



CROSSING BORDERS: SHARING SONGS

PARTICIPATORY MUSIC PRACTICE IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE CONTEXT

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about this

BOOKLET

This booklet is the result of the Erasmus+ project **Crossing Borders: Sharing Songs**. In this project, three partner organisations shared their working methods in making music in a culturally diverse context through workshops and sessions on song learning, improvisation and composing. The project ended with a blended mobility in Ostend (Belgium) where 30 musicians worked towards a unique concert. This booklet provides more insight into the project and the lessons learned. The partners are happy to share their tips & tricks with other music educators. Enjoy reading!

THE PROJECT *CROSSING BORDERS: SHARING SONGS*

In 2022, three socio-artistic music organisations (**kleinVerhaal, Orchestre Par-tout and Flotsam Sessions**) from three different countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and United Kingdom) decided to join forces because of their common focus on participatory music practices. The Erasmus+ project 'Crossing Borders: Sharing Songs' gave them the opportunity to meet, to exchange expertise and to inspire each other. The project aimed to increase **participation of migrant youngsters in music projects** and to support professional musicians and youth workers in methodologies and innovative approaches about participatory work with diverse groups and the cultural heritage they bring with them.

Muziekmozaïek, a support centre for folk and jazz music in Belgium, followed the project throughout its entire duration and collected tips & tricks. This booklet contains our working methods and lessons learned and can be used by any interested musicians, youth workers and cultural organisations.

All partners were willing to experiment in their own country with different formats and approaches of inclusive music projects. During the two years of partnership, we exchanged and collaborated with each other around four topics:

"HOW CAN WE INTEGRATE *INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE* MORE IN OUR MUSIC PROJECTS?"

"HOW CAN WE INCLUDE MORE PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT *CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS* AND HAVE A BIGGER SOCIAL IMPACT?"

"HOW CAN WE INTEGRATE *CULTURAL HERITAGE* OF OTHER CULTURES INTO OUR MUSIC PROJECTS AND TRANSLATE THESE INTO CONTEMPORARY MUSIC COMPOSITIONS?"

"HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR MUSIC PROJECTS MORE *PARTICIPATIVE*?"



the
HOW'S

"THIS PROGRAM STARTS WITH A SONGS PROGRAM, BUT IT'S AN EXCHANGE OF WAYS OF THINKING TOGETHER AND INVITING PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS TO REALLY HAVE A KALEIDOSCOPE OF ALL DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKING IS VERY ENRICHING."
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ORCHESTRE PARTOUT (THE NETHERLANDS)

Based on the inspiration that making music is essential for **self-development**, Orchestre Partout sets up chemical encounters between people with and without a **refugee background**. Through music workshops spread across the Netherlands, residents of asylum seeker centres and status holders discover, develop, and share their talents with other musicians and with the public. **Club Partout** is a home and a breeding ground for new and integrated musicians to record new music. With its activities, Orchestre Partout contributes to positive images and self-development of asylum seekers and status holders, to the development of musicians and to a **rich and inclusive music landscape**.

For more information: <https://orchestrepartout.nl/>

FLOTSAM SESSIONS (UNITED KINGDOM)

Flotsam Sessions is a London-based project creating **exciting musical spaces** where people from diverse backgrounds and experiences come together to share, express, learn and perform music. With a base in **folk and roots music** from all over the world, they create **cross-cultural dialogue** that transcends borders and makes a human space for all. Flotsam is open and free for all - no matter what level, background or experience.

For more information: <https://flotsamsessions.co.uk>

KLEINVERHAAL (BELGIUM)

kleinVerhaal vzw is a **participatory art practice** that, against the backdrop of port city Ostend, organises an inspiring meeting and creation place where people from all walks of life, including the most vulnerable, dive into the arts. kleinVerhaal partners with professional, committed artists from film and music for open studios in which a colourful mix of people from diverse backgrounds, cultures and ages shape their imaginations. **From the heart of society** and through the medium of the arts, kleinVerhaal translates, interrogates, and documents the **complexity of today's society** into unruly creations and stimulating actions.

For more information: <https://www.kleinverhaal.be/>

THE WAY W

During the project we organised **two training weeks** for 12 musicians and also youth workers. The purpose of these training weeks was to make time for deeper acquaintance with each other and **each other's working methods** and to attend **workshops** around **common learning questions**. From September 28 to October 2, 2022 we met in Ostend at KleinVerhaal for the 1st training week. From February 15 to 19, 2023 we went to Amsterdam for the 2nd training week.

In August 2023, at the end of our partnership, we focused on the participants of each partner and organised a **blended mobility for 24 participants**. An exchange of one week in Ostend (Belgium) brought them together to meet **international friends with the same passion** and to gain new competences in performing and recording. The blended mobility week, from 1 to 5 August 2023, resulted in a concert at the local festival **Theater Aan Zee** in Ostend.

