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Meetings between night and day
Creating a collaborative music performance for children aged 0–3 years

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt, konstnärligt arbete

Det självständiga, konstnärliga arbetet finns dokumenterat på inspelning:
Professional Integration Project, NAIP - "Meetings between night and day"
Abstract

Møter mellom natt og dag (Meetings between night and day) was my Professional Integration Project (PIP). It was a musical collaborative performance implemented in three kindergartens in the municipality of Fjell, outside of Bergen on the west coast of Norway, between March 17th and March 19th 2015. The target audience for the performance was children aged three years and under. The performance consisted of 10 folk songs from the countries of Norway, Sweden and Malawi. In addition I employed voice improvisation accompanied by small instruments such as djembe, an mbira, a glockenspiel and a rain stick. The performance integrated a visual presentation of pictures taken by photographer Ingvild Festervoll Melien.

In the findings I present my relation to the audience, the roles of the adults in the kindergarten, the difference between being a musician and not a teacher in the audience setting, my aspects of time and digital media, how participation and interaction were integrated in the performance, and how the collaboration with photographer Melien functioned, as well as describe my own development in regards to new acquired skills and experiences. The findings are presented through my own reflection, and through discussions where I point to literature concerning perspectives on children and arts.

My conclusion shows that I have managed to create a successful musical collaboration performance in terms of developing my own artistry and engaging with the target audience of children between 0-3 years, in a performance especially created and designed for them. It also points to ways for how I can continue developing as an artist making performance for small children, and how these aspects also are transferable to other areas for musical performance.

Keywords: children, kindergarten, voice, artistic, collaboration, performance
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1. Introduction

Meetings between night and day is my master project in the master programme Joint Music Master for a New Audience and Innovative Practice (NAIP) at Kungliga Musikhögskolan (Royal College of Music) in Stockholm. This paper is written as a part of my Professional Integration Project (PIP). This project I have created and developed in a period of nearly two years, and it resulted in a performance that I conducted in three kindergartens in March 2015. Conducting a performance for children aged three and under has been the main focus of my PIP and is also the main focus in this paper. However, it also includes my very own personal reflections on my very own development as an artist and musician.

From the perspective of the current socio-political climate and the advancing technological developments that rapidly change the working landscape of performing artists (Smilde, 2009), I have chosen to conduct this project as a contribution for the chosen new audience, and for myself as an artist working in these changes.

I have used my own experiences as a classical singer as a starting point for the project, and gone on an adventure that has led me back to where I come from. In my home community I conducted a musical performance with songs and music from Norway, Sweden and Malawi, as well as some improvisation. The audience were children from nine months until around three years old in three different kindergartens. Some of them listened quietly and some of them made a lot of noise, but in all the performances I felt moments of complete concentration and interest from the children. This was a performance for the children and not a performance with them, and using folk songs, improvisation, small instruments and pictures taken by a photographer, I performed all alone on stage with the children as an audience in front. I have tried to innovate myself as an artist, to create something new, and add another layer to my previous experiences as a singer and musician. The exploration also included performing for an audience that is new to me, but also new to the world. They will be future audiences, but in the current socio-political climate and with the changes happening (Smilde, 2009), I do not know what will be their music and culture in the future.

In this paper, I start by giving a personal background, followed by a background of my Professional Integration Project, and finally presenting perspectives on children and the arts, and the reasons for choosing my audience and content for my project. In the aim chapter I present my research question that has been the guideline for my work, and also point to other aims that have manifested before and during the process. The methods show how I have worked in regards to making the performance, and in the findings I discuss reflections I have made in the process.

This project belongs to the diverse field of practice-based research, where the research process is closely connected to the artistic practice itself (Hannula, Suoranta & Vadén, 2005). Therefore, this paper describes and summarizes the practice that is in the centre of the research. Attached to this paper is a video documentation of the performances in question.
1.1. Personal background

The journey towards this Professional Integration Project (PIP) has been a highly personal one. It has been my way of taking control over my own musical path. There have been numerous intertwined inspirations and provocations along the way that have brought me to where I am today.

The first and most important detail of the starting point for this process has been my undisputed passion for singing. It started at an early age, and after I have never wanted to stop. I sang in a children’s choir from I was 6 years old and started vocal groups when I was 12 years old. Later I then applied for higher education in classical singing, wanting this to be an education to show me how to live off of my immense passion. I soon realized however that the education did not grant my wish. Being in the education I was drawn in to doing the same thing as everyone else in the education was doing. This meant learning the same repertoire of the same classical composers from baroque times until early 20th century, and giving recitals of this repertoire as our exams. I must however say that I like this music and have enjoyed learning the craft of singing, but with learning more about my voice I have also seen the possibilities that exist in the world today. Especially when it comes to collaboration with other fields in culture, promoting oneself towards a new audience and learning completely new things with the help of the Internet.

Through this discovery I came to understand that I needed other types of experiences than what my music academy could offer me. I went out searching, and collaborated with a free theatre group in Bergen, Norway, as well as engaged in culture politics from a local level until a national level. I wanted to challenge myself, learn new skills, deepen skills I already had, and use them in new ways, for a new audience and in new spaces. These extra-curricular activities were not looked upon in a positive way in the music conservatoire; the teachers said I needed to focus on the singing. I did not agree to this and went out searching again, this time for an education that was to incorporate my reflections on musicianship as well as offer an education. I found the master programme Joint Music Master for New Audiences and Innovative Practice (NAIP) offered in the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. On the masters own homepage I read this:

You are being trained to become a diverse and highly employable musician, capable of dealing with all the challenges that will arise throughout your career. You learn to develop and lead creative projects in diverse artistic, community and cross-sector settings. The purpose is learning about creating new audiences and developing your leadership skills in various artistic and social contexts. (NAIP European Master of Music, undated)

I could easily relate to this, so I applied and was accepted. Through the two years of the master I have worked on my Professional Integration Project (PIP). In this project the students combine innovation of project management, communication and creative collaborative practice in terms of designing a musical performance for a new audience. Being accepted to the NAIP master has been important for the implementation of my performance and the creation of it.

In the next chapter I will show my specific inspirations when it comes to my PIP, what they are and how they have inspired me.
1.2. Background of my Professional Integration Project

Saying yes when new possibilities arise and suddenly realizing you are thrown into something you know very little about. This is what happened when a dance choreographer approached me and asked if I could step in for the musician she had been working with in one of her dance performances. I listened to her, found it intriguing and said yes. Little did I know that this was actually a musical career-altering move for me.

It turns out that she was creating and conducting performances for children aged 0 to 3 years in kindergartens. This was at that moment completely new to me, and I had never thought of them as a possible audience, so to have the chance to do performances for them was something that inspired me a lot and made me more innovative in my ways of approaching music and performance. The dance choreographer was skilled in contemporary dance, and she used a set of movements as well as improvisations. I was also asked to do improvisations, which, again, also was new to me at that point. The freedom of doing whatever I wanted in the music performance was terrifyingly scary at first, and I started out just preparing what I was going to do for the set time I was asked to do improvisations. But after some time, I realized that I could also do live improvisations and enjoy it. This feeling of accomplishment also stands as an important revelation for my current PIP as well as for me personally as a musician.

Later we toured around Norway, as well as Finland with this performance, and I got the chance to perform for many kindergarten children. And what struck me was the honesty in the audience and their real concentration on something that was abstract in ways of movements and sound. I will not say that all the performances were perfect; sometimes the children would cry or start moving around and be interested in other things. Especially if the space we used was filled with other people or there was a lot of background noise. But most often the children would be engaged for the duration of the performance, and sometimes even come on to the stage and start moving around together with us performers. For me, the honesty in the audience was so interesting, and I wanted to make my own performance, to try out some of my own musicianship to this audience of children aged 0 to 3 years.

