Music in the Odensehuis
Returns and characteristics of a meaningful collaboration between a group of musicians and participants of the Odensehuis, Groningen

Research Group Lifelong Learning in Music
Karolien Dons & Tine Stolte
November 2016
Contents

1. Introduction ........................................... 2
2. Music in the Odensehuis: the research ................. 3
3. Process description and outcomes of the research ...... p. 4
   3.1 The creative process ................................ p. 4
   3.2 Returns for musicians and participants of the Odensehuis ... p. 7
4. Characteristics of the collaboration ..................... p. 10
   4.1 A reciprocal and well-matched encounter .......... p. 10
   4.2 Innovating and creating for a meaningful collaboration ... p. 11
   4.3 Shared leadership .................................... p. 12
5. Implications for the learning process and the development of musicians p. 14
6. Bibliography .......................................... p. 16
1. Introduction

For the project Music in the Odensehuis a number of musicians, supervised by an artistic leader, worked together for several months in the Odensehuis Groningen, a drop in house for people with memory loss and their relatives in the Korreweg borough in Groningen. The project was a collaboration between the research group Lifelong Learning in Music¹ and the Odensehuis Groningen. Inspired by encounters in the house, the musicians wrote compositions for the lyrics they had written themselves and, based on this, they put together a musical performance with theatrical elements. The encounters between the musicians and the participants of the Odensehuis brought about a very special kind of collaboration.

This report describes the project; the way the research concerning the project was organised; starting points and outcomes of the research; a number of characteristics of the collaboration which became clear through the research and a description of the implications for the learning process of musicians.

Earlier research conducted by the research group Lifelong Learning in Music made clear that contact with music and making music can be very meaningful for people with dementia. In the project Music in the Odensehuis not only the role of music for people with dementia was a focal point, but also how meaningful working with people with dementia can be for the musicians themselves.

The objective of the project was to start a sustainable music practice in the Korreweg borough, in which musicians who live or work in the area are structurally involved in the Odensehuis. In the autumn of 2015 alumni and students of the Prince Claus Conservatoire wrote compositions and played music during a period of three months, together with the participants of the Odensehuis. This group consisted of visitors, volunteers and staff.

Project activities
in order to get a sense of what the project should address the artistic leader took on the role of participant on certain mornings or afternoons during a period of six months. Based on his experiences he developed a concept for the musical collaboration, together with the coordinator of the Odensehuis. The objective was that a group of seven students and alumni of Prince Claus Conservatoire would write compositions and lyrics based on the encounters with the participants of the Odensehuis, and that they would perform the music that was inspired by these interactions, which had as focal point ‘living with dementia’.

At the heart of the project were the encounters between musicians and participants of the Odensehuis on the one hand and the work sessions of the musicians with the artistic leader on the other. The kick off consisted of a the meeting of all involved parties and took place during the musicians’ first visit to the house. After this a series of encounters followed, during which the musicians presented themselves and their instruments.

¹ For more about the project visit www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org.
During these visits there was time for informal contact as well. Stories were exchanged, people had a coffee together and played games. Based on these conversations the musicians wrote lyrics for their compositions, supervised by a professional writer. In order to enable the musicians to make sustainable contributions to the Odensehuis after the project had ended, the alumni were coached in entrepreneurship as well.

During the meetings at the conservatoire the musicians improvised, based on their associations about living with dementia, such as identity, attachment, comfort, belonging and meaningful activities. Some of the musicians wrote compositions to go with the lyrics and during later stages these were developed further. During this period their musical ideas were presented in the Odensehuis. This process led to the development of a performance with theatrical elements, made up of a mix of songs, spoken lyrics and instrumental elements. The performance was carried out in four locations: in the Odensehuis, at the conservatoire (both in November 2015), at a festival for the elderly in the Groninger Forum (February 2016) and at a national meeting of Odensehuizen in Zutphen (October 2016).

2. **Music in the Odensehuis: the research**

The research group Lifelong Learning in Music wanted to monitor and use this very special project in order to generate new knowledge for the professional practice of musicians. The following questions were the key focal points:

1. What happens during the interaction between musicians and participants in the project Music in the Odensehuis?
2. What are the returns for the musicians, artistic leader and participants of the Odensehuis?