During the project we used three working methods to create new music: **song learning, improvisation and composing**. These methods are also reflected in the artistic DNA of each partner organisation, with varying degrees of importance. In further pages we describe the three working methods in more detail and provide examples of exercises and warm-ups.

THE WORK (ED)

**SONG
LEARNING**

IMPROVISATION

COMPOSING

WORKING METHOD 1

SONG LE

The background features abstract, organic shapes in shades of pink and light green, layered over a solid teal background. The shapes resemble stylized, flowing forms, possibly representing musical notes or abstract patterns.

The background is a solid teal green. Overlaid on this are several large, overlapping, abstract shapes in a vibrant pink color. These shapes resemble stylized, elongated forms that could be interpreted as legs in high-heeled shoes or flowing fabric. The shapes are positioned in the upper and lower portions of the frame, framing the central text.

WORKING METHOD 1

EARNING

Song learning in an intercultural context is in the DNA of both Flotsam Sessions and Orchestre Partout. Flotsam Sessions organises monthly jam sessions that are open to everyone, with a special focus on migrants and asylum seekers in London. Each jam session starts with a song learning workshop where they invite participants to teach a folk song that feels close to them. There is a lot of power in doing that, especially when you live in a place where you didn't grow up. When the whole group has learned the song they make arrangements where they make space for every musician. When arranging, it is important to ask the group which instruments we want to hear more or less and what is missed. The person who taught the song takes the lead and makes the final decisions on the arrangement.

Orchestre Partout organises music activities in asylum seeker centres across the Netherlands. The concept of a rehearsal is simple: they play the songs that the participants provide themselves and make new arrangements together. For example, someone from an Arabic culture learns to play a rhythm from India or Pakistan. During rehearsals they stimulate awareness among the musicians where the focus lies: on lead vocals, moments of improvisation, interaction between band members and the audience. This way of working creates an environment of listening, sharing, engaging and equality.

"I MOVED TO LONDON FIVE YEARS AGO AND SANG MY WHOLE LIFE. BUT I NEVER FOUND A SPACE LIKE FLOTSAM TO BE FREE IN. IN THE BEGINNING I WAS SO LONELY IN AN UNWELCOMING CITY. I FELT DISCONNECTED FROM MUSIC AND COMMUNITY. FLOTSAM SESSIONS GAVE FLESH TO THE BONES OF MY MUSIC. I DISCOVERED THAT I AM A FOLK MUSICIAN. I FELT WELCOMED AS AN OBSERVER, BUT I COULD PARTICIPATE IF I WANTED TO. THEN I WAS INVITED TO TEACH. THE STATUS CAN BE SHIFTED. I FELT ACCEPTED AND APPRECIATED. I FOUND A NEW MUSICAL FAMILY." (KERTTU, PARTICIPANT FLOTSAM SESSIONS).

**ANTEANOCHÉ Y ANOCHÉ (4X)
PARIÓ LA LUNA (3X), EH!
VEINTICINCO LUCEROS (4X)
Y UNA LUNITA (3X), EH!**

During the second training week, Yenny taught us a Colombian cumbia song. **Cumbia** is a typical rhythm from the Colombian Pacific. The music is a mix of African, Spanish and native Colombian. Normally it is played with **percussion** (three drums: llamador, tambora and alegre). There are also a flute (gaita) and marimba involved. The original rhythm is called **Aguabajo**. Cumbia is often combined with dancing: the sun in the middle and the planets around the sun. Women carry candles and wear a skirt (pollera). Men wear hats and flirt with the women. According to Yenny the dance has its origins in Guinea, in West Africa. In Colombia it became known as a celebration dance for the marriages between Africans and the native people of Columbia.

*"To teach a song, for me, was an experience to **express and teach a little piece of my country, of my culture**. For me at that moment people were connected. It was nice that I just give some information through the lyrics, how to sing, and how to play the rhythm, and then seeing people singing that song that usually, as a Colombian girl, we sing in our language easily, and then seeing people singing this song is quite difficult when you don't speak the language... **Everyone adds something from their culture, an ingredient** so it's not the original Cumbia. I felt very happy to do that." (Yenny, participant Flotsam Sessions)*

WORKING METHOD 2

IMPROVING



WORKING METHOD 2

ISATION

The image features a dark green background with several overlapping, semi-transparent pink shapes that resemble stylized, flowing forms or perhaps abstract representations of human figures in motion. The shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. In the center, the word 'ISATION' is written in a large, bold, yellow sans-serif font. To the right, the text 'WORKING METHOD 2' is written vertically in a bold, light blue sans-serif font.

YaGoon is a band project of **kleinVerhaal** that started in 2019 by trumpeter **Yamen Martini** and pianist/oboist **Gonzalo Arévalo**. YaGoon's starting point is traditional music and well-known songs from different cultures to which an original contemporary interpretation is given. The original compositions are completely **taken apart and put back together through improvisation**, giving them a new identity. In addition, YaGoon works on improvisation as a basis for the creation of new songs.