Different cultures are as well a great inspiration for me. Meeting people from different countries and exchanging information on our cultures makes me want to travel all over the world. After finishing my bachelor of music in Norway, I had the chance to move to Malawi in southern Africa and work there for four months. My workplace was Music Crossroads Malawi, a music organization situated in the capital Lilongwe, that offered music education for young people, room for practices and rehearsals, as well as a place were people could come to borrow instruments. My job consisted of teaching voice technique, conducting choirs and teaching music theory. However, the most interesting for me was getting to know people, their music and culture, and making music together with young people. Malawi is needless to say, very different from Norway, which is my home country. It is a poor country in forms of their economy, receives a lot of foreign aid, struggles with HIV/AIDS, corruption, poor health care and poor communication. But the people are what make a country, and all the people I made friends with were so kind and inviting. Making friends has never been as easy as it was for me in Malawi. I believe I owe a lot of that to the fact that I was working with music. I got to see something that is equally as good as anything from the developed world. And I got to know people through music instead of through illness or poverty,
which is sadly what a lot of other foreigners see, when they come as aid workers. I learned that their culture is equally as important as my own.

With these revelations from my time in Malawi, I decided that I wanted to use these experiences in an artistic way. Not through education and pedagogic work, but through a performance with music. By using stories and music from this culture and using it in my way, and mixing it with music and stories from my own culture I hope to show a little bit of the culture interest I have, and also to confront some of the prejudices through music performance.

To deepen my understanding of folk music from my own culture, I decided to take folk singing lessons. I had the chance to do this in Stockholm, with a Swedish folk singer. Even though this is not my home country I still think that the songs and texts reflect something that is well known to me.

I previously wrote that I was first asked to do improvisation in the performance with the dance group. Being able to challenge myself with improvisation became very important to me. This idea manifested even more clearly after an intensive course in improvisation in The Hague 2013. Here I learned a lot, and we were introduced to everything from classical improvisation to jazz and free improvisation. After these very intense days, I decided that I wanted to also include this in my future work towards the PIP.

So to summarize some of my inspirations, it was the idea of making my own performance for children under the age of 3, and use songs and music from different cultures, as well as improvisation in this performance.

1.3. Perspectives on children and the arts

I have showed how I came to be interested in making a music performance for the age group of children 0-3 years old, by working together with a dance choreographer and touring with her performances. But except for these experiences I had no other knowledge about children as an audience or how to create and put together a musical performance so that it can best suit their taste and preference. To explore this field more, I have read books especially concerning the theme of arts and children.

In Norway there is a research programme on arts for children called Kunstløftet. This is an initiative from Arts Council Norway, and their purpose is to increase the interest for, the quality of, and the recognition of art for a young audience (Kunstløftet, undated). On their website there are numerous articles on the subject of arts for children, and they have also printed and issued article collections on this topic. I have used these articles in creating a clear understanding of what I was doing, and how I could argue my positions for choosing to make a music performance for children.

Furthermore the Arts Council Norway had a project called Klangfugl (1998 – 2002) in Norway, which also were exported outside of the Norwegian borders, and called Glitterbird – art for the very young (2003 – 2006) during the time it was financed by the European Union (EU). This was an art project, with many different performances by different artists, for children aged 0-3 years old. The book Med kjærlighet til kunsten – Kunst for barn under 3 år (Hernes, Os, Selmer-Olsen 2010) is a book written to reflect and highlight certain issues that the different performances in these two projects experienced This book has been an important
literature resource for this study, especially concerning form, staging and context for my performance, which you can read in my methods chapter.

It is also important to understand where I fit in with my project in regards to certain perspectives on children and arts. These can be called the perspective of children’s culture (Hernes et al. 2010; Tingstad, 2013). I will now show some perspectives when it comes to the cultural historical perspectives on childhood, and differences when it comes to categories for culture products concerning children today.

In the cultural history of childhood, there are different theoretical, and artistic, descriptions of childhood, children’s culture, and reflections on how childhood is understood as a cultural phenomenon (Hernes, Os, Selmer-Olsen, 2010). In the book *L’Enfant et la vie familiale sous l’Ancien Régime*, (1960, English title: Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life) historian Philippe Aries claims that childhood is an invention, and he justifies this by pointing to the history of childhood. In the mediaeval times children did not have any value until they could work, around the age of 7, and after this they quickly glided into the adult world, Aries claims (Danbolt, 2014). His book started a lively discussion on the phenomenon of childhood, and brought to life some new ideas on how children are, and have been, viewed throughout history (Danbolt, 2014).

Despite interesting views, it took time until researchers started questioning the difference between children’s way of being, and the perception of children and their way of being (Danbolt, 2014). Before the 1980s, the fields of psychology and pedagogy dominated the research on children and childhood (Tingstad, 2013). The themes and perspectives most often showed a passive childhood. The children were unfinished adults who were being socialized and adapted to fit the adult world. In the 1980s however, researcher within the field of sociology and anthropology started to argument that childhood was not only a period where you were preparing yourself for what you were going to become, but that this period also had an important value in itself (Tingstad, 2013).

The research also had to include, not only the individually-oriented perspectives, but also how the childhood fitted with the structures of society, and how children live their lives and create meaning here and now. (Tingstad, 2013, p. 4)

These perspectives continued in the 1990s, when we got *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Here is the idea that children should be heard, and have a right to engage in matters that concern them. These perspectives continue also in today’s research on childhood (Tingstad, 2013). These historic perspectives are very important, because they highlight issues that today might be seen as self-evident. Using history makes it easier to see where ideas come from, and what in society has constructed them. For me as an artist it is also important to know this, and to reflect on what relevance this has for me.

The next perspective also highlights issues that are worth knowing when making art for children. Children of today have many choices when it comes to culture consumption. They are consumers in a market that more and more contact them directly and offer their products and services (Tingstad, 2013). These different products can be divided in three segments:

1. The artistic-oriented children’s culture – this is where adult artists try to create new art for children, and give them an experience without it being driven by commercial or pedagogical forces.
2. The pedagogic and educational culture for children – this is where adults create cultural products for children with mostly instrumental intentions. The goal is that the children learn something.

3. The market- and entertainment-oriented culture for children – this is mostly offering entertainment and an escape from reality, it has no pedagogic or artistic intentions. The purpose with these products is to make money, create work places etc. (Hernes et al., 2010, p 18).

Of course some products are not necessarily easy to put in one box, there are for example games that works as entertainment and also have a pedagogic value. Or some artistic oriented products that suddenly become million dollar businesses with products like cups, towels, games, pencils etc. Neither is it possible to divide these different product categories using quality as a separation mark.

For me, who have been planning and created a performance for children, it has been of high importance to know these things. I need to understand children and childhood and to localize the terms in both time and place, and also to understand the historical connections, and look at it in a critical and reflected way. I see my performance mostly in the first category, namely an artistic-oriented children’s culture. But my goal is also to be a professional musician and make money, as well as entertain, so I guess in many ways it can also be put in the last category.

The findings chapter where I reflect on my findings will also include more perspectives on art and culture for children, and I highlight aspects that have come up in the process of working with my own performance.

2. Aim

The first aim I have been working with in creating and structuring my project is this:

How can I create and structure a collaborative musical performance for kindergarten children aged 0-3 years?

Using I in the question I emphasize that I want to do this with my background, competence and skills. The word collaborative, points to how I want to expand my horizon beyond just using music, and creating something with another person from another field of culture.

The second aim I have been working with is this:

Developing my own artistry in meeting with a new audience

I reflected very much on how creating and structuring this project affected me as a musician, not only how I wanted to affect the children. The project therefore became increasingly an exploration on how the project and this audience would affect my own artistry as a performing musician.

My aim is to bring new knowledge that is relevant to musicians later meeting the target audience of this project, and furthermore, I aim to bring new considerations for teachers and other practitioners who work with this age group. Especially, I aim to communicate how an artist and musician has worked with the young children in order for the other practitioners to find new ideas for their own occupations.
3. Practice meets Research

This study is in the field of practice-based research. Which is an approach where the practitioner researches his or her own practice through the process, not separately from it. Practice-based research can be applied for work in the field of artistic research (Hannula, Suoranta & Vadén, 2005).