Two teacher-researchers of the research group monitored the project by being regular observers during the project activities. They each had their own perspective. One of them observed from the viewpoint of the musicians and how they interacted with the people in the Odensehuis; the other had a reversed viewpoint, and looked at how the participants, volunteers and the coordinator experienced the project.

At the end of each phase, the researchers made notes of their findings and experiences. In addition group talks took place with the musicians and they talked individually with the artistic leader, a number of volunteers and the coordinator of the Odensehuis. A number of these conversations were recorded and transcribed. The other interviews were written down as notes. One of the researchers took part in the initial meetings and the evaluations which took place one on one between the musicians and the artistic leader. Impressions of these conversations were recorded in the notes. Between these meetings, the researchers talked to each other regularly and exchanged their first impressions. Also after these conversations took place, the researchers, each for herself, made notes.
When the project was concluded the researchers went to work on analysing their notes and transcriptions. For their analyses they looked at how the collaboration between the musicians and the Odensehuis had come about and at the characteristics of the collaboration. Each of them analysed her own material, based on the two research questions. While writing down the results the researchers worked on a shared text, each in turn. While transferring the work from the one to the other, they also exchanged ideas about aspects concerning form and contents of the text.

3. Process description and outcomes of the research

This chapter describes the outcomes of the research. The analyses of the observations and the interviews have resulted in insights concerning the creative process and the returns for the musicians and participants of the Odensehuis.

The creative process of Music in the Odensehuis came about as a result of the meeting and continued contact between the various participants. The preconditions and circumstances in which this organic process came about were interpreted after the creative process had ended. In order to make clear how this process went, a chronological description has been added below.

3.1 The creative process

The Odensehuis took the initiative for working together with the research group Lifelong Learning in Music and Prince Claus Conservatoire around the theme of music. Anthony Heidweiller, singer and opera maker with an international reputation in participation and community projects was appointed as artistic leader. He made two introductory visits to the house, where he participated in the regular activities. Regular meetings took place as well between him, the coordinator and the project leader. This first exploratory phase resulted in a plan: seven students and alumni of Prince Claus Conservatoire, supervised by the artistic leader, would create a cycle of songs they themselves had written and composed. During this creative process, the students would look for inspiration in the encounters with the participants of the Odensehuis. The interaction with the participants would provide the input for the creative process, which would eventually lead to an artistic product. Weekly three hour long sessions were planned at the conservatoire. In addition visits to the Odensehuis would take place. Eventually, after a period of three months, a performance would take place in which the pieces would be presented to the participants and other interested people.

Introductory meetings

A search was started for students and alumni who lived in the Korreweg borough and who had demonstrated an interest in this way of working and this specific social context. Three bachelor students (flute, vocal, composition), two master students (violin and piano) and two alumni (cello and vocal) were selected. The instrumentalists all had a classical background, and a number of them were familiar with other genres as well. The student composition had musical experience in various genres. The cellist also had...
composing experience and intended to use this in the project. The pianist left the project early because of previous commitments and she was replaced by an alumnus. The group had not worked together before in this setup.

In order to connect as a group the musicians started to improvise together and explore each other’s musical preferences during four sessions. The artistic leader took the initiative, supported by two alumni. One of the alumni came up with the idea to start improvising with the themes identity, attachment, comfort, belonging and meaningful activities. These so-called psychological needs were identified by Tom Kitwood (1997) and are connected to ideas he developed concerning personal care and personhood. With these concepts Kitwood makes a plea for a respectful way of caring for people with dementia.

After the first work sessions at the conservatoire, the musicians made a first visit to the Odensehuis and met the coordinator, the project leader and the volunteer who organises the musical afternoons. At that moment there were no participants of the Odensehuis present.

Meetings in the Odensehuis
As soon as the musicians got to know each other a little bit better, they started visiting the Odensehuis in duos. These meetings always started with everyone sitting down at the large table in the space where the kitchen is as well. People talked and games were played. The conversations showed that there was a great interest from both parties in the ideas of the other parties.