Practical example:

We do an improvisation workshop, conducted by Yamen Martini. All musicians sit in a circle, grouped by **instrument type** (wind instruments, percussion, strings). We start in silence until someone starts playing and then others join in. In several rounds, we do the same routine. The round can be stopped by Yamen or can end organically by itself. After each round, there is a short debriefing. Yamen gives the advice that it's all about communication and balance. **If you hear the other instruments, you are doing well. If not, you are too loud.** We must not forget that silence is also music. If you relate to others, it will fit. It is nice to combine different sounds. The idea is that we feel **free to add** whatever we like, but that we free our heads of all theory. **The ego should be as minimal as possible.** But at some moments, when you feel it, you can grab your moment.

"WE PLAY SEVERAL TYPES OF MUSIC, WE HAVE OUR OWN TUNES. ALL TYPES OF MUSIC ARE NICE. SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHER MUSICIANS. THAT IS IMPROVISATION. IF YOU WANT TO GO DEEPER INTO MUSIC, THE OPTIONS ARE ENDLESS. THERE IS MORE TO MUSIC THAN 12 TONES. YOU DON'T HAVE TO FOLLOW ANY THEORY OR RULES. YOU CAN JUST JOIN IN. YOU CAN USE THEM AS A BASE, BUT EVEN IF YOU DON'T KNOW THEM YOU CAN JOIN IN WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT RIGHT OR WRONG". (YAMEN MARTINI, MUSIC COACH KLEINVERHAAL)

FREE

MOVEMENT

VOICE

RHYTHM



THE CROSS

IMPROVISATION GAME

1) Make a big cross on the floor with tape. All participants stand in a circle around the cross. The participants can pick a place in the cross and do what belongs to that section.

First section: movement

Second section: rhythm (body percussion)

Third section: a sound or melody with your voice

Fourth section: free (think outside of the box!)

2) When another participant joins the leader in the cross at the same section, they have to copy them. Participants can step in and out of the cross whenever they want.

3) It is important to stimulate reflection after the game by asking what the participants noticed. Who took the lead and who didn't? When did they lose interest? When did they feel supported?

WORKING METHOD 3

COMP



WORKING METHOD 3

LOSING



The idea of a composition session is to create **totally new music** through a creative process. When Orchestre Partout composes new music with participants they give a certain starting point through a **playful game** or challenge. It is helpful when you give musicians a certain framework or constraints that give structure. The starting point sets musicians in **motion**. The starting point comes from the conductor, but the participants deliver the ideas. Anything can be a good starting point: a note, a story, an idea, an object... Mostly the result is the proof that everybody can make music regardless of your cultural background or level. It is a good idea to build up a composition exercise from basic and safe to complex and experimental. **A feedback circle** at the end of a creative process is important so everyone can feel heard.

"I LIKE TO WORK WITH *BOOM WHACKERS* BECAUSE THEY ARE SO **PLAYFUL**. YOU CAN MAKE COMPLEX MUSIC BUT YOU CAN START SIMPLE. THE **MAGIC** HAPPENS IN THE SPACE BETWEEN WHAT AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS DO. THE ROLE OF A FACILITATOR IS TO BRING IT TO **ANOTHER LEVEL**. IF YOU PLAY BOOM WHACKER OR AN INSTRUMENT, IT DOESN'T MATTER. **EVERYONE STARTS FROM A COMMON PLACE** WITH A MELODY WE CREATED TOGETHER AND LATER ON WE DIVIDE AND MAKE VARIATIONS." (LUCAS DOLS, SOUNDS OF CHANGE)



PRACTICAL
EXAMPLES
PRACTICAL
EXAMPLES
PRACTICAL
EXAMPLES
PRACTICAL
EXAMPLES
PRACTICAL

In 3 groups we create **2 melodies** that you can easily **loop**. Then Ted and Hashem gave instructions using the **Kobranie** method to develop the melody. By combining different symbols we created new songs with the whole group.

Everyone writes down their **name** on a paper and circle **3 letters** that correspond to a **note or chord**. In pairs we compose a melody with these 6 notes or chords.

We divide the group into four and assign one of the **four elements of nature**. We brainstorm around the element and create a "word cloud". We translate this into sentences, which we then transform into melodies. We show the result to each other and the group provides feedback. Do we need any additional elements or instruments? Is everybody feeling involved enough?

Bring headphones and share a song that always works for you as **musical medicine**. In pairs we listen to each other's songs and write down the **thoughts and feelings** that come to mind. Each duo writes or draws the essence of what was shared on a flipchart. After 5 minutes the group splits in two. We look for **similarities and differences** in our notes. Now the flip charts are changed and in 15 minutes each group has to make a new song with 2 parts (**A + B**), inspired by the flipchart of the other group. We listen to each other's songs.

