students will be students who are interested in learning how to lead creative workshops in the future. The pupils of the Music School (age between ca. 14 and 18 years), are all pupils who show, one way or the other, aspects of musical leadership (e.g. children who are talented in improvisation and composing).

During the coaching period the four graduates work with these groups, supervised by the artistic coach. The repertoire to be developed is free and can contain all conceivable genres.

In the workshop week of April, Sean Gregory is guest teacher in Groningen. This week's purpose is an intensive training for the four candidates and their ensembles, and further coaching in the development their products.

During this week a number of public accessible activities will take place: next to the workshops of Sean Gregory, that are situated in the NNC as well as in the Groningen Community Music School, presentations will be held of the work that has been done by Sean Gregory in London and, for example, in Gambia (by means of films and lectures). A special workshop will be given by Sean Gregory about music making with very young children (toddlers).

Groningen will be a dazzling city this week, because two big projects with active audience participation are provided as well. One project in the Groningen Museum and one in a, to be determined, shop or shopping centre.

In both places the four ensembles of music school pupils and conservatoire students will be joined together and play under leadership of the graduates. Also an *all comers band* will be formed, lead by Sean Gregory. The audience that enters the venue immediately is a member of the band. Own instruments can be brought in, but also a utensil from the kitchen (for example). The concert in the Groningen Museum will be a *Live Online concert*, together with an all comers band present in London at the same time. The highlight will be a collectively interactive made composition by the all comers bands of Groningen and London, in which the audience will automatically be one and the same audience. A unique on the spot improvised composition of musicians and audience from Groningen and London will be performed!

The remaining period of the project (till May 2006) will be used for finishing the products, with the help of the coaches. Finally all of this will result in a number of creative workshops, which will be achieved at the end of May in the city of Groningen on several locations. These locations will be: a Community School, a nursing home, a hospital and a school for children with an aural, speech or language handicap. These workshops will be recorded and placed on the website of the lectorate.

The final artistic product of this project is thus a series of artistic high-quality creative workshops, developed and performed by recently graduated musicians and taking place in different social contexts in the community of Groningen. This will be an important step into the professional integration of young musicians; with the network they learned to develop during the past six months, they can make new contacts and develop workshops.

Participants

Participants will be graduated students (of the NNC and other conservatories) or musicians with a comparable level till the age of 35. The acquisition takes place in the autumn of 2005.