Practice-Based research is a distinct approach, in terms of the significant aspects and characteristics of originality, mastery and contribution to the field, are held to be demonstrated through the original creative work (Fyfe, 2012). In scientific research, the goal is to contribute with new knowledge to the field. In music and arts, the goal is to contribute with a new piece or performance. If a creative artefact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge, the research is practice-based (Candy, 2006). Subsequently this study draws from traditional practice-based research which is rooted in the theoretical framework of pragmatism, where the author is seen to build knowledge by participating in action, Learning by doing (Flick, 2009).

In my research I have made a performance, which is a contribution to the arts and to the practitioners related to the field where my project was executed. As the findings arise from my own artistic practice, where I have stood in the middle of the process, I am going to include my own reflections to the descriptions of the outcomes.

4. Methods

In this chapter I show methods that I have used for creating my Professional Integration Project (PIP). Firstly, I am presenting the methods used for extracting, shaping and creating the content. Secondly, the methods I have used to form this content into the performance, and finally the methods that I have used to analyse my own work. Making my performance and working on my Professional Integration Project has been a long process, and I therefore choose to present my methods in three stages.

The first one is the preparational stage, this is the longest in terms of time, and has been a process of over one year. Many of the activities, explorations and reflections I have done in this period of time are, however, not included in this chapter, as they have not necessarily led me to something in the final product. What I will describe is my work on developing my voice, my collaborative work with photographer Ingvild Festervoll Melien, our inspiration field trip to Malawi to obtain material, and an explanation of my mini-PIP, which was a pre-project that tested out my musical material for an audience of two year-olds.

The second stage I choose to call the action stage. This is where I create my performance using material and reflections I have collected from the work I did in the preparational stage. In this stage I explain how I have worked in regards to the content, the means, structure and context, the staging, and lastly about how I have documented my performance. The last stage, which I have called the analysis stage, is where I explain about my reflective practice journal, and how I have used video analysis in the processes towards writing about my findings.
For a clearer view on what happened when and at what time, I have also written a timeline that you can find in the appendices (see appendix 3, p. 34)

4.1 Preparational stage

4.1.1. Voice exploration and development

Develop and explore new ways in terms of singing, and using my voice, was essential in reaching the new audience. As previously stated, my background is as a classical singer. I therefore have most of my knowledge in this way of singing and using my voice. Originally, classical singing technique was developed to produce a sound that could be heard over an orchestra, and fill big concert halls without the use of microphones or other sorts of sound enhancing technology. Performing songs in small spaces, and with a close proximity to the audience, this was not the technique I needed.

I therefore wanted to have lessons in folk singing, to learn more about that way of singing, and to learn more about folk music in general, I was therefore granted lessons with Maria Misgeld for the first year of the master program. In these lessons I learned new repertoire of Swedish folk songs, as well as learn the technique required in performing these songs. I also continued to take lessons in classical singing. But here I explored new ways of using my voice; in dialogue with my teacher Eva-Larsson Myrsten we tried out different repertoire, but always keeping in mind the audience of children between 0-3 years. I explored classical voice technique in smaller spaces and with a closer proximity to the audience but keeping the sound quality that I previously had in my voice. In the second semester I was also granted a few lessons in pop singing, also as a possibility to explore different ways to use my voice and to try out another sound quality and technique.

Improvisation has also been a journey of exploration. Through the mandatory subject of Leading and Guiding I have learned improvisation games, and to lead improvisation settings myself. And in the improvisation workshop in The Hague I was introduced to all kinds of improvisation from baroque to jazz. I also got to choose what kind of improvisation I mostly wanted to focus on and I chose to learn more about free improvisation with professor Anto Pett from Estonia. These experiences also shaped my performance, and made me more secure with including improvisation in my project.

4.1.2. Starting a collaboration with photographer Ingvild Festervoll Melien

In my research question I state that I want to make my performance project a collaborative process, with an artist from a different field of culture. Quite early in the fall of 2013 I spoke to my friend Ingvild Festervoll Melien, who by then had just finished her education in photography. In addition she has a bachelor in geography, and I know her from the music field, as we sang in the same choir together for some years. I listed my ideas for her, explaining my background, and my intentions with my project. She liked my ideas and wanted to do the journey of making this performance together with me, and we decided that she would be collaborator and partner in creating the performance.
Her contribution, in form of pictures, was a very good fit with the folk music and improvisation I wanted to use. We both felt that by using pictures it was easier to structure a whole performance for the small children, and they could find enjoyment and interest in both the sound and image.

Throughout the one and a half-year we spoke on several occasions. Living in different cities was challenging, but it has also proved to be a good thing as our meetings had to be very structured. From October 2013 until March 2015 we had many Skype-meetings, e-mail exchanges and Facebook-chat conversations. We met physically on four occasions. These were, our field trip to Malawi in April/May 2014 (this trip is more thoroughly explained in the next section of this chapter), sorting of material from this trip in August 2014, final decisions in regards of material and a general rehearsal of the performance in January 2015 and the implementation of the performances in three different kindergartens in March 2015.

Melien also helped me a lot with funding. Quite early on I decided that I would want to pay her for the work she put in, since it was, essentially, my master project. She therefore suggested we could work out some applications together, firstly to fund our trip to Malawi, but also so I could get money for material and money to pay her for her contribution. I will in this paper not focus on the funding and budget making procedures I have been through, but I can say that a lot of our work did not really pay off. In the end, however, we did receive a sum of 10 000 NOK from the municipality of Fjell, where I held the performances. This money I spent on our travels, printing of pictures and paying Melien a small compensation for her work.

4.1.3. Field trip to Malawi for artistic inspiration and obtaining of material

After starting my collaboration with Meilen and finishing the first semester of the master programme NAIP I decided in January of 2014 that I should go on a field trip to Malawi, with my collaboration partner, Melien. For me this was important because I wanted to make some of those experiences I had there into parts of the musical performance. Melien had never been to Malawi, and therefore it was important for her as well to see some of the ideas I was talking about. Since our ideas also were that the sound and image of the performance should be coherent it made a lot of sense that Melien could see and capture in her pictures, some of the atmosphere and energy I had felt when I met musicians and sang songs from this culture.

From April 23rd to May 6th 2014 we therefore did a field trip to Malawi. April 23rd and partly 24th was spent travelling. Our primary destination was the capitol Lilongwe where we stayed for 4 nights. Here I was observing and engaging in parts of the music education programme at Music Crossroads Malawi, a music organization situated in a relatively poor part of the city. I spoke to two of the teachers, and they taught me songs from their culture. Quite recently, before my stay, the organization had developed a songbook to be used in primary schools. This book contained only songs from Malawi, and I was so lucky that I could receive one of these and bring it home with me.

The organization also runs a children’s choir called Hear Us children’s choir, they sing and dance to music from Malawi, but also perform songs from other cultures. I
observed two of their rehearsals, and also helped them learn a Norwegian song. Photographer Melien was in Lilongwe taking pictures from the areas I was situated, but she would also wander alone and get acquainted with the country and culture on her own terms and through the camera.

On the 29th of April we travelled to Nkhotakota, a village west in the country, right next to lake Malawi. This is a much more secluded area, and I wanted to come here because it would be nice for Melien to see some other parts of the country, as well as for me to get some other influences than the ones I already had planned.

In Nkhotakota there were not so much music education happening and therefore not so much for me to observe in regards to music. But I travelled more around with Melien and we were very inspired by the light and the shift from night till day and back. This became especially clear on a clear night with amazing starry night sky.

We spent a total of three nights in Nkhotakota before heading back to Lilongwe where we concluded the trip and looked at our findings. For me, these findings included songs recorded on audio, songbooks and video from some observation sessions at the music organization. For Melien they included pictures and a few videos from the observance of music performances, and more artistic pictures showing daily life, nature and culture through her eyes.