WARMING UP

THE HUMAN ORCHESTRA

Everyone sits spread out on the floor with their eyes closed. A facilitator walks around the room and chooses people randomly by tapping them in the head. When you feel a hand on your head, you make a sound and keep making that sound. If you feel a hand on your head again, you stop. The facilitator is the director and can play with the sounds to make a human orchestra.

THE GREETINGS

Encourage everyone to walk around the room and to spread out well in space. A djembé or cajon can provide rhythm. Follow this instructions:

- 1) Walk around and focus on yourself/on the space/on the others
- 2) When the facilitator shouts 'stop' you find the person the closest to you and go stand in pairs:
 - Find 3 things you have in common with each other
 - Find 3 things you have in common with each other without talking
 - Make a greeting together (then make a new greeting with person 2 and a new greeting with person 3)
- 3) Walk around and as the rhythm stops the facilitator shouts '1', '2' or '3' and you must look for the right person and make the corresponding greeting.

GROUP REFLECTION

(After a workshop) Sit in a circle and ask participants to think about the following questions. Share some reflections in the whole group. Think of an example where you as a musician entered the panic zone.

What triggered your panic?

How did you feel emotionally and physically?

What can other people do to help you in such a situation

What can you do yourself?

THE DRILL

Run over the names in a circle

- 1) In pairs: Count out loud to three and alternate at each count.
- 2) Gradually ask participants to replace number 1 with the other person's name, number 2 with a jump and number 3 with a 360° turn. Switch pairs regularly.

(play this game simultaneously)

- 1) In 2 circles: Say the name of a person in the circle on the rhythm of a drum. That person says a new name and so on.
- 2) You can't repeat the same name twice.
- 3) If you don't remember a name, say a wrong name or don't say the name on the beat, you fall out and must join the other circle.

THE CHECK-IN

It's a good idea to do a check-in with the group before you start making music. A check-in is a circle in which everyone briefly answers one or more questions. People speak when they feel like it and no one responds to what is said (sharing & dumping). Invite people to speak in their mothertongue. A check-in creates connection, provides recognition, and shows what is going on in the room in terms of topics and energy. You can also opt for a non-verbal check-in, for example by singing together. Examples of check-in questions:

What did you experience yesterday that you would like to share?

How do you feel at this moment?

How did you sleep?

What do you remember from our previous meeting?

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METX (BRUSSELS): INTRODUCTION INTO GNAWA MUSIC

Gnawa is a religious brotherhood which combines **Islamic faith with African animism**. Music styles work on **trance**. The music is often atonic, works with call and answer, and improvisation. The instruments are very particular (guembri, qraqeb and tbal). It is not just music, but also movement, incorporating coloured costumes and community work.

More info: <http://www.metx.be/>

SYSMO (BRUSSELS): INTRODUCTION INTO RYTHME SIGNÉ

Rythme signé, or Ritmo con señas, is a **gestural language** which enables a conductor to communicate with the ensemble in order to **compose a piece of music in real time**. It is inspired by Santiago Vázquez and his work on La Bomba de Tiempo in Buenos Aires (Argentina).

More info: <https://sysmo.be/nl/>

DREAMING OF SYRIA (AMSTERDAM): INTRODUCTION INTO DABKE DANCING

With Dabke Nights, Dreaming of Syria aims to bring an inclusive crowd to the cultural nightlife and connect people from different backgrounds. Dabke is an **Arabic folk dance** which originated in the mountains of the Levantine region, including Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan & Syria. Dabke is derived from the Levantine Arabic word “dabaka” meaning ‘**stamping of the feet**’ or ‘to make a noise.’

More info: <http://dabke-night.nl>

DIRK ZANDVLIET: WORKSHOP COMPOSING

A conversation about the importance of a **musical ecosystem**, nightlife and his band Gallowstreet. The band is about finding solid bass riffs and then **building layers** and melodies. After the conversation we created a new song by starting from a bass rhythm and then building grooves, riffs and a melody on it.

More info: <https://gallowstreet.com/>

SOUNDS OF CHANGE (LUCAS DOLS): MUSIC AS AN INSTRUMENT OF TRANSFORMATION

Sounds of change gave a workshop about how to facilitate groups in an **equal way** and space, where people feel **safe and connected**. The connection they feel starts the process of people supporting each other. That is a new approach to working with groups. In our western society we are often focused on individual therapy, but there can be a healing process in **group work**. Powerful things happen when you work with groups. With music (or any art form) you give a tool to people to express themselves or to connect with others in different ways, including the non-verbal way.

More info: <https://www.soundsofchange.org>

JEFFREY NOORDIJK: WORKSHOP KOBRANIE

Kobranie is the organisation behind the Kobranie Method which is a musical form of work that lets groups play together, improvising, under the guidance of a **'processor'** (a role rather like a conductor). It is also a creative form of work, free of style and dogma, in which there are **no limits** to what can be brought to sound. The method does not assume skills and puts artistic initiative, creativity and **authenticity** first.

