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## ESTABLISHING A RELEVANT CODE OF PRACTICE FOR COMMUNITY MUSIC FACILITATORS WORKING IN POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXTS

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### **Abstract**

*Community music is a professional area that increasingly provides income for musicians trained as performers in the European classical music traditions. My School of Music, like many higher learning institutions around the world, are creating courses that provide professional development and training to performers wishing to become community music teachers and arts facilitators. When preparing conservatory trained performers to be effective community music facilitators in a (post)colonial context, the genealogical narrative of a European conservatory model can work in direct opposition to the celebration of a local community's music making. In this context European musical art objects can also act as public reminders of past historical trauma by supporting discourse that represents marginalised communities through the lens of the culture of power. While community music can sit uncomfortably in formal education, it provides the opportunity to unpack, reflect and transform a conventional music learning culture and its signature pedagogies. This paper describes the creation and transformation of a postgraduate research pedagogy course designed to support performance students planning to work in the community. In this course we explore several indigenous concepts including historical trauma as frameworks for discussing public narratives and regazing at communities' identities, all to support better facilitation of community music activities. Through this process we identified a code of practice that enables our graduating community arts educators to better address socio-political issues that are specific to our context but also equip those students with a set of competencies that are transferrable to other global regions and arts practices.*

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### **Keywords**

*Community Music, Historical Trauma, Conservatory Model, Māori, Indigenous, Community Arts Education.*

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## **Introduction**

Community music activities often provide employment opportunities for performers trained in the Western European classical music traditions. As a creative field community music's outreach is diverse and its aims prodigious. Stemming from a core belief that music-making should be accessible for all (Higgins, 2013; Bush & Krikun, 2013), the conversations among global practitioners have revealed a breadth of activities with a variety of localised meanings (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018).

Underpinning this is a universal connection to socialist values and a strong desire to disrupt undemocratic behaviours that perpetuate unjust systems. Lee Higgins (2013) describes community musicians in his foreword to the anthology *Community Music Today* as “dreamers who imagine an emergence of something different, something that might disturb and transform a situation that appears fixed and static” (p. viii).

As a field of scholarship, community music is thriving (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018) and it has become a challenge to map the full extent of this global family's activities. Many of these disruptive musicians do not label themselves as community musicians but their activities fully

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align with the values and ideals of community music (Higgins, 2012; Karlsen, Westerlund, Partti, & Solbu, 2013). Special interest groups and networks such as the Community Music Activities Commission of the International Society for Music Education (CMA), connect researchers and practitioners working in the field and report on various activities through the commissions' meetings and their international journal. Activities, research studies and experiences shared within this organisation and their documents, evidence projects that embrace various socio-politically driven initiatives, sustain folk and traditional music practices, empower and promote self-sovereignty of marginalised communities and increasingly provide non-clinical interventions in the area of population health. (Coffman, 2002; Cohen, 2012; Schippers & Letts, 2013; DeVito & Gill 2013; Talmage et al., 2016; Rakena, 2016a; Fogg-Rogers et al, 2016). There is some evidence to suggest that community music also provides a meaningful creative outlet for many graduated conservatory students and is an important component of a young creative artists' career portfolio, enhancing and sometimes providing the main source of income for a performer (Bartleet et al., 2012; Bennet, 2008; Burt-Perkins, 2008).

While academics agree that the field of community music is relatively new (Higgins, 2012; Veblen, Elliott, Messenger & Silverman, 2013; Bartleet and Higgins, 2018), the educators and facilitators that work in this field are both provocative and productive. In a relatively short amount of time they have produced a small but diverse body of literature that challenges and stimulates practitioners. We in Aotearoa/New Zealand are relatively new to this discussion and bring an assortment of socio-political challenges to the table. Some are similar to other musicking (Small, 2011) contexts, some are specific to our situation, but all align with the values of the wider global family of community musicians and demonstrate our commitment to ensuring future accessibility and participation in music learning and music making opportunities for all our citizens.