4.1.4. Conducting a mini-PIP

The fall semester of 2014 I was on an exchange from the Royal Academy in Stockholm to Iceland Academy of the Arts. This exchange is possible for the students of the NAIP-programme to other schools that offers the same programme, as is the case with these two schools.

In Iceland I was even further away from my collaborator Ingvild Festervoll Melien and this made us partly postpone some of the work we had planned to do together this fall. However, the time in Iceland I developed the musical content of the performance. I had all my material from the first year of the NAIP master program, my voice lessons and the field trip. And through the subject Performance and Communication that I did at the school, I was pushed to do some preliminary performances. In the beginning of the semester it was small 2-minute performances of some of the material for my fellow class mates, and then on November 26 I did a full 15-minute performance with a selection of the musical material in Sólborg leikskoli, a nursery situated in Reykjavik. The audience were 2 year olds who all were together in the same section in the nursery.

I performed all the songs and used an iPad with a loop program called Loopy, for instrumental support, since I did not have any of the instruments I wanted to use present in Iceland. I also tried out the length of the songs and improvisations.

Findings and reflections from this experience were important in the continued work with my project. I was especially glad that I had chosen to work with pictures, since it was hard work to keep the children’s attention only with my voice. Another finding was how my use of the iPad affected the performance in a way I did not like. This is discussed more in the findings chapter. Also aspects of staging and communication with the audience were tested out and developed from this preliminary performance.
4.2 Action stage - Creating my performance

After a year of collecting material, trying out new things, exploring different kinds of music and testing new things with my voice, reading literature, and reflecting alone and with my collaborator Melien, I finally had the final product, my very own performance ready in March 2015. In this chapter I will show how I worked in regards to the content and in regards to the form. With content I mean which songs, how and where I did improvisation, instrumentation and so. By form I mean the length of the performance, how to set it up and how to introduce it to the children. The content has been a very egocentric journey, where the discussions, on what I want to use and not use, have been happening between my collaborator Melien and myself. I feel I can stand 100 per cent for the content and had I chosen a different audience I would also have wanted to present the same songs and music. The form has been where I have had to seek literature and other sources to know how to best set it up, so I can present my artistry in the best way, but still meet the children in their world.

4.2.1 The content

After travelling to Malawi and finishing the first year of the master, with voice lessons in classical singing, folk singing and pop singing, as well as the mandatory subjects of Leading and guiding, Performance and Communication and Cultural entrepreneurship it was time to process the material and new skills I had acquired. Over the summer and early autumn of 2014 I chose what I wanted to include in the performance. In Malawi, Melien and myself decided that the theme we would work from was the shifting from night till day. Melien took some beautiful pictures of the sunrise and the clear starry night sky, which worked as a frame. In this framework I found music, and she found pictures that could somehow show this transformation. This functioned as a good framework, but I must emphasize that this did not inhibit us, and it was important that we were free within this theme.

As previously stated I moved to Iceland for an exchange in the fall semester of 2014. In Iceland I continued working on the musical content, I choose 10 songs, all folk songs from Malawi, Norway and Sweden. For me they all had an element of change, which I could see working in the theme From morning till night, which we had chosen. I also liked these songs; they evoked something special in me, that I wanted to present for my audience. Here is a list of the songs I chose, with comments:

1. Nu rinner solen opp – This is a Norwegian folk song, the text is written by Thomas Kingo, and this text is found with another melody in the Norwegian psalm book. The melody I use however, I learnt many years ago and it is a Norwegian folk melody. I think it fits the mood of the text, which talks about the sun rising, and how it lights up the hills and mountains.

2. God morgon – This is a Swedish folk song I learned in my folk singing lessons with Maria Misgeld. The title translates to Good Morning and it was sung to get the girls who tend the cows, up in the morning.

3. Bongololo – This is a Malawian folk song I learned when I was there for the field trip in April/May 2014. I had a few sessions with Luckson Chazima who is a music teacher at the music organization Music
Crossroads and this was the first song he taught me. The songs talks about a millipede.

4. När jag var liten – A Swedish folk song I also learned from Maria Misgeld in my lessons with her. The person who sings tells that when she was young, she thought the person she loved would not love her back, but even though this is the case, she still lives happily.

5. U you’ana lera mwana – A Malawian folk song I learned when I lived there in 2012. It is a song originally meant for weddings, and the text says, If you raise your kids well, then you are smart. It is call and response that is quite typical for Malawian traditional songs.

6. Fulu fula – This is also a Malawian folk song that I learned in my field trip in 2014. The text says: turtle digging in the sand, turtle digging, digging in the sand. Often it is used as a name song, and then you change the “Fulu” in the song with a person’s name, typical if you want to learn names in a group.

7. En vän i världen – This is a Swedish folk song I learned from Maria Misgeld. The text is very sad, and talks about a love that is no more, and the tears that flow because of the loss.

8. Birimankhwe – A Malawian folk song I learned from music teacher Lackson Chazima. The text is sad and talks about a chameleon, which is sad because the children are making fun of him.

9. Nu solen går ned – A Norwegian folk song with text by Samuel Olsen Bruun. It also exists with different melodies, I learned the one I use from a choir song arranged by Grete Pedersen. The text is about how the earth gets peace when the sun is setting and night comes.

10. Stjärnan – The last song I also learned from Maria Misgeld, and it derives from Dalarna in Sweden. It is about the stars that shine when night falls.

In addition to these songs I also had some vocal improvisation. I used improvisation in mostly a melodic way, but also to some extent just with sounds, like stroking the drum. The vocal improvisation I used mostly in song 7 in the performance, it is also to some extent used in song 5, 6, 1 and 10.

In the performances in Fjell in March I had 4 instruments with me. These were: a small African djembe, an mbira (a thumb piano, most common south of Sahara), a glockenspiel and a small rain stick. I used the glockenspiel and partly the mbira as melodic variations from my voice, letting them sometimes play the melody and sometimes have a harmonic line to the main melody. They were also used on improvisation. I used the glockenspiel on songs 1, 2, 4, 7, and 9. The mbira was used on songs 3 and 8. The djembe was used as a rhythmic instrument on songs 5 and 6, but also as a sound improvisation element in between songs 6 and 7. The rain stick was used in song 7 and 10 and it was used as sound colouring to accompany my voice.

In Reykjavik for my mini-PIP I did not have any of these instruments at hand, so mostly the roles of instruments were put in a loop programme application on my iPad, called Loopy. It was my intention to also use this feature in the main performance, the reasons why I chose not to, will be discussed in the findings chapter.
My collaborative work with photographer Melien presented itself in 11 pictures printed and shown on a stand. These were connected with the songs and musical elements in the performance. The pictures are together with the songs, one picture per song, except song number 7 that has 2 pictures. The pictures are attached to this paper (see appendix 1, p 31), with the number of song corresponding to the pictures. Like with the songs, the theme of night and day are most prominent in the first few pictures and in the last few pictures. The other depicts things and objects from nature, which can evoke different moods together with the music. Some of them can even look a bit abstract, but they all show physical objects or phenomena. All the pictures, except the pictures belonging to song number 1 and 9, are taken in Malawi on our field trip. The two other pictures are taken in Norway.

4.2.2. Context and cultural aspects of the performance

When shaping the content for the children, I needed to adjust it to their needs and interests. I do believe the material I have described in the content chapter could also be of interest for other audiences, but I use the structure, means and context to make it especially fit my target audience. For children to respond and contribute in relation to what is being performed it needs to meet them at home (Hernes et al., 2010, p. 53). And for the art to engage there is needed some kind of recognition. For me the recognition in sorts of theme, were to show different cultures in a normal way. Children of today will grow up in a much more culturally diverse society than I did, especially if the immigration to Norway (and Sweden) continues like it has the previous years. By showing my experiences with new cultures, both the clearly different one from Malawi, but also the culture in Sweden, I wanted to show that folk songs, singing, making music and the change from night till day are something that happen in all of these cultures. It is recognizable for them.