The musicians also brought their instruments with them. During the meetings these were brought out and at a certain moment all attention went to the musicians. This gave rise to an atmosphere of excited tension. The musicians introduced themselves and in turns they played some music and they told a few stories. They talked about their passion for their instrument, for example, or about the repertoire they played. Spontaneous questions came from the audience: why this instrument? How long have you been playing this? Why did you choose to make this your profession? etc. The questions had an open nature and developed in an organic manner. During these moments the music took centre stage and the musicians and the participants shared their fascination for music.

The creative work starts
Inspired by the meetings in the house, the musicians got to work individually on writing texts and lyrics. For most of them writing texts was unfamiliar terrain. A professional writer coached them and helped them clarify what they wanted to say. At the same time the composer and the cellist-composer started working on developing their musical ideas. These were tested by the musicians, after which the composer concerned adapted the pieces for the next rehearsal session. The artistic leader worked as a coach during this phase and gave artistic direction to both lyrics and music.
Sharing the pieces halfway during the process
About halfway during the process a number of musicians and the artistic leader started sharing the music and the lyrics as they sounded at that point with the participants of the Odensehuis. The pieces were played and performed in the order which might become the order of the final performance. This intermediate sharing turned out to be one of the key moments in the project, as is demonstrated by the meaningful returns this resulted in for both parties.

In between performing and making music, there were open and meaningful conversations, which were given direction by the artistic leader. Just like with the first meetings everyone who wanted to share something spontaneously was given the space to do so. Despite the fact that the creations were unfinished, the participants reacted very enthusiastically. The lyrics were very familiar for the participants of the Odensehuis. They recognized themselves and each other in them and they also talked about how dementia was acknowledged in the texts.

This way of sharing the work in progress gave the participants an insight into the creative process and it gave them the opportunity to provide input for the process. In this way the participants became co-owners of the creative process. This process of sharing their ways of working, and the first material and the participants’ response to this provided new information and insights for the musicians’ creative process. They felt supported by the participants’ response to their lyrics and this gave them the confidence to keep on developing the creative process.

Working towards the performance
The work sessions which took place between the sharing with the participants of the Odensehuis halfway in the project and the final performance were especially about fine-tuning between the parts, refining the compositions and developing the performance. Theatrical elements were explored so as to give an even better expression to the messages in the pieces. Because they were going to sing the pieces, the two singers were given a more narrating role. There were also three musicians who recited the texts they had written during the performance.

The final result was a performance of forty minutes, in which the newly composed songs, texts and existing repertoire were performed in a theatrical setting. The theatrical elements reinforced the texts and the music. For example, balloons and a blindfold respectively symbolized the loss of contact with a loved one, and the effort ordinary, daily activities take. Because participants of the Odensehuis regularly talk to each other in a circle, this setup was also used in the performance. Both the vulnerability and the resilience of the participants of the Odensehuis became clear. The performance took place in a circle, with musicians and participants sitting side by side in the inner circle. Other invited guests sat in the circle around them.

The performances
During the project period performances took place in the Odensehuis and after that at Prince Claus Conservatoire. For the performance in the Odensehuis the participants had invited the people they wanted to share the project with. This way the participants were
given the opportunity to share their experiences in the Odensehuis with their loved ones. Other people who were interested and social partners were invited as well, which resulted in a full house. Participants recognized themselves and each other in the texts and responded to this during the performance by making eye contact, or by making themselves heard. Afterwards many people showed that they had been very moved by the performance. At the same time, listening to and watching the stories was very hard to deal with as well, because the loss that people with dementia and their loved ones experience became very clear. Below a quote from the observations of one of the researchers:

\[
\text{D is crying. She tells me that she thought it was wonderful, but very hard to deal with as well. She recognizes a lot in the texts that were written. They not only characterize certain participants, but also the illness and the loss. D says she would like to invite her children to next Saturday's performance at the conservatoire. "They have to see this too!" (Observations T.)}
\]

The performance at the conservatoire was a full house as well. The performance was much more theatrical this time, because it took place in a concert hall, which had professional lighting and sound technique. There were more people in the audience as well. People who were not involved in the project said they recognized themes and were touched by the message which was put forward in the performance.