More info: <https://jeffreynoordijk.com>





the
CONCERT

SETLIST

THEATER AAN ZEE

During the blended mobility in August 2023, we worked towards a concert in 4 days and performed it at the theatre festival Theater Aan Zee. To come up with a set list we used a combination of our three working methods: song learning, improvisation and composing.

Atelier 0.666: A song that was composed by the whole group out of improvisation. It started with an open jam with the goal to build a connection with the musicians. Then we split the group by type of instrument with the instruction to come up with an idea. We combined the ideas and agreed on the key. People who felt comfortable were encouraged to do a solo.

A solo by Djalt: During the blended mobility we organised an open stage where every participant could present a song to show their musical heritage and traditions. Djalt presented a combination of a Flemish and a Balkan song and it was chosen by the group for the setlist.

Dinye: A pop song from Iraq, taught by Al Gaeth.

Earth: A song that was composed during a composition workshop inspired by the four elements of nature, conducted by Hashem Kabreet. For the concert the group chose two of the four improvised songs: water and earth.

Kobranie improvisation: Conducted by Hashem Kabreet, we performed an improvisation on stage using the Kobranie symbols. In this song we also interacted with the audience, who became an integral part of the performance.

A solo by Pearl: During the blended mobility we organised an open stage where every participant could present a song to show their musical heritage and traditions. Pearl presented a song and it was chosen by the group for the setlist.

Tzadik Katamar: A Jewish melody, taught by Laurence, and arranged by the group. Bringing this melody to the group and the audience, it was important to indicate that the focus was on the oral tradition from mother to daughter and not on the political context and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

SETLIST

05 AUGUST 2023

Ham-Seda: A song that was brought to Flotsam Sessions by participant Mashid and together we made a contemporary arrangement for it. This is an old song from Googoosh, an Iranian singer. After the Iranian revolution of 1979 she was not allowed to perform. The song is still very famous in Iran.

Water: A song that was composed during a composition session inspired by the four elements of nature, facilitated by Hashem Kabreet. For the concert the group chose two of the four composed songs: water and earth.

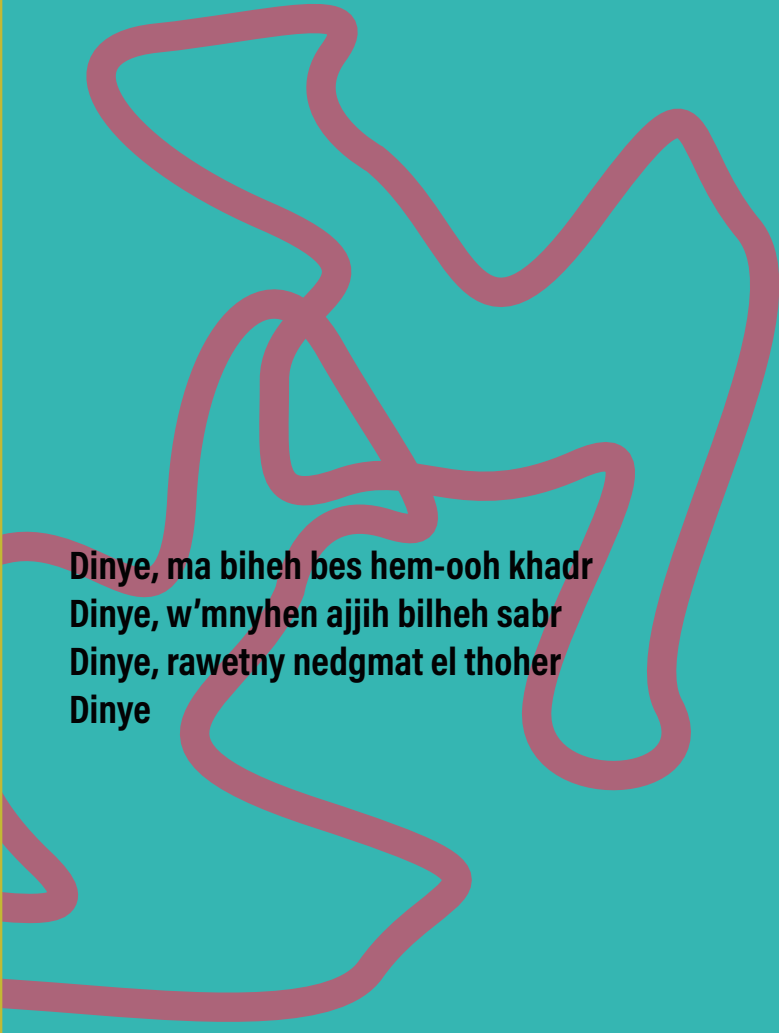
Aleppo-Quattro: During the blended mobility we organised an open stage where every participant could present a song to show their musical heritage and traditions. That evening spontaneously a smaller formation of four musicians emerged that brought sounds of Aleppo. It was a nice example of the oriental way of music making with a combination of a clear song and a band that follows the singer, with a lot of free space to improvise.