It is motivational for a child to have influence on what is happening. Arts for this age group can involve activities that make the child have influence on what is happening, and should involve possibilities for participation (Hernes et al., 2010). To make some sort of engagement for the children were a difficult element for me to include in my performance, and I will discuss this more in the findings chapter. However, I chose to make a performance of 16 minutes, and after that invite the children into my space, so they could play the instruments and look closer at the pictures if they wanted to, or ask me questions. By welcoming them to the performance in the beginning, explaining that I were to perform first and they could try after, and then inviting them when I was finished, I set the frame for the performance. First they were in the audience area, listening, paying attention, after they were in my stage room, playing on the instruments and looking at pictures, this made it easier for them to phase out of the performance.

4.2.3 Using photographs and instruments

The photographs were chosen to illustrate the world, with recognizable elements in them. But they also are somewhat abstract in the sense that it is possible to interpret different things in some of them. They are recognizable and at the same not. Another aspect that is recognizable, are the different instruments, especially the djembe drum, and the glockenspiel, which are found in many kindergartens, as they are child friendly and easy to use. The recognition aspect is not only limited to what they knew before the performance, also working and exploring with their recognition in the performance is possible (Hernes et al., 2010). I do this with the
use of the different instruments, when I use one instrument and then later use it again. My voice also works as a thread in the performance, I sing all the new songs for them, and by performing alone my voice becomes recognizable as the performance progresses.

Different artefacts, are often used in art performances for children. Objects are a substantial part in the world of children (Hernes et al., 2010). I used instruments that were well known for them, the djembe and the glockenspiel are instruments that can be found in many Norwegian kindergartens. *Children’s play involves objects that are used in unexpected ways. The objects transcend into new connections while at the same time stay as they are* (Hernes et al., 2010, p. 58). The mbira I used has the shape of a bowl, and this was an element I saw as a transcending object, a bowl that has sound in it, and therefore turns into an instrument. By using sound colouring with my voice, the djembe and the rain stick I also wanted the sounds to be something else, and I use these instruments to explain the pictures in sound.

### 4.2.4. Employment of universal musical elements

There are certain universal elements that can and should be used in a certain way when making performance for children. One aspect like this is the phrasing. Clear structured phrasing attracts the children’s attention. These are phrases that have a clear form or shape that are recognizable. These elements help to create a focus in the performance (Hernes et al., 2010). In performance art, such as dance and theatre, this element is closely linked with movement. In my performance I do not move myself, but the music has movement, flow, tempo and rhythm. By using different instruments and placing the songs in a certain order it also impact the phrasing of the performance.

Repetition also fascinates children. Through children’s own play, they often repeat the same thing over and over, want to read the same book again and again or want to hear the same song over and over again. This can be a way to get to know something that is complex, or that they experience something new every time (Hernes et al., 2010). As a consumer of art myself I very much relate to this, I enjoy when things are repeated, and find deeper meaning in for example music when I hear it several times. In the performance I therefore used repetition a lot. Each song is repeated at least one time, and with the repetition I added another layer, for example by adding more instruments, adding small changes to the melody with my voice or adding a second melody. Sometimes I also took away the text in the repetition. Children also seek new challenges and experiences. So even if the repetition is enjoyed, there should be a development or change to give the experience more dimensions (Hernes et al., 2010). Through engaging with art I want to challenge the audience, and myself, and to include something new is important in performances for children. By challenging the known, and surprise them, I want to make sure that the audience develop new perspectives on the world they live in and towards themselves. This is why I chose songs that are not known to them, it is also why I chose to sing some songs in a completely foreign language. The pictures also present known things, but even these images can be something different, if the audience wants to, and wishes to use their imagination.

Tempo, rhythm and timing are important means to be used actively and passively in the meeting with small children. Small children can also use longer time than adults to process the experience, keeping a slower tempo might therefore be of
essence to make the children experience everything. At the same time one needs to make sure the performance is not too monotonous (Hernes et al., 2010). In my performance I did everything in quite a calm manner. The songs have different rhythms and energy in them, but in between most of the songs I gave time, so the children could change attention to the pictures and take in the mood of the new picture and new song. The calm songs were in the beginning and in the end, whereas the songs with most sound, high tempo and energy were in the middle. The improvisation was placed, so I could read the audience reactions, and make them longer, change the dynamics, tempo and rhythm if I felt the audience were not responding in a way I wanted them to. With my own estimates of time in regards to improvisation and doing the performance beforehand on my own, the performance part lasted approximately 16 minutes. In the findings chapter I will discuss more on how this worked, how I felt as a musician and how the performance ended up in regards of time.

4.2.5. Staging

In a performance for small children, the audience do not have the same expectations to how the stage looks and even what a stage is. How the space is arranged, helps the audience precondition in the communication with the stage (Hernes et al., 2010). After deciding my content, and my means and form, I created the staging.

I decided that I wanted to travel to the kindergartens, this was because I wanted to include my own work in their daily lives; it was also new to me to actively go and seek the audience. In Norwegian kindergartens, this is quite common, and I wanted to test out how this works. Because of the uncertainty of room, I was therefore dependent on having a flexible set-up that could fit in different spaces, after what the kindergartens could offer. In my staging I placed myself in the middle, I sat on the floor with my legs crossed, to keep me on the same level as the children. For the pictures I ended up transforming a music stand so that it could stand on the ground, on this I had the pictures stacked. Each picture were printed and glued to a foam board (a thick cardboard of 5 mm). The picture set-up was placed on my left side.

The instruments were placed on my right side, and hidden under a piece of fabric, so that I could use the element of surprise after I showed them one by one. This staging worked very well, and I could easily transport all my different objects around, from kindergarten to kindergarten. In the performance room, which were a small storage space/music room in the first kindergarten, their eating room in the second kindergarten and a proper concert room with a stage and professional lighting in the last kindergarten, the children were close to me and the performance, but there were still an imaginary line between me as an artist and the audience. This line however, they got to cross once the performance were over and they were invited in to play.

4.2.6. Documenting the material

As previously stated I visited three kindergartens. In the first one I did two performances, both of these for children aged 10 months to three years. In this kindergarten I did not film, but I took notes in my reflective journal (see next
chapter) and also have my memory of what happened there. In the second kindergarten I did one performance that is filmed, however, this kindergarten does not allow me to keep the material more than until after I am done with my master, I am allowed however to use it in the analysis stage. Only certain parts where the children are not visible at all are allowed in the DVD. In the last kindergarten I also did two performances, the first one for the older children in the age category, ages two and three, and the second one for the smallest ones, ages one and under. Both of these performances were filmed, and I am allowed to use these films. Therefore, most of the footage in the DVD is from these performances.

In the processes towards the final product I have also documented different stages either with film, or with audio. From the field trip in Malawi I have both film and audio from sessions where I learned songs. And from the voice lessons in folk singing, classical singing and rhythmic singing I have audio recordings. Also some of my own practice where I have tested out improvisation, instrument sounds and timing have been recorded and used for reflection.

4.3 Analysis stage

4.3.1 Reflective practice as a method

Through all the different processes and even when applying for the NAIP master programme I have kept a journal. In line with the statement keeping a reflective journal – sometimes also called a learning journal – is a way to reflect through documenting ideas, feelings, observations and visions (Participatorymethods.org, undated). In this book I have written down ideas from the very early stages, and throughout the whole of my Professionally Integrated Project. It contains drawings, single words, and sometimes, full explanations of the development I have been through.

Some of the ideas have been thrown out, some of the ideas and sketches have concluded in completely different ways than I first anticipated, and some are very nice paths that I can easily follow back to my original ideas. For an example of how one of these drawing/notes look, I have included it in the appendices (see appendix 2, 33). This drawing shows my initial thoughts on what I wanted to do, and for whom I wanted to do it. So after drawing this, I have been filling in the how, or the centre of the drawing.