After the project period the show was performed twice more time; at a festival for the elderly in Groningen and at a national meeting of Odense houses in Zutphen, in the Netherlands.

In the process as described above, personal contact was always at the forefront. Sharing and exchanging, which the musicians did with the participants of the Odensehuis, was consistently done throughout all activities. To a large extent, it was the personal interaction and reciprocity which nourished the creative process, which guided the creative ideas and led to the creation of the performance. The final result was that the artistic creations had a great impact on both groups: the musicians as well as the participants.

3.2 Returns for the musicians and the participants of the Odensehuis

Discussions with the musicians and the participants show that their participation in this project had a great impact on them. For the musicians it impacted their personal as well as their professional development.

Artistic improvement
The project stimulated curiosity about music, sometimes even new curiosity. For example, when the artistic leader sang a song his voice and matching opera sound impressed the house. The following quote from a participant of the Odensehuis demonstrates how this experience changed his view of opera:

\[
\text{"The singing was so intense, and it is unbelievable that a voice can produce so much sound. Where does Anthony get it from...! I never really liked opera but that}
\]
has changed completely. It gave my wife goose flesh, and she never had that before.” (Participant A.)

This shows that the project not only brought familiar music closer again, but it also opened up doors to new discoveries.

Acknowledging and recognizing
The lyrics and the music written by the musicians moved the participants deeply.

‘I was moved, it’s so recognizable.’
‘I recognize my husband in the lyrics (looks at her husband, who is sitting next to her), how he behaves, and the things we have to deal with.’
‘This is who we are. The lyrics are really “Odensehuis”’. (Various participants.)

Especially this last quote suggests that this participant was able to identify very much with what was presented. The conversations which took place after each performance showed that the feeling of recognition also brought about a feeling of being acknowledged. People felt accepted and appreciated for who they were. This recognition and acknowledgement also contains the dimension that people feel recognised in their life with dementia. The lyrics and the performance showed the various aspects of living with dementia in an artistic way. That which cannot just be expressed in words, was expressed in the performance in a very powerful way. The lyrics, the music and the theatrical setting make the different layers of emotions concerning living with dementia explicit. Following the performance at the conservatoire one of the volunteers of the Odensehuis said:

‘It is very emotional. It’s so recognizable and we know what the situation is like, but you have taken it to another level and touch all kinds of deeper layers.’ (Participant K.)

Fulfilment, pride, motivation
The meetings and interactions between the participants of the Odensehuis not only inspired musicians to write music and lyrics, they also provided great experiences for the musicians themselves.

‘I think that sharing the music and the lyrics halfway made the process itself easier. Because we thought it would not be appropriate, but the participants said it was really good. That if it would become even better than this, it would be fantastic, but that it was really good the way it was. That reaction gave me a great sense of fulfilment. I was proud of what we had already achieved at that moment.’ (Student F.)

This musician’s quote suggests that the interaction gave rise to positive feelings, such as fulfilment and pride. Working together actively this way with the Odensehuis, became very meaningful to the students, both in a personal and a professional way.
Learning as a person means learning as a musician

The musicians said that in this project, more than in any other kind of work, they also participated as a person, not just as a musician. Participating as a person also turned out to have its effect on being a musician. This became clear from the answer a musician gave to the question what the project had meant to her:

‘I think that for me the most self-evident aspect was that I learned something as a person. [...] For me as a musician the idea that we don’t just make music for ourselves became more of a reality. And that this means that you don’t only repeat things from the past, but that it can also be something that is happening here and now, and that this can also be very meaningful to people. [...] This brought me closer to making music than happened by simply studying my repertoire. Here I think about what the composer has written and I can understand why. That they are my own lyrics makes it even more interesting.’ (Student C.)

This quote illustrates that the returns of the project are in the first place of a very personal nature. Although she experienced the learning process as something very personal, she made a very immediate connection with her professional development. The learning process this project provided, influenced her vision on the current relevance and meaning of music. In addition the creative process and the writing of her own lyrics influenced her own artistic process. As a result of this, she gained a different perspective on her studies and the interpretation of music and lyrics.