Parió La Luna: The Cumbia song we learned during the training week in Amsterdam in February 2023, taught by Yenny.

Swedish Trall: A contemporary take of a Swedish, completely acapella folk song, taught by Flotsam Session director, Moa.

Kobranie improvisation: Conducted by Hashem Kabreet, we performed an improvisation on stage using the Kobranie symbols. In this song we also interacted with the audience, who became an integral part of the performance.

Bein el-asser Wel Maghreb: A happy Chobi-song with a dabke dance that reminds us that music exists in the body. It was taught to the group during a dance evening. In the performance the audience were invited to dance together with the performers.



**Dinye, ma biheh bes hem-oooh khadr
Dinye, w'mnyhen ajjih bilheh sabr
Dinye, rawetny nedgmat el thoher
Dinye**

DINYA

HAM-SEDĀ

Ham-sedāye khoobam, bekhoon tā bekhoonam
Omre man to hasti, bemoon tā bemoonam
Ye jā abre āsemoon, ye-jā por az setāre
Ye jā āftābie āsemoon, ye jā mibāre
Bi to ammā hame-jā abri o gham-gereftast
Abre āsemoon ye ghatre bāroonam nadāre

To age bāshi, āsemoon sāfe
Ghossehā poshte koohe ghāfe

Bā to man bahāram
Bi to shoore-zāram
Vaghti hasti, khoobam
Vaghti nisti, bi to
Ye ghābe shekaste roo divāram

Bā to man bahāram
Bi to shoore-zāram
Vaghti hasti, khoobam
Vaghti nisti, bi to
Ye ghābe shekaste roo divāram









TIPS AND TRICKS FOR

TIPS &
TRICKS

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR

MUSIC FACILITATORS

**& TIPS
TRICKS**

MUSIC FACILITATORS

MAKE EVERYONE FEEL WELCOMED AND CONNECTED

"How are you? This is the most important question in the world. Making music without knowing how people are, without checking in with people doesn't make sense for me." (Lucas Bols, Sounds of Change)

Before we can make music, we bring people together in a space and make them feel **safe, connected and welcomed**. We value people just for being in the room, even before playing any music. It is not about their skills, but about their presence. Facilitators are constantly "reading the room" to assess how everyone is feeling and what the musical level is. They look for the right way to communicate with each participant and use multiple languages to do so. They invest in regular, small and **personal conversations**. Sometimes music is the best way to make contact and the conversation only starts later. Peer educators play an important role in this. They are often a **bridge figure** to bring new people to rehearsals and translate if necessary.

"We always have coffee and tea at our rehearsal because it's a super inviting environment. So even if you don't play music, you can come in and have a coffee and a chat. And maybe somebody starts playing and you listen, and before you know your feet start stamping, and your hands start clapping." (Ted Van Leeuwen, Orchestre Partout)

*"Everyone here is **respectful to each other** and everyone wants to learn. You can see that everyone here is really interested in learning about different cultures and different kinds of music from all around the world. Having that mutual respect for each other creates an inclusive space." (Ilanthe Marl Isle, Flotsam Sessions)*

INVITE

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IMMERSE

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DISCOVER OTHER MUSIC CULTURES

*"I didn't expect that **Eastern music** would be so strongly welcomed here."
(Omid Aghajani, Muziekmozaïek)*

*As a facilitator in a **culturally diverse context**, making a musical translation to various cultures is the core of your work. Facilitators with a diverse cultural background are involved and quickly recognise both Western as non-Western rhythms and music styles. Others have mastered this craft thanks to their years of experience and their passion for the music of specific cultures from around the world. **Immersion is the key**. Experienced session leaders easily recognise certain cultural **traditions or beliefs** that can be a barrier or a strength in a musical process.*

*As a facilitator you work with the songs that participants provide themselves. Your broad musical and **cultural repertoire** and **clearing your head** beforehand is your most important preparation. Try to be **fully present** in the moment. And it's not just the facilitators who immerse themselves in the music that people bring from their home countries. Invite all musicians to trust the process and just be 100% in the moment. Our methods breathe the energy of a pressure cooker. Experiment is part of every creation process. You do not have to take a training course before you can participate. We improvise and use various playful methods to create new music. The **cross-pollination** between various styles, cultures and sounds is central. In this way we look for new sounds and ditto musical material. The energy in the **pressure cooker** solidifies until the moment we share our music with an audience.*

*"Sitting with the musicians that play **Arabic music** and trying to understand the scales and making the connection with the Hindu classical scales, so much learning has happened to me musically in that sense that it's been incredible." (Ilanthe Marl Isle, Flotsam Sessions)*

ABOUT MUSIC AND GROUP DYNAMICS

In any participatory music project group dynamics and musical qualities have to be balanced. They are always intertwined. It means that as a facilitator you must dare to set goals and to strive for quality. At the same time you have to be aware of the group dynamics and give customised support. You can build it up from simple to more complex and end with something fun and satisfying for everyone. Try to balance a rehearsal or musical session. It is interesting to move on the axis between a leader-driven and group-driven style and between teaching skills and stimulating imagination. Where is the perfect point to be in your workshop? Moving through that whole arena is the dance you can do as a facilitator.