Reflective practice, reflexivity and first person inquiry are used in research to explore issues of power and positionality and to make the role and assumptions of researchers more explicit and integral to their analysis. (participatorymethods.org, undated)

Reflection has been important through all the stages, and in all the other methods I have used. This journal shows the reflections I have done in regards to voice development, my collaboration with photographer Melien, both our common reflective talks, and my own views on this collaboration, it contains field notes from the trip to Malawi, and different ideas to my music making in regards to the pre-performances and the finished PIP. This journal binds together all the other methods I have written, and it has been a highly valuable tool in the process towards the finished project. It is now a useful material when I write about the journey I have taken, as well.
4.3.2. Video documentation-based stimulated recall as a tool for analysis of the performances

Reflections around results, which I will later discuss in this paper, have, in addition to the reflective journal, come from using the video documentation for analysing and recalling the performances I did between March 17th and 19th. I previously wrote that I filmed in two out of three kindergartens and three out of five performances.

Stimulated recall is a method that can be used as a supportive tool for analysing a filmed documentation of a past action or event and recalling on. As a person is stimulated by the video to remember the what kind of processes took place at the time of the action, the recollection may support their own reflection on it, as well as give new insight on what happened and how. (Haglund, B., 2003)

In my project, I have a total of 50 minutes of filmed material on the performance and audience participation. This I have cut down to a video of approximately 15 minutes, containing all the songs and musical content in the right order, but showing it from different performances where I found there are interesting elements happening in the performance, or interaction in regards to the audience. In kindergarten number 2 I have cut away the audience, as they did not allow me to keep video material of the children. In kindergarten number 3 I did two performances, and I show the whole stage, children and me (In kindergarten 1 I did not film).

While looking at the video from these performances, I reflected on different episodes that came up, some of them I actively looked for, these are the ones I remember from when I conducted the performances, and some I found while looking at the video. Findings from the video recollection and analysis of chosen aspects of the project will be described in the following chapter.

5. Findings of the Professional Integration Project

In this chapter I point to some of my findings when working on my Professional Integration Project. The question I aim to answer in this section are about making performance for children and adults, and specifically how that has worked, as well as what my own experiences were like.

5.1 The artist’s relation to the audience of children

Somehow I feel that when I perform for these small children I get an even stronger bond to them. The meeting is stronger, and my performance is better because of who they are. According to Danielson (2014), the adult audience has in the last centuries acquired a demeanour in connection to cultural performances that is characterized by silent attention. And this, I must say, are not the case with children under the age of 3 years. In my performance they easily mouthed their discomfort or showed if they were bored, by walking away. They talked loudly in some places, and would whisper to the neighbour, or walk over to the adults in
charge, sometimes sitting on the other end of the room. All of these things are not easy to deal with when trying to perform a soft piece with a soft voice. But in those moments when the attention is full, and the energy in the room is directed at me and what I am doing, I cannot explain it with a better word than *magical*.

Performing for adults, has not given me as many of these magical moments as performing a 13-minute piece for small children.

Trying to get the audience involved and break the barrier between audience and artwork or art performance has been quite popular and partly successful in the art world the last years (Danielsen, 2014). This issue is not really a theme for children. They do engage with their whole beings, and show excitement and boredom without necessarily thinking more about it. I like that I know when they are interested, and when they are not. This creates a stronger and more honest meeting between the audience and me as an artist.

5.2. The role of the adult

In the performances I conducted in the kindergartens, there were also adults. These were the kindergarten’s staff, they are responsible for the children when the parents leave their children in the kindergarten’s care. From the video documentation I have, it is clear to see that some of them really struggle with the children, placing them in the chairs, or holding them on their lap if they did not sit still. To enter in to these adults domain in caring for the children were not always very easy. I really wanted the children to be able to run or turn around, or be completely uninterested if they wanted to, rather than the adults desperately trying to make the children look at me and pay attention. While performing it was often more disturbing how the adults reacted, then how the children were acting.

I tried to communicate with the adults before the performances started, stating that it was okay for the children to come closer or go away if they felt like it, but it did not always seem like the adults picked up this information.

Another aspect that included the adults was the seating of the children. In my preparation for the performances, I had pictured that the children were to sit on the floor, this was the most flexible for the children I thought, and my previous experiences with the dance group, they always sat on the ground. In two of the kindergartens I performed in however, the children were placed in chairs. In kindergarten number 3, it was on some children chairs that were made for them, and this I felt worked since I was placed on a stage. In kindergarten number 2 however I performed in the children’s common room/eating room, and the children were strapped in to their kitchen chairs, and were not able to move from their chairs at all. But in this kindergarten it seemed like they were used to being seated like that, and I did not feel it was my place to challenge the adults decision. It also worked, and the children did pay attention and were not crying or trying to get out of their chairs.

The role of the adults are anyways very important, and in future work with performances for this age group, I will take the adults needs and points of view more in to consideration, and try to be more communicative towards them.
5.3. Being an artist and not a teacher

My performance has been an artistic performance; I have made a musical performance where the audience are children aged 0-3 years. It has not been a performance where the children are to learn about music, or learn something else through music, but simply experience music and a performance like adults audiences could, and hopefully would, do.

Explaining this has been partly challenging, it has also however resulted in many reflections on what is pedagogic and what is artistic. Finding literature on musical performance for children that has an artistic goal has been difficult, as most of the previous research seems to have a pedagogic goal. However, for dance, drama and other stage-performance genres, there are written quite a lot, and to translate these practices into my own, has not proved very difficult, in many ways I feel it has been a benefit, as it sometimes is easier to see ones own genre from the outside. Input from dance and drama performances and research on these performances has enriched my own practices in regards to participation, staging and communication with my own audience.

What has been more of a challenge has been to convince critics and sometimes even myself that what I am doing has a purpose, and is important. Sometimes it seems I have had to defend the reason for doing art because I have chosen an age group that don’t care, in many people’s eyes. If it does not have a pedagogical goal, then one might as well make performance for someone who actually care, has been some of the feedback I have heard.

It is difficult to answer this critique, but after doing my own performance I can at least say, that for me, this it is not correct. I feel like the children, like any other audience group, go from the performance with a new experience that enriches their life a little bit or a lot. Speaking to the adults afterwards they also told me this, and they were very glad that I came and offered the children something different in their day-to-day life in the kindergarten.

5.4. Some aspects of time and timing

The length of the performance, and timing for different elements in the performance has been an interesting point of reflection for me. Starting out I had a very clear idea that the performance should be 20 minutes long. My previous experiences with the dance group suggested this, and I did not reflect more on it in my processes in collecting and exploring my material, my so-called preparation stage. Then in the action stage when I had gathered my material and were to put it together in a performance, I felt that I could easily create a whole product if it lasted around 16 minutes when I performed it alone, this was excluding the participation part at the end, so it was the part of the performance I had all the control over. This length had all the different elements of a calm beginning, a more energetic middle part and back to a calm ending.

The performance was well balanced between the music and the pictures, and I felt I kept my artistic integrity by keeping it at 16 minutes and not adding more because of some idea that it should last longer. I also have to add that these 16 minutes were in the practice room with only me, my recording device or a few adult audiences listening. As previously explained I used improvisation in between some of the
songs, or as an integral part in the songs. When performing in a safer setting, where I felt sure that the audience were listening to the end, I would finish my improvisation when it felt right. However, in the actual performances where the children were sometimes walking around, and taking attention from my own music making I ended up doing the improvisation shorter than I intended. After watching the videos from the performances and looking back in my reflection journal I don’t think the performances were suffering from this though. Keeping an open form in the improvisation to take signals from the audience felt more like the absolute right thing to do for these small children.