### **The metamorphosis of a conservatory-based programme**

Community music making in Western cultures began being extensively discussed as a field in the 1970's and issues around professionalising and training for leader/facilitators began being discussed in the United Kingdom in the early 1990's (Higgins, 2007). However, Shippers & Letts (2013) point out that this type of deep rooted music making in communities has been "characteristic of many music across the world for many centuries" (p. 287). The early concerns of the Western practitioners with regard to professional development were that "curriculum might fail to fully reflect community music's core principles" (Higgins, 2012, p. 87). The shift from the significance of the musical art object, and the performance conventions around that

object to the *divertissement* and well-being of the musicking individual is a shift in the core objectives of a conservatory trained musician. On the flip side of this, while community music can sit uncomfortably in formal education, higher education can provide the opportunity to unpack, reflect and then transform conventional music learning cultures and their signature pedagogies.

My School of Music has recently rebranded its degree programme. Originally founded on a Western European conservatory model and its associated signature pedagogies (Rakena, Airini, & Brown, 2016), we have scrutinised the quality and relevance of our programme and submitted it to a series of complex review processes including international benchmarking. These strategic exercises ensure that our graduating students continue to participate in global academic and professional markets. For the first time in the history of our department, we have also addressed what some New Zealand music educators might call the “elephant in the studio”, our nation’s inherited music education curriculum. Our model sustains the traditions and practices of the settler class drawing on the pervasive exemplars of Western European music’s’ signature pedagogies (Don, Garvey & Sadeghpour, 2008). An unfortunate by-product of this model in our colonial context is that this approach also privileges the participation of the settler class (read here elite or economically advantaged) and their descendants, in those education traditions (Rakena, Airini & Brown, 2016). The concerns of non-Western community practitioners in our (post)colonial context is that these communities’ needs may not be addressed in any professional development forum, so translating the earlier statement expressed by Western practitioners, in this context curriculum might fail to fully reflect the needs of all communities, especially those that are marginalised.

Some may say in the area of graduate future-proofing, my University School of Music has been slow off the mark and a little resistant to change. Why would we change if we continue a cycle of privilege that benefits the culture of power?

Consequently, we have only recently shifted from a 19th century conservatory episteme (Bartleet et al., 2012) to a 21st century degree model that has as its objective a portfolio career for graduating performance students. We are following the lead of other higher learning institutions and introducing courses that support a more comprehensive professional training for our students, a process that also considers the state of music education in feeder institutions and the needs of our various communities. The committee charged with refreshing the curriculum acknowledged that we should consider other music models, look at exemplars from other creative disciplines and draw from other music traditions. In a collective attempt at self-affirmation and self-sovereignty, and with the intent to disrupt conventional models of higher

learning, they suggested that perhaps we have the expertise and lived-experience to create our own culturally rich and context appropriate programme.

This has resulted in a suite of courses that highlight the distinct strengths of our South Pacific learning culture while targeting our context specific socio- educational challenges. We have shifted away from a model that is performance intensive and genre-siloed. We have opted to enhance the music student experience by developing a buffet of course offerings that include community music and created permeable barriers between genres and specialisations. This allows our student cohort to enhance their principal area of study with additional skills and competencies from other areas. The intended outcome at the postgraduate level is that performance students will have a more comprehensive and streamlined creative degree that open pathways to more diverse career opportunities including community music and a give them a set of competencies that will contribute more meaningfully to our society.

This paper describes one module Culture Matters, a component of a postgraduate level research course that was initially designed to build competencies and encourage reflective practice in performance students preparing to teach one to one instrumental and vocal studio in the community. Studio pedagogy and community music have to some degree a natural synergy. Both draw on the notion of the teacher/facilitator as a “moral agent and educator” (Allsup & Westerlund, 2012, p. 140), and both require individuals who can think as music instructors and critical cultural workers (Rakena, 2016). Responding to the specific learning needs of our students, mostly grown in the South Pacific, we entwined context-specific and iconic research literature strands from music education, non-western research methodologies, community music, critical theory and postcolonial theory. This course values practitioner experience, so we also created a parallel seminar series that allowed community music researchers, practitioners and educators to share their concerns and experiences directly with the students. By engaging with the literature and passionate practitioners we found a way to gently guide performance students into the wider world of community music facilitation and leadership with both an understanding of the practice and a respect for academic rigour.