(Re)discovering professional motivation

The musicians indicated that this project made them think about their own motivation for the profession:

‘This practice makes me think about being a musician and brings me back to my motivation for becoming a musician in the first place. [...] This project also makes me feel quite special as a musician, because of the feeling it can give me access to other communities, that I can be part of a larger world through music. In another profession I might never have met these people.’ (Student B.)

This quote shows that the project helped this musician to rediscover her motivation for the profession. She saw how making music opens doors to new communities and connects people. She also saw that there are unlimited opportunities for musicians to participate in a meaningful way in society through music, or as she called it ‘be part of the world’.

Discovering new artistic possibilities

This project challenged the musicians to extend their artistic repertoire with other kinds of creative practices by writing lyrics and composing and arranging new music. One of the musicians said the following about this:

‘It taught me that there is so much more. That there is such a thing as your own style and your own ideas. And your own projects, that you can carry out yourself.’ (Student F.)
This quote suggests that participation in this project made the student think about the range of her options and her power as a musician for developing initiatives and carrying these out.

4. Characteristics of the collaboration

The returns as mentioned in 3.2 give the idea that the project had a great impact on both the participants at the Odensehuis and the musicians. Considering the development of future practices, this chapter takes a closer look at the themes which were characteristic of the process and the collaboration in this project.

4.1 Characteristic 1: a reciprocal and well-matched meeting

While describing the creative process earlier, we concluded that the contact and the exchange between musicians and the participants at the Odensehuis was a deciding factor in the impact the creations eventually had on both groups. We saw that both participants and musicians took part by ‘giving’ and ‘receiving’. If we look at this contact more closely, we see that it is largely characterized by reciprocity and equality. We now give a number of examples of how these aspects were put into practice during the project.

This reciprocity and how well-matched the participants and the musicians were, was perhaps best illustrated by the first visits to the Odensehuis. When one of the musicians unpacked his instrument to play something he asked the participants: ‘Would you like me to play something or would you like me to tell something first?’ This allowed the participants a say in the moment. With this open approach, which he continued throughout the moment, he also found out more about the wishes and needs of the participants. The way this moment took shape, in which the musician introduced himself and his instrument, was created by both parties. After her first visit to the Odensehuis another musician talked about a conversation she had had with one of the participants. She said that in this conversation she had been herself first and musician second. She said: ‘I wanted to give them something as well by telling them about myself.’ Even though these meetings took place with the intention of finding inspiration for writing music and lyrics, in the moment itself it was not only about finding inspiration, but also about contributing to being together. Again we see a two-way street, in which musicians both as a musician and as a person share and exchange as equals with the participants of the Odensehuis.

Participants in the Odensehuis don’t talk about who has dementia, but they do talk about what it is and what effects it has on you. The musicians indicated that after their first meetings in the house, they started to think about dementia and about how this illness influences communication. Because the meetings were so well-matched and sincere, they realized at the same time that whether someone had dementia or not, really did not matter to them. The interaction of the moment was what was important.

Introducing this equal and reciprocal way of working during the first meetings, set the tone for everything that was to follow in the project. During the later activities this dialogue and open attitude was continued. Music took central stage every time, with the
musicians and the participants as bystanders. During the final performances this approach became quite clear because of the circular setup in which musicians and participants sat next to each other. This made all those present viewer and performer at the same time.

This reciprocal and equal nature of the contact was to a great extent created during the preparatory work of the artistic leader in the run-up to the project period. He made a deliberate choice, for example, to introduce himself to the participants as a visitor to the Odensehuis, and not as a musician (although to the coordinator, the project leader and a number of volunteers he did make known who he was). This allowed him to explore boundaries without creating expectations. During the preparatory phase the artistic leader took an inquisitive approach to the participants and their motivations and to what it was that the Odensehuis did exactly.