*“Mostly you should let everything open, from the beginning. You let them breathe, you give them time. Music is language and language needs time.”
(Yamen Martini, kleinVerhaal)*

During the training weeks we talked a lot about the comfort, stretch and panic zone. What you easily can do, what is obvious or known behaviour is in the comfort zone. When you are stimulated and must put in some effort, you enter the stretch zone. In this zone you learn. You try to take it a step further. If you go too far, you enter the panic zone. You feel stress and want to return to the comfort zone. Your limits have been crossed, it was not a pleasant experience. As a facilitator you try to get people out of their comfort zone and excite them in a feasibly challenging way. It is helpful to recognize different expressions of (dis)comfort in participants. For some musicians playing a solo can be very stressful, while others are triggered by complicated chores or equipment failure. Invite participants to reflect on who they are and what they need. If someone is very comfortable in a jam session and takes a lot of space, then maybe being silent is their stretch zone.

“If you’re trying to create something together like we are doing now I think it’s super important to have some sort of listening background. When is it going to be my turn for a solo? Is it now? Or is it now my turn to be quiet?” (Kerttu Sormunen, Flotsam Sessions)

CREATE A SPACE FOR EACH MUSICIAN

The feeling 'all or nothing' can really block participation. As a facilitator, you divide your attention evenly between the participants who are at different places on a learning curve and you give them different options to be part of it. That is quite complex because *everyone has different needs*. For some it is the complete feeling of liberty, but that can be inaccessible and scary for others. Respond to different needs and carefully push the boundaries to where a musician can be *challenged*. Strive to ensure that both beginners and someone who already has a lot of experience feel comfortable in a music session by providing them a shared common ground or starting point that everyone understands and can participate in.

"They are all members of the messenger group, but not all of them reply back. Then you find a way to reach them in a different way. One by one you have to work." (Yamen Martini, kleinVerhaal)

You must constantly differentiate and come up with *solutions on the spot*. By providing a solo in a song you can give someone an extra challenge. Someone who does not play an instrument can receive a shaker to safely be part of a song. Rather, use simple melodies to improvise on so that *each musician can find their own place in it*. During the training weeks we observed different ways of working. Some facilitators give more structure and others give more freedom. Both ways can be good or wrong to create a song. You must know when to use which tool. *Feel the room!*

"You can start from the beginning by putting people in a box. But if you do not open the box at a certain moment, they will not play something different and it will get boring. It is a process." (Yamen Martini, kleinVerhaal)

STIMULATE PEER TO PEER LEARNING AND OWNERSHIP

It is important to *share leadership and expertise* between professionals and participants in an equal way. Music facilitators can do this in various ways, by inviting participants to learn a song to the group and *sharing responsibilities* in making coffee, preparing the room, being an ambassador on social media, etc. Regularly have check-ins with the group or small one-on-one conversations to have an idea of the *level of engagement* a participant is willing to take. It is also about not being too dominant as a facilitator. Be flexible to receive new ideas. If you give ownership or leadership to a participant, you should let them own the space completely and express themselves. Try not to intervene too much as a facilitator at such a moment.

Never push people to be involved. Ownership is a process. Some people come on time, others are doubting and come later. When you are working continuously with people these dynamics can shift. If you expect a certain engagement from the beginning, you will lose a lot of people because they lack certain skills or motivation. Be patient.

*"The more **role models** you have of people **from minority backgrounds** it will encourage other people to step in and start to take part. You simply just need a more **diverse range of people in leadership roles.**" (Moa Norrsell Fahlander, Flotsam Sessions)*

At Flotsam Sessions there are different levels of engagement participants can take throughout the projects:

- Coming to a Flotsam gig/seeing the Flotsam band perform*
- Coming to a Flotsam Sessions workshop*
- Joining in at a Flotsam Sessions workshop*
- Joining into the jam after the workshop*
- Coming to the orchestra workshops/rehearsals*
- Leading a Flotsam Sessions workshop*
- Performing with the Flotsam Orchestra*
- Leading/arranging with the Flotsam Orchestra*
- Performing solo/ensemble at Flotsam events*
- Leading an external workshop*