### **The metamorphosis of a conservatory-based performer**

Culture Matters creates an educational space that encourages students to critically reflect on their experiences in studio teaching contexts, other formal music learning contexts and informal learning and non-formal learning situations that occur in community music making situations. In this module we collaboratively analyze the quality of the teaching interactions experienced by individual students in these various contexts, foregrounding the notion that these pedagogical decisions set the stage for almost everything educators do and how they set about

doing it (Bowman, 2009). By accessing those memories, imagining the original goals and objectives of the instructors and considering these in conjunction with the student's goals and objectives as recalled by the students in the present, we anticipate that the graduates will be more mindful when engaging in the training of individual students and leading community music groups (Rakena, 2016b).

We go further, hence the title of the module, and consider non-traditional methods of analysing research studies and reframing learning cultures. This module is underpinned by principles and concepts that are derived from our nation's indigenous community and closely-related Pacific cultures. These are historically some of our most vulnerable communities. With this we signal that as an institution, as teachers and as citizens we will respect our historic partnership agreement The Treaty of Waitangi, a document that many commentators have exposed as problematic, originally imagined as a mechanism that would sustain the traditions, language and values of the indigenous and allow self-determination, it has in fact been effective in establishing a colonial power structure that has worked to limit opportunities for those communities. This is described more fully in the next section. The impact of this is evidenced in these communities' population health statistics and reiterated through the generations (Pihama et al., 2014; Wirihana & Smith, 2014).

The module begins with critiquing one of my favourite animated series, *The Wild Thornberrys*, a children's show that was produced by the American cable channel Nickelodeon from 1998 to 2004. The show revolves around Eliza, a young American girl travelling the world with her documentary film maker parents. Eliza receives a gift after saving a shaman who has disguised himself as a Warthog. The gift allows her to talk to animals. Every show deals with Eliza's transformation from ignorance to knowledge because she can talk to animals. While loving the animals and wanting to protect them, the instinctive assumption made by Eliza is that because she is human her worldview is superior and the right way of doing things. Even though she speaks the language she doesn't listen. Despite her best intentions, Eliza's stubbornness and her complete belief that she's always right can lead to destructive outcomes. She is also seen to develop brief periods of megalomania on more than one occasion. Chaos unfolds, perils and adventures always ensue, but after a brief period of reflection and humility a shift of worldview happens and everything turns out well.

While the show predominately aims to raise global eco-awareness and empathy for animals there is also a grand metaphor for community engagement and a lovely portrayal of colonial power structures. Reviewers comment, the series is tailored to a child's imagination and teaches kids to appreciate animals, to be curious about different ways of living and the vastness of the

world. The Thornberrys live a fantasy life, for sure, but the series explores the real customs of many different cultures. (Wallace, n.d.)

We build content around the Thornberry's premise that the predominant worldview is not the only viable perspective, and the course uses a variety of tools to increase student's potential to be reflective, culturally responsive and act with humility when working in and around community projects.

### **Creating a Code of Practice**

#### **Step 1: Relearning our community's identity**

We can perhaps appropriately assume that those with the most relevant knowledge of an academic field are the scholars who have deeply researched within that field and have critically engaged with the literature around that field. I do not challenge the professional academics ability to paraphrase and critique the literature that has emerged from their fellow academics. Within community music, however, I suggest the experts, the authority that can contribute new knowing to the field especially in (post)colonial contexts, may be participants from communities that are marginalized. They are familiar with a dominant cultural discourse, not of their making, and have experience building resilience against structural inequalities through a number of diverse collective activities including musicking. They live daily with the "heavy weight of history" (Lima, 2011, p. 7).