4.2 Characteristic 2: Innovating and creating for a meaningful collaboration

Both partners in the project worked from the motivation of exploring innovative practices and ways of working and to creating these. The research group Lifelong Learning in Music looks at how musicians can make meaningful contributions in a rapidly changing society. The Odensehuis is motivated by offering care alternatives for people with dementia. They are looking for ways to provide care which does not isolate. Both parties want to take up positions in the heart of society and to connect with society. They are actively working on the realization of this by looking for partners to collaborate with, so they can develop new ways of working and new projects together.

The projects organized by the research group often bring musicians in contexts which are unfamiliar to them. This characteristic also played a part in the project 'Music in the Odensehuis'. The context of the Odensehuis is described below.

The Odensehuis works actively on creating a calming atmosphere, in which participants can share time together in a harmonious way. In the interactions light-heartedness and humour play an important part. In this community of elderly people with a delicate health the house aims to strike a balance between calm and liveliness. This is a delicate balance, in which 'quality of life' is an important aspect. Quality of life in the Odensehuis is taking the strength and the self-determination of the participants as a starting point. Quality of life means avoiding stress for the participants, because stress is the greatest factor in deteriorating health. Quality of life also means participating in society and preferably being at the heart of it. Special care is taken to find volunteers who can bring positivity to the house, and to find young people who bring their youthful energy. By having fixed rituals, for example during lunch, unrest is avoided and clarity created. There is a flexible attitude towards care needs and the care of specific participants. In searching for ‘quality of life’ it is important to maintain a constant balance between organizing activities based on the participants' wishes and creating the necessary respite. Because of the way the characteristics and the vision mentioned here are carried out, the community exudes optimism and resilience.

---

2 See website of the research group Lifelong Learning in Music
http://www.lifelonglearninginmusic.org
‘You have to be able to bear that you are vulnerable. You really wish you could protect someone. Close everything up. But then you can no longer offer good quality of life.’ (Participant M.)

The features described above characterize the contexts in which the participants and the musicians meet and interact. The creative process was developed against this background.

During the meetings in the Odensehuis a ritual came about in which musicians played for the participants and talked with them about their experiences with music. For the participants it was unusual to have musicians about the place, who made music for them. Music became a connecting factor in the interaction between participants and musicians.

Because the circumstances in this context were unfamiliar for the musicians, they were not able to fall back on roles that were familiar to them, that of being a musician on a stage, for example. In this setting it was necessary for them to introduce themselves in new ways, to be flexible and to adapt to life in the Odensehuis. This allowed them to reconsider their own motivations and the meaning of their role in society as a musician.

During the project a flexible way of working together was developed between the partners on the one hand and the musicians and the participants on the other. The meeting between the different parties resulted in a new collaboration, a custom-made project and a performance based on original and authentic lyrics which came about through a meeting between people.

4.3 Characteristic 3: Shared leadership
Finding a shared basis for a project in which young people, in an environment which is unfamiliar to them, work together with vulnerable elderly people was a tantalizing challenge. This challenge called for an extensive consideration and the practicing of leadership. Leadership meant that a fundamental effort was made to explore each other’s ‘language’. In this context ‘language’ means literally how you communicate with each other, but also understanding each other’s sensitivities, exploring boundaries and values which are important in this specific context. In addition an effort was made to arrive at a ‘shared language’. The partners had to work on developing a situation of mutual trust. Each had to know what the other one required in order to function within the project. This process, that took about six months, required leadership from both partners. The artistic leader had a pivotal role in this. Key in this process were: patience, communication, empathy, making contact and becoming a participant. This leadership led to a ‘blueprint’ for the further collaboration in the project, especially between the participants and the musicians. The collaborative work form for the project *Music in the Odensehuis*, was devised in a way which is comparable to the following description of leadership.

‘Musicians’ leadership shows in their capability to deal with change and create value and motivation, while communicating, collaborating, facilitating and
listening and using their interpersonal skills in a reflective and reflexive way.” (Smilde, 2009, p. 66.)

Exploring each other’s motivation and finding a mutual starting point, came about through the leadership of both parties.