EQUALISE

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EQUALISE

ALLOW IT TO BE (UN)STRUCTURED

As a facilitator, it is important to give clarity about your rules and framework. The smaller the framework, the easier the creation or improvisation. Structure provides safety, but it can also be limiting when used in a rigid way. That framework is not a linear nor a rigid thing. You must adapt it according to the energy and needs of participants. Make an agenda and be able to drop the agenda. Structure doesn't have to be a chronological or a collective thing. Not everyone has to do the same thing together. You can also give structure in a more intimate or personal way, by providing the space for drinking a coffee or tea or start moving or playing music organically and give people the opportunity to join gradually. If there is the feeling that there is only one way to participate, it is going to make a lot of people not show up. What seems to work the best is when people together can agree on the structure and the rules. Your framework must reflect the people you work with. Structure is good as long as it serves the people and the context.

"If you don't say what the rules are, it doesn't mean there are no rules, you are just not communicating them." (Maya McCourt, Flotsam Sessions)

Check-in: just to land and hear from everybody how they are feeling

Warming up: physically, vocally or mentally

Skills: What is the new info you want to bring?

Creation: you get the freedom to create something new

Presentation and reflection: make it count

Check-out: the root note to get back on

"This is where I find the passion in working with groups because you can plan your actions but you can never plan your reactions." (Hashem Kabreet, Orchestre Partout)

*Being part of a participatory music practice is also about valuing **expectations**. Empower and acknowledge the courage of people for just showing up. Appreciate every **contribution** to the process. But to be able to make music and work towards a performance a facilitator also needs a group that has a sense of direction that **everyone agrees upon**. You must create that **collective feeling of value** in the group by setting a common goal. Dare to set this common goal and strive for quality.*

*Most of the time, you want to get out there and you make music for an audience. Musicians also need the audience to rise above themselves. **Performance** is part of the process and makes it clear and sharp. We are convinced that the process is enriched by the performance. That is why all partner organisations regularly work towards a concert. This always requires a **specific approach**. Look at the people in your group, their qualities, and the role they aspire to. Also keep the occasion in mind. An outdoor festival is a completely different setting than background music at a reception.*

*"Of course it's also about a concert and having the feeling that it counts. You have to also **validate the music**. Working together towards a concert really contributes to that." (An Van den Bergh, Muziekmozaïek)*



VALIDATE

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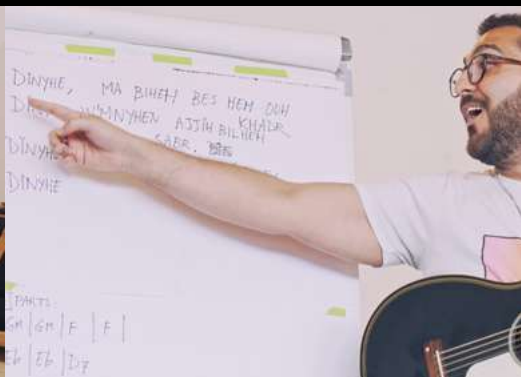
VALIDATE















and the "pollera", the skirt



and the idea is to share together art and music

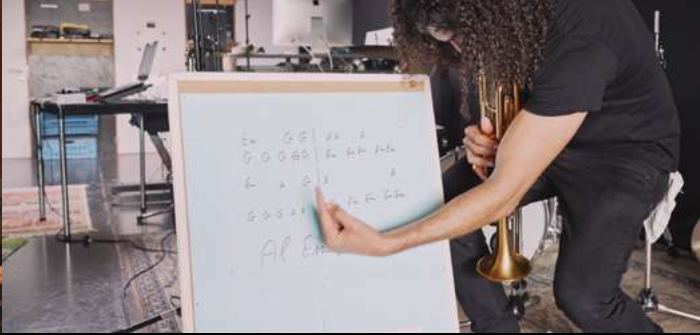


I really didn't expect that the eastern music

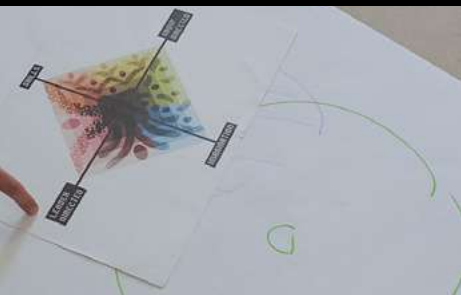




this sign means "long notes"



It's really this balance between structure and no structure



it felt like we were in a "safe bubble"

An abstract graphic design featuring a solid pink background. Overlaid on this are several overlapping, organic shapes in shades of yellow and green. The shapes are layered, with some appearing in front of others, creating a sense of depth. In the center, a light blue shape contains the text.

we would like to

THANK

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Songs we learned

Dinya
Ham-Seda
Aleppo-Quattro
Parió la luna
Swedish Trall
Pearl song
Djal song
Tzadik Katamar
Al Ein
Lokada Karaji
Bein el-asser Wel Maghreb

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