The video analysis reveals that the part of the performance where I was performing lasted around 13 minutes, and then the time for the children to play and look and use my space was longer, and an even bigger part of the performance. Hernes et al. (2010) state that somehow the convention for children’s performances is that the duration should be between 20 and 30 minutes. It would still be interesting to experiment more in regard to different duration.

I feel I have developed as an artist in testing out my limits for improvisation in regards to different audiences. I really would like to experiment more with time when it comes to small children as audience in the future, but also not be afraid to test out shorter concerts for an adult audience. There can be quality also in short, but well thought through performances.

5.5. Digital versus analog

In my education and life as a classical singer, the use of technology in the music making has been non-present. To sing with an unenhanced voice, to learn repertoire written before music technology was invented, are mostly what I have been learning and performing. Therefore in my application to the NAIP master programme, I wrote that I would like to learn more about music technology and digital media to use with my music making, and to learn to use my voice with microphones, and other equipment.

My audience of children were also in my mind in these thought processes, seeing that children will grow up in a more and more digital world. Children of today are called Digital Natives, in the book Born Digital (Palfrey & Gasser 2008). They refer to how children and youth of today have grown up with digital media as an included part of their childhood, school life and social life.

I therefore wanted my project to fit this reality, and also learn a new skill when I was doing my PIP. In the first year however I did not focus on this skill, I used my free credits of choice on exploring my voice in terms of folk singing and rhythmic singing. In the fall of 2014 I moved to Iceland, and I had to some extent let go of my wish to use technology.

But in November I planned to do a mini-performance. I then downloaded a loop music programme to my iPad called Loopy. It was a programme that allowed the user to loop sounds, making it possible to use these sounds, musical figures to create something else, or improvise on top. This programme was very easy to use, and I thought I could use this instead of some of the instruments that I did not have present in Iceland. Before the performance I recorded some sounds, and in the actual performance I wanted to use it for improvisation, recording my voice and improvise with it, creating layers of music.
In the performances however I realized this did not work very well. First of all was that I did not feel skilled enough. The sound intended did not turn out like I wanted to. In the whole process of working with my own project and creating my own performance with music of my choice, this was the first time I did not feel skilled enough. The second issue I had concerning this technological application was how all-consuming it was for the children after the performance was over. I invited them closer, to check out the application, and maybe they could try out looping something themselves. As previously written I did not have any instruments that they could try out, I did not have the pictures ready either. So for me to also test out the participatory/interaction aspect of the performance, I invited them to look at the iPad. In this performance all of the children were two years old, it was about 12 of them, and all of them knew what an iPad or tablet was. I tried to show them the application, not all the other features that exist on a tablet. But they clearly knew you could find movies and games and other fun stuff on this device and were crawling over me to get to these features. My idea with the instruments were that they could be sat out for the children, and they could test them however they wanted to, that their exploration of these instruments were to be experienced as something new to me as well.

With the iPad this idea just became too overwhelming. It also made me reflect on my approach to the digital media, and what kind of musician I want to be in regard to it. I decided that for know, I am happy with being a non-digital musician. And showing off real instruments and my real voice became more important than adapting my musicianship to a digital world.

In the performance this also spread to the showing of the pictures. They were originally intended to be shown on a screen, but when I discussed my reflections from the mini-PIP with photographer Ingvild Festervoll Melien, she suggested we could also print the pictures. This idea intrigued me a lot, and so we ended up doing it like that. This worked very well, and it also made the whole performance more flexible in terms of space. As long as we had all our items, we could be anywhere and did not have to be dependent on power outlets, or special seating for the children to be able to see the pictures.

### 5.6. Interaction and participation from the audience

As I previously wrote in the action stage chapter, Hernes et al. (2010) have stated clearly that in a production for children, the audience should be invited in for some kind of participation. I included participation by inviting the children in at the end of the performance, where they could openly play with the instruments, and take a closer look at the pictures. However, I have also read more on this subject and not everyone agrees that participation is necessary. Such views are presented by Roed (2014) and Nagel and Hovik (2014), which I discuss in chapter 6.

Reflecting back on my own performance product, I included some sort of participation after my performance was ready. Coming from a background of music, where there always is a line between the audience and the performer, I found it difficult to include participation. Even in my exploration with improvisation, newer forms of music and testing of new spaces, there was never an expectation that the audience should be involved and participate in the music performance. I even have done music performances where I have been standing in
the middle of the audience. But my job was the same no matter what. The audience actions did not change my actions.

Coming from this background, I chose to make a whole performance where I was in charge, I did not divert from my planned scheme of songs based on the children’s reactions. The only thing I did change were the length of my improvisations, these were based on how I felt the children were in terms of patience, if I felt they were inattentive I shortened them, if they paid attention I would make them longer. My idea was that they were to silently absorb and contemplate on my music performance. After I was done however, I opened up the room completely to the audience. I invited them in to play with the instruments and look at the pictures how they liked, but I did not engage with them a lot. I sometimes showed them the instruments, and would sing or play something if they asked me to, but it was more an opening of the space after my own performance, than a real interaction.

In the video documentation however, I see that this is a very good ending to the performance, and creates a good framing for the small children. I open the whole performance with welcoming them to the performance, and then I tell them I will perform first, and they can come and play after I am done. I feel that it creates a link between us, and an agreement that we all can play together and in the same space. I like the idea that I am not any different just because I can sing and have prepared this performance. Seeing the audience participate gave me more inspiration for the other performances, this could be in terms of how I presented each instrument, and sometimes which sound I would use in the improvisation. One example is the sticks for the glockenspiel, the smallest children, around 1 year old, really liked these sticks, and they would just hold them as a prize, and not necessarily make any sounds with them. This inspired me to also use the silence and expectation of sound with just holding the sticks in other performances.

These ideas on interaction and participation in the arts, have made me more aware how little interaction there is in music performance for adults, and I really would like to explore this field more in the future of my artistry, both in performances for children, but also in performances for adults.

5.7. Artistic development through cross-artistic collaboration

The aim of my study was to create and structure a collaborative musical performance with photographer Melien. In this chapter I will present my reflections on this collaboration, and how I feel it has shaped the performance and helped my artistic development.

To conduct my music project in collaboration with a photographer has been highly rewarding. In an artistic sense it has made me more flexible, and more interested in photography as an art form. The shape and form in the pictures she has taken was very inspiring to work with in a musical way. The collaboration had a dialogical nature in terms of planning the artistic processes. An example is the process where we discussed the theme of the performance. After several conversations, both physical meetings and on Skype, we decided that we should go to Malawi to get more inspiration and influences. I had the idea of using folk songs, and present music from different cultures, but it was through this trip in Malawi that we
together agreed on the theme of *Night and Day*. I absolutely loved her pictures of the sunrise and the starry night sky, and this made my inspiration flow.

In the meetings after this trip, I presented some of my song ideas to her, and she would be inspired by that and find pictures that fit the songs according to her imagination. Melien has also been a valuable reflection partner in the processes before, on how to systematize the performance and listening to my ideas of choosing repertoire for the children. She has contributed both with her artistic self and her reflective ideas to make the performance what it is.

Working with Melien has been very successful, but I do see my choice of collaborator as an enlightened choice. She was a person I knew; I had an idea of her artistic abilities, her way of working and her personae. In the future when working with other collaborators I will also have a list of requirements that are important to me, if they are to work with me, and I can only hope that it will work as well as it did in this project.

5.8. About artistic quality and the necessity of a professional musician’s skills

Discussing the term quality is difficult, but going through many stages in my own artistry with this project it has been a significant reflection. There can be said to be two central areas for debate on quality: Quality as absolute or relative, or quality as subjective or objective (Hylland, Kleppe & Stavrum, 2011). For me art quality is relative, in the sense that it can be good in some circumstances and bad in others, and subjective, I can easily understand if some people like that art, where as I don’t, or vice versa. In regards to politics and dealing with money and resources, there is often an idea that it needs to be objective, or work in a certain connection. Often are art products for children valued in this aspect (Hylland et al., 2011).