Articulating our "heavy" history begins with a significant document previously mentioned called the Treaty of Waitangi, a historic text signed by some indigenous Māori leaders and representatives of the British Crown. The treaty was designed to create a partnership with the settler colonists we called Pākehā, and was designed to ensure the Crown would "protect Māori culture and enable Māori to live in New Zealand as Māori" (Ministry of Justice n.d.). In this course we acknowledge that the story of Aotearoa/New Zealand is the story of the Māori and the story of New Zealand begins with their relationship with the Pākehā as outlined through this treaty document. This partnership plays out in all sectors of our society and we believe that community educators need an intimate knowledge of the document as it underpins the policies and practices put in place by government across all our public sectors.

These procedures provide a legislative framework that ensures as a nation, we are inclusive of both Māori and Pākehā peoples, cultures, and values.

We speak about culture of powers and how they operate in (post)colonial contexts using a summary by Barton & Young (2000) of Lisa Delpit's concept from her 1988 article *The Silenced Dialogue: Power and pedagogy in educating other people's children*:

The ‘culture of power’ represents a set of values, beliefs, ways of acting and being that for socio-political reasons, unfairly and unevenly elevate groups of people - mostly white, upper and middle class, male and heterosexual - to positions where they have more control over money, people, and societal values than their non-culture-of-power peers. (p. 873)

We discuss this concept and how the goals and objectives of the Treaty of Waitangi might remediate this (post)colonial legacy. We discuss the socio-political challenges that arise from our brand of colonialism, a situation that has specific issues that have historically impacted our education practices. We discuss our communities, who shapes their public narratives, who are included, who are excluded, and why. We discuss how social or socio-political issues are negotiated within that collective. We discuss how these interactions have imprinted and shaped our personal musical identities. We introduce the notion of historical trauma, a concept that has in recent years been used “to describe the long-term impact of colonization, cultural suppression and the historical oppression of many indigenous peoples” (Kirmayer, Gone and Moses 2014, 300). We consider how the public narrative around marginalised communities shifts when we use historical trauma as framework for analysing indigenous students’ experiences of education and when we critique the discourse that comments and measures societal outcomes within the areas of social justice and population health.

We speak to the concept of cultural and psychological safety and how we as music educators and music leaders engender respect and participation for individuals from all communities in our musicking spaces. Of particular importance is how community music can contribute to the construction of a collective identity for communities who have struggled historically to participate in the traditions of the culture of power. How can community musical discourse shape and inform contemporary narratives around these communities, build resistance and heal past traumas. We then discuss the musicking that arises from these communities

All of these activities within the module are motivated by the advice of Wayne Bowman (2009), who states “we need to think carefully about what community means, how it is created and sustained, what kinds of community we wish to create and sustain and why, and what music and education have to do with all that” (2009, p. 110).

### **Step 2: Avoiding racist pushback**

When integrating indigenous worldviews into a Western framed learning structure the supporting resources need to be appropriately modulated. This ensures that the students, who may only be superficially acquainted with these concepts, terms and historic documents, become allies rather than reacting to impulses that could result in racist pushback, a clash Brookfield (2014) describes as “learned racism from dominant ideology” (p. 90). We are aware

that these students may have never entered the communities in which these expressions systematically play out.

To interrupt these impulses, we ask students to consider what team they play for and what culture they represent when attending to daily interactions and when considering research studies and the wider education literature. After they have declared their team we are better able to discuss these terms and concepts in relation to the wider research literature and our specific teaching and learning context.

We also need to acknowledge the translation difficulties of some concepts that are often incommensurable with Western<sup>2</sup> thought and concepts. A recurring issue is the colonization of these terms, a process that can diminish the full meaning of some complex ideas, leaving only a watermarked image of the full Māori concept. Mika (2012) describes this as “the hegemonic attraction to colonizing language” (p. 1086) and goes on to declare education as a “dominant site of colonization” (p. 1081). He highlights the problematic and often inappropriate usage of some Māori terms and concepts. He uses as an example *mātauranga*<sup>3</sup> a non-traditional term created to be used for knowledge. He sees this superficial usage as a “project” (1081) undermining Māori relationships with things in the world, a shift from knowledge being mysterious and uncertain, “a product of the natural world in humanity” (1082) to something static with a fixed epistemic certainty.

