

# **Artistic - reflective project of the lectorate NNC/RC and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London: Orientation on the Professional Field**

## **Dec. 2004**

### **Introduction**

From 6 till 10 December 2004 an artistic - reflective project for all first year students took place. The purpose was to start the students' Orientation on the Professional Field connected to their Personal Development Plan.

A group, consisting of Bindert Posthuma, co-ordinator Education, Rineke Smilde, lector Lifelong Learning in Music, Roos Peppelenbos, assistant of the lectorate, and the first year students Pia Greiner (cello) and Tobias Nijboer (double bass jazz), prepared this project. Furthermore Sean Gregory (head of Professional Development Guildhall School) was involved in designing the contents of the project.

### **What is the Orientation on the Professional Field?**

The orientation on the professional field at the NNC contains the following subjects:

- Exploration:

*Collecting information:* In preparation to the practical activities students look for information about the music profession via literature or the Internet.

*Practical activities:* The students write a plan of exploration in which they describe which practical activities they choose to do and why. After handing in their plan, the students start the activities. The NNC organises a few activities, which they can attend: a visit to a music school/arts centre, a visit to a rehearsal of an orchestra, a visit to a studio and a workshop "entrepreneurship". Next to taking part in the NNC activities, the students will have to carry out at least two self devised activities.

- Reflection placing your own professional orientation in the wider professional field: about each activity the students write a short report and a reflection on their experiences considering the activity and how it relates to their motives and ambitions.

- Formulating vision; creating a personal development plan:

*Personal vision on the profession:* as a result of the reflection the students describe their personal vision on the role which they might take up in the professional field and their personal perspectives  
*Expectation of the education offered by the NNC:* the students write down their expectations of the education offered by the NNC.

This artistic-reflective project was meant as the start of this professional orientation.

### **Background**

When starting the professional music training, it means that students start thinking about their future as a musician. This means at a certain point making choices for the future. Making these choices starts with a personal development plan. It is important to consider questions like: which role do I want to play in the community as a musician? Where lies my strength? Why am I doing what I am doing? This kind of reflection is, next to the artistic development, very important. We therefore chose an artistic-reflective project as starting point for the orientation on the professional field: a project in which both components were covered.

### **Goal**

By creating and performing an artistic product (a composition) together and reflecting on its realisation, a first step towards the Personal Development Plan of the first year students was to be made. This was to be achieved by preparing together a series of creative workshops, to be executed in two venues not very common to perform for a musician, connected to audiences not very common for a musician to perform for: a primary school ('De Linde', Haren) and a nursing home for elderly and disabled people ('Coendershof' in Groningen).

We chose to realise this project in co-operation with the Professional Development Department of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. This department develops programmes in which musical activities take in venues in the community where musical communication can play an important role, for example in prisons, hospitals, youth centres etc. Furthermore the Guildhall School is an important partner of the lectorate Lifelong Learning in Music.

*What happened?*

The first year students were divided into four mixed groups. Mixed as in instruments and departments (Jazz, Classical, Conducting, Classroom Teachers Training and Composition). The groups were put together on advice of the heads of department, looking at specific skills and

qualities of the students (e.g. initiators, strong artistic thinkers etc.). Each group was lead by one or two workshop leaders (tutors). These tutors were students of the Guildhall School who just graduated in the postgraduate programme Professional Development. Here they learned to create and lead creative workshops by improvisation, in all sorts of contexts. Next to one or two artistic leaders (tutors), each group also had a mentor (from the NNC).

The tutors (workshop leaders) of the Guildhall School were: Jo Wills, electronics; Jules Buckley, jazz composer; Guy Wood, jazz percussionist; Luke Crookes, bassoon player; Lucy Forde, flute player; Mara Miribung, cello player and Nia Lynn, singer.

Mentors were: Marinus Verkuil (Head of Classroom Teaching Department), Peter Mak (Teacher in Music Psychology and Pedagogy, also member of the team of knowledge experts), Bindert Posthuma and Rineke Smilde.

On *Monday December 6* the afternoon was spent by discussing the contents of the week together, reflecting on the students future as a musician and, along with their mentor, getting to know the group.

On *Tuesday December 7* and *Wednesday December 8* the groups were working on creating a composition by improvisation, lead by the workshop leaders. While composing a piece, the group always had to keep in mind the audience (and thus the context) they were going to perform to. During these two days there was also time for reflection: a teacher of the primary school came to visit the NNC and an 'activities-coach' of the nursing home came to inform the students about the children c.q. patients who would form their audiences during the performances.

This was important information, because the aim was that the students, next to connecting to the context in terms of their composition, also were asked to have a short conversation with the audience after the workshop. These conversations, about what music means to people, the evaluation of the performance etc.) would take place in small groups, be informal and, both in the primary school and the nursing home, be supported by staff of the school and home. The mentors prepared these conversations with the students.

On *Thursday December 9* the workshops took place under the supervision of Sean Gregory. In the morning the workshops were in the primary school. All four groups attended. Two groups performed their composition; the other two groups joined the audience and were observing.

After the two compositions Sean Gregory developed a group improvisation with the two students groups and the children. After that the conversation of the students with the children took place. The organisation group and tutors shortly evaluated the performances with the teacher of the school.

In the afternoon the same thing happened in the nursing home; the two groups who performed in the morning were now observing. The other two groups performed their composition, followed by a group improvisation (students and audience) lead by Sean Gregory and a short conversation of the students with the inhabitants of the nursing home. The organisation group and tutors evaluated the afternoon with two activities coaches of the nursing home.

Finally *Friday December 10*: the morning was used for evaluating the week with the students and their mentors and tutors. At 13:00 h. the students performed their workshop (composition) at their best for all students, teachers, employees and other interested people at the NNC. The performance ended with a group improvisation lead by Sean Gregory.

As a closure of the week a conversation took place on Friday afternoon between the students and Peter Renshaw. Peter Renshaw is arts and education consultant and former head Research and Development of the Guildhall School, who developed and set up the Professional Development Department. Under the title "Developing your Personal Pathway" Peter Renshaw talked to the students about personal choices in the profession and what aspects can play a role in connection to that.

The students, mentors and workshop leaders kept a personal diary over the project in order to be of use for evaluation and self assessment.

### **What is the connection with the concept of Lifelong Learning?**

- The components artistic and reflective were elucidated in several ways: different audiences, different contexts, different kinds of demands for communication playing a role in creating a composition and the way to perform it.
- Mentors and tutors were working together in a small group (shared leadership). Shared leadership was also amongst the students, while mutually giving shape to their composition.
- The project was shaped together with people from the primary school and the nursing home, was lead, reflected on and evaluated together (widening the mentoring circles).