The musicians who were involved in this project had to use their leadership skills in order to be able to function in this context, with which they were unfamiliar and in a collaboration which was unfamiliar as well. With the introduction of the ritual around sharing their music, a form of communication was introduced as well, which inspired them to write lyrics, songs and a create a meaningful performance. This collaboration came about because of their open attitude and shared leadership.

Sharing leadership during the work process manifested itself when the musicians were able to build on each other’s ideas and input during the creative process. This also resulted in a shared ownership of the performance and shared responsibility for the final product. They experienced this process in quite an explicit way. After one of the lyrics had been discussed, for example, the musician who wrote the text told the group openly who had inspired her to write it. She pointed and talked to the people who it concerned and thanked them for inspiring her. This openness encouraged the participants of the Odensehuis to be more open as well about how they experienced the texts. A number of participants talked about the feelings which had come to the surface by listening to the lyrics. One of the researchers described the feelings she had concerning one of the participants:

‘Next to me is participant A, who is clearly very moved. His body is shaking. I see the tears in the corners of his eyes. It looks as if something is releasing inside him, he sighs a few times. It is clear he would like to say something. Only later, after the third text, will he actually speak. I think that after that firsts text he was so moved that he simply wasn’t able to speak.’ (Observations K.)

During the conversation at the end of the intermediate sharing of the music and the lyrics, there was an open discussion about the results so far, and about whether both partners were happy with it.

One of the volunteers of the Odensehuis wonders what the musicians themselves are experiencing in this project. He would like to know whether the project gives them something as musicians. One of the musicians answers that he now really thinks in terms of an exchange: everyone comes here to bring something and to take something. That is something he has really become aware of during this project. The volunteer says he is glad to hear this, because this also lies at the heart of the Odensehuis’ philosophy. (Observations K.)

This kind of open communication and the concern about each other’s wishes and meeting these wishes, confirmed once again the shared leadership which was applied in this project.
5. Implications for the learning process and the development of musicians

The impact this project had on the musicians has implications for how musicians learn and also for how musicians are trained. In order to function as a musician in a project of this kind in society, a combination of interpersonal and artistic competences are needed. Being able to connect the two areas, especially 'translating' the personal into the artistic, turned out to be a prerequisite for the musicians in this project. Moreover it also became clear that thinking about your identity and role as a musician in society took on a different character because of the collaboration in which giving and receiving took centre stage. Because of this project several musicians became aware of the ways in which they could make valuable contributions within a concrete social context in their immediate environment and how much (artistic) satisfaction this gave themselves and the other people involved.

Important learning processes took place in this project, which are not always feasible or self-evident in a traditional learning situation at a conservatoire. The returns for the musicians which were mentioned in paragraph 3.2 illustrate the way in which they were challenged as creative musicians and how this influenced their way of thinking about their own artistic power. This project offered the space for kinds of learning which take place in a practical setting, such as informal learning, learning-by-doing and learning as it takes place in a ‘community of practice’ (Wenger, 1998). A community of more or less experienced practitioners, who learn together and from each other. Especially for the students, this stimulated new ways of learning or allowed them to discover new ways of learning. Based on the impact this kind of learning had on the students, a plea for learning activities which take place outside the school walls, in society, is very opportune.

What this project has offered as well is an interesting contribution to current discourses about the changing relationship between musicians and their audiences. The difference between these parties is fading and the traditional kinds of presentation and participation encounter each other more and more frequently in mixed formats. The format which was developed in the project Music and Dementia is a good example of this.

Musicians are looking for closer connections with society. This development gives rise to new ways and possibilities of working together. This practice will continue to develop in directions which are as yet unknown. It is important to introduce young musicians to these practices, in order to enable them to share in the development of the practices and to determine in which direction they could go.

This research took place in a setting in which musicians and participants of the Odensehuis interacted with each other. The outcomes of the research transcend this specific context, however. They have implications for the training of musicians, for how musicians learn, they provide a contribution to the discourse about the changing relationship between musicians and audiences and, finally, they have implications for finding closer connections between musicians and society.
Bibliography

Alheit, Peter. Hilfen für das Schreiben von Beobachtungsprotokollen/Feldnotizen (handout).