Students emerge from this challenging exercise with a greater understanding of preferential bias and learned racism. Having experienced what a critical theorist would call counter stories (Brookfield, 2014) we begin a decolonizing exercise imagining a community music code of practice that responds to this new knowing.

### **Step 3: A Code of Practice**

Elizabeth Campbell (2000) states that educators who teach with only a knowledge of a code of practice may be ill-prepared for various situations, and that by becoming familiar with the principles underpinning such codes, ethical decision making by those in the profession will be strengthened. The code presents an opportunity to explicitly outline the profession’s expectations of itself. Higgins (2012) describes the Code of Practice developed by Sound Sense, the United Kingdom’s professional organisation for community music, with MusicLeader as a set of quality statements designed to ensure a high-quality of practice. Separate from the specific competencies needed by a community musician, that is understanding what a community musician does (Cahill, 1998; Higgins, 2012), we approach a code of practice through the principles that will shape the code.

We begin the process by imagining an indigenous community conceptualizing an expression



of community music. Music students from these communities often label Western genres of music-making such as choirs, orchestras, and brass bands as community music. While indigenous students enjoy and participate in these activities, they see these constructs as belonging to the colonial body (Rakena, 2018). Having said that, members from indigenous Pacific populations have a deep understanding of community and the drivers that underpin the social relationships and responsibilities that shape the collective identity (Ewalt & Mokuau, 1995). They include a set of shared values developed across time and the Pacific (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2009; Somerville, 2012; Rakena, 2018). We begin by introducing some of these values and integrating them into established practices.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand we are fortunate to have many models of community engagement and active interventions that have been drawn from our indigenous philosophies, views and values. They function across the health sector, Te Whare Tapa Whā, Te Wheke, Te Pae Mahutonga<sup>4</sup>; in education, Te Whāriki, Tātaiako<sup>5</sup>; and perhaps the most impactful expression of our community's values and world view, Kaupapa Māori, which operates across many fields. Kaupapa Māori is an important praxis heavily situated within academic discourse but emerging from the Māori world and centred around our way of being. This approach views the holistic makeup of Māori, both as individuals and collective members of the community, in working towards advancing the well-being of the collective. (Mane, 2009). For this reason, it aligns well with the rationale of the module and the praxial outcomes of community music activities.

We employ a narrative process called whakapapa kōrero<sup>6</sup>. This activity is finding traction in the population health sector within Māori communities. The term is translated as genealogical narrative however as Mika (2012) and Stewart (2016) both indicate, the displacement of Māori terms from the Māori world can distort the original intent of the concept. We take on the idea of whakapapa kōrero identifying whakapapa as genealogy but also as the verb, meaning to layer up and kōrero as the noun narrative or story. We consider the concept to mean gathering and accumulating stories and narratives that give a holistic meaning to the collective identity. We look at contemporary and past narratives, and we consider who has shaped and delivered those stories and absorb them all into our truth. In this way we can understand more deeply the history of the community and its relationship with the culture of power, and consider who has control of the public narrative.

We suggest that this key information is needed when a new leader or facilitator moves into a community to make music, or when a leader or facilitator creates a new community of music within the wider existing community. From here we can speak more pragmatically about those

activities that will ensure a high quality of music making. We acknowledge that kaupapa Māori framing can reprogramme existing Western framed codes of practice, and together with whakapapa kōrero and the existing intervention models for Maori communities we can overwrite the history of cultural conquest, and the part this colonial strategy has played in the history and development of community music in Aotearoa/ New Zealand (Rakena, 2018). In this project kaupapa Māori protocols complement critical theory and together work to resolve unequal power relations and meet the aspirations of Māori communities (Mane, 2019).

We return to the Soundsense/MusicLeader set of quality statements (Higgins, 2012) and list them below.