I have developed as an artist through this project, but I also feel that my artistic value and integrity is kept, and that the quality of what I perform is up to standards. I admit that this was a fear I had before this project, that by changing my musical identity I would no longer be a high level musician.

But by venturing out in to a field that involves both a new audience and new content for me, it has been important that I still have kept my artistic quality. I have tested out new things, and then thrown it out because I did not feel skilled enough, as was the case with the iPad and use of technology. Exploring and developing my voice has been an important method in the preparational stages, and with that, learning new ways of using my voice. In the performances however, I did in many ways go back to my known way of singing, because I felt this gave me more integrity in the performances and safety in regards to the audience. So even if I sing folk songs, I am not calling myself a folk singer or sing the songs the way I learned them. I am staying true to my known skills, but using influence from other fields of the arts and culture and creating a new quality product.

Even though there are some reference points to what can be of importance in working with children, the most important is to be honest towards your own expression and audience (Hernes et al., 2010). This has been very true for me; I definitely do feel that I need skills in meeting with the children. Their honesty is in many ways, a clearer criticism than what adults give with their silent politeness. Working with making a performance for children has made me aware of my skills, and I also have developed them. It has also made me more aware of my reflection
on quality, and I think this should be the case with any music performance or music project regardless of choice of audience.

6. Conclusive discussion

How to conclude a work that I have been working on for nearly two years? I think I can conclude that I have been able to create and structure a collaborative music performance, and I also believe it was a success in terms of me being able to create and structure a performance where the audience were three years and younger. From the video analysis and my own reflective journal, I conclude that the children are paying attention and experiencing my performance the way I intended, being themselves and listening with their whole beings was essential for me when developing this project. This view is in line with Hernes et al. (p. 27):

Children are already from birth curious individuals that come to the world with a substantial competence. This competence is used actively to get to know the world, and with getting to know the world, they expand and strengthen their competence.

My other goal, to develop as an artist, I also conclude with being a success seeing that I now have more skills that I can employ in the shifting socio-political climate of today. I have conducted a performance for a new audience and used innovative practices in the process. These elements I feel are helping me to be the artist I want to in society today, which increasingly demands such knowledge and skills of working musicians. These aspects go back to reflecting on the quality and skills of the musician, that are in line with Hylland, Kleppe & Stavrum, (2011) (see section 5.8.).

Using my own personal background as inspiration and partly also provocation led me in to a path of creating an artistic performance that has developed, influenced and made me more confident with on my own artistry and to perform for a new audience. By using simple elements of just voice and small instruments I made a complex performance. Subsequently, I have let my collaboration fuel more innovation in terms of ideas, letting a field trip make the material basis of the musical performance.

Through literature I have been able to reflect on qualities regarding my own creative, collaborative project. They have been in line with my newly found knowledge on how to create and structure a performance for children between 0-3 years, which was my original research question. One of such aspects that I found out (see section 5.2) was the role of adults. My findings are in line with Hernes et al. (2010, p. 96) as they state:

Since art performances for the smallest children is such a new field for many, and unknown for the adults that accompany the children, they might be unsure of which conventions that are applicable in this situation.

Therefore it is important to take into account the artist’s distribution of communication between the children and the adults as well as the practical settings, that can be steered and led by the artist.

My understanding after conducting this project is that especially the theme of quality in music performance for children, and ways to create performance with inclusion of participation from the audience are aspect that now will be an
integrated part of my future work. However not everyone agrees to this view. In his article *Myten om det interaktive* (The myth of interactivity) Røed (2014) ironically writes that there seems to be no limits for how many possibilities the art can offer in terms of play and participation.

Again, I have to think about the many invitations to play different art institutions offer our children. Do they really play as a part of the art? Are they not rather a part of an art ideology that makes a theatre our life, where we are expected to play the role of obedient citizens? (Røed, 2014, p. 7)

He states that the act of participation is in reality just an *ability to follow a recipe*. In the article *Interaktiv scenkunst for barn – tyranni eller magi?* (Interactive Performance art for children – tyranny or magic?), Nagel and Hovik (2014) also point to problems with this overwhelming enthusiasm to include participation in art for children. However, they feel that the problem occurs when the interactions seems to be superficial or not thoroughly thought through. The children’s form of interaction with performance arts, can stretch from quiet absorbed contemplation in one end of the scale to full bodily participation in the other end (Nagel & Hovik, 2014).

From my conducting of these performances I see that both the children and me gain more experience when they are allowed in to the stage space, and the quality does not suffer, rather, the performance gives more impact to all the people involved, both me, the audience of children as well as the adults in the kindergarten.

Making this performance for children has been important because I believe that children also should have the opportunity to experience arts, and especially live music. As adults, children also enjoy listening to and watch a performance as an experience, instead of always being treated as beings that are trained for adult life. My findings point to that small children can enjoy a musical performance and engage equally as much as, if not more than, adults or any other audience does.

7. Future development of the Professional Integration Project

In many ways a project, like the one I have done, creates new ideas and a will to jump right in to a new project, but by having to reflect and analyse my whole process in this paper I find invaluable experiences come from that. When the thought processes goes around and around on different findings, it has for me created a deeper understanding of my own artistry.

Here in the final chapter I will, however, point to some ideas that I have found that can possibly be future projects.

My artistic collaboration with photographer Melien proved to be a very functioning and inspiring one, and I like the idea of continuing my work with her in future projects. At the same time, I would like to test out my musical ideas and interests with another artist from a different field, maybe an actor who knows more about the creation of space on a stage, and maybe someone who knows more about inclusion of the audience in terms of participation and interaction. I want to make performances that have participation aspects, not only for children, but also do this
with adult audiences. The participation is a wide field that I feel I have just tried a little bit. Future possible participation ideas can be to involve the audience or group of people and make them participate in the whole creative process as well. There are many possibilities, but I have a will and a wish to try this more.

In between children and adults, there is of course also a gap of youth, whom also is a new alternative audience for me. The material I have gathered, it is possible to use again in other settings but requires adaptation for the context and the focus group. I may introduce the same performance to a school, or an elderly home, where the material may have a different significance and response.

I see that my journey with my Professional Integration Project has ended, but it has prepared me for encountering new material, artists and audiences in future projects.
8. References

Literature


Internet


9. Appendices

9.1. Pictures used in the Professional Integration Project performances

1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6)
9.2. Example of the reflective practices from my reflective journal
9.3. Timeline of the development of the Professional Integration Project

Timeline: process description in time.

• January 2013: Applied for NAIP programme Stockholm with my PIP project.
• April 2013: Was accepted to NAIP in Stockholm with my PIP.
• September 2013: Choose electives for my PIP. In my studies in Stockholm I decided to spend it on getting a broader voice, and learning more about folk singing.
• October 2013: Decided that my PIP would be about folk music from Norway, Sweden and Malawi, and the cultural meetings between them. Started working with the photographer Ingvild Festervoll Melien.
• January 2014: We decided to do a field study trip to Malawi for my PIP. Applied for funding for this trip. Received 5000, - out of a budget that was 35000, -.
• February 2014: Arranged our trip to Malawi till April 23 until May 6.
• April 23 to May 6 2014: Our field study trip to Malawi. I learned some songs that are used in the performance, and received a songbook for even more inspiration. Spoke to teachers at the organization. Ingvild Festervoll Melien took several photos that were used in the performance, and we were stationed both in the capitol of Lilongwe as well as in the rural areas of Nkhotakota.
• November 5 2014: Granted a scholarship of 10000 NOK from Fjell kommune, to do the performances in some of their kindergartens.
• November 26 2014: Mini-PIP, performing the music for the performance in a nursery in Reykjavík
• January 2015: The photographer and me worked together on the material we gathered in Malawi and in Norway, and put together the performance.
• February 2015: Planned the tour, transport and so on. Arranged the different kindergartens.
• 17 to 19 March 2015: 5 performances in 3 kindergartens in Fjell kommune, Norway.