Be well prepared and organised Be safe and responsible

Have appropriate musical skills Work well with people

Evaluate and reflect on the work

Commit to professional development (p. 89)

We accept these as useful, broad in scope and practical in application. We add to these statements a set of core values inspired by the personal reflections and narratives of performance students participating in the course, and the work already done by community educators, academics and researchers in our communities.

Respect the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) Be aware of community power differentials Know the wider communities' musics, stories and histories Value culturally and psychologically safe musicking spaces Be curious and open to learning differently and with humility Foster self-determination Learn the expectations of the collective Nurture the collective Through this process we have eroded the pervasive and often pathological message from some in the music education sector who dismiss difference and identity formation as essentialising, and promote a universalist approach to considering equality. Queer Latino writer Lázaro Lima (2011) describes this situation Identity markers ascribed by members of the culture power have direct effect on the lived experiences of marginalized minorities, despite protestations to the contrary by universalists who see equality as a condition of philosophical being beyond materially ground history or religious mandate. (p.7)

He goes further those who have historically been marginalized or defined through the prejudices of the majority culture, as Latinos have been since 1848- be it by the state, religion or the reach of both through secular law or "moral" compulsion- cannot risk their identities being in anyone's hands but their own. (Lima, 2011, p. 6)

This is a timely message for community musicians and vital to the holistic education of our

future community music leaders. While we are a country admired for its cultural responsiveness and respect for indigenous rights, we are in fact largely made up of segregated communities and we are still working to diffuse insidious and pervasive structures that have ensured inequality is maintained. This course looks at the health of our communities from the bottom up. It examines that ways in which we perpetuate the “soul wound” (Duran and Duran, 1995, 24), a term that describes the collective intergenerational wounding associated with historical trauma. In settler colonies such as ours the impact of the colonising forces continuously reinforcing the dominant culture have been described in well-conceived and culturally appropriate-designed research studies that capture stories of indigenous participants reporting on behalf of their communities. By exploring these first person narratives, and locating literature that critically engages with the power differentials that emerge in (post)colonial contexts our students can more successfully integrate Pacific-based knowledge and creative values into community teaching and learning contexts.

To quote James Baldwin (1972) “It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.” In this course we have created a learning culture with the objective of diffusing these tensions and developing a set of core practices underpinned by relevant values for our future community leaders that will intersect with the ideals of community music, best practice teaching and the Aotearoa/New Zealand specific praxis, Kaupapa Māori. To return to Higgin’s quote in the opening paragraph, we are interested in preparing community musicians “who will disturb and transform a situation that appears fixed and static” (Higgins, 2013, viii)

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### Endnotes

1 By placing (post) in parenthesis I play with indigenous notions around colonial intervention and the general query, can a situation be postcolonial if the settler population have not yet left?

2 By this I refer to the Eurocentric framing of history and cultural arts and the predominance of Western Philosophy and political theory in shaping academic discourse.

3 Mātauranga Māori is a knowledge tradition or epistemology that has its roots in ancient Polynesia and was the creation of the peoples who travelled and settled the Islands across the Pacific Oceans. The use of this non-tradition term in contemporary academic contexts is problematic for some Māori. While it is used to define contemporary understandings of

indigenous knowledge; systems of knowledge transfer and storage; and the goals, aspirations and issues from an indigenous perspective, these definitions equate with an outcome that fixes things in the world, useful for Western Academic, but some feel this undermines the nature of Being and its spiritual connection to Knowledge.

4 See <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/populations/maori-health/maori-health-models> for more information on these health models.

5 Te Whāriki is framework for curriculum in early education settings. See <https://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/te-whariki/> for more information. Tātaiako is a Ministry of Education resource that offers competencies teachers need to develop to support Māori student success see <https://educationcouncil.org.nz/required/Tataiako.pdf>

6 Use of the term genealogical narrative, refers to the indigenous Maori term whakapapa kōrero. This is a healing intervention based around historic or contemporary narratives that link environments and people.

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*Received: February 8, 2018*

*Accepted: April 15, 2018*