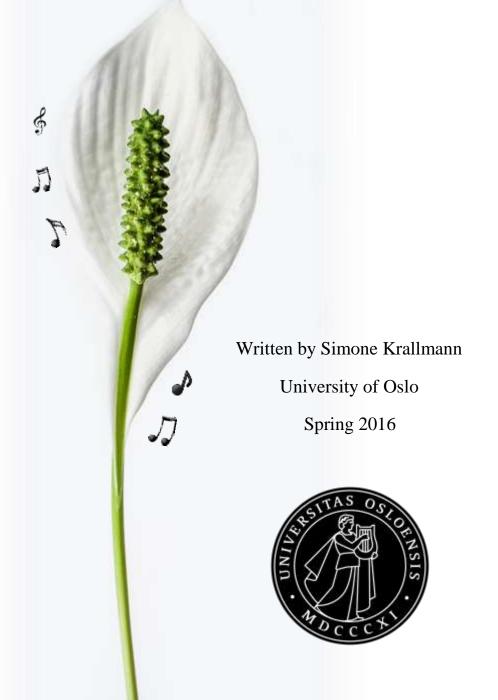**"Without music, life would be a mistake." - *Friedrich Nietzsche.***

How do music and singing affect singers' lives?

Reflections based on qualitative interviews with singers and choral conductors

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"Without music, life would be a mistake." - *Friedrich Nietzsche.* How do music and singing affect singers' lives? *Reflections based on qualitative interviews with singers and choral conductors.*

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Abstract

How do we view music and what value do we attribute to musicking activities? Based on the understanding of music as an *activity* as opposed to an object, I will seek to answer the following primary research questions: *Can music and singing positively influence people's lives and increase their quality of life and sense of well-being? If so, how?*

This work includes a combination of my own research data gathered from qualitative interviews with singers and choral conductors, combined with existing theory and research. The thesis is comprised of five main sections: Chapter one – Introduction, includes a presentation of methodology and key terminology. Chapter two explores musicking's effect upon the individual, including its role in shaping identity, music as a form of expression, as well as its relationship with emotion and motivation. Chapter three looks at musicking in an interpersonal setting, including its impact on our sense of belonging and meaningfulness, as well as exploring potential benefits of choral singing. Chapter four includes a discussion of findings, and of the notion of elitism and the availability of musicking for wider society. Chapter five presents reflections regarding my own research experience, possibilities for future research and closing thoughts on the power of musicking.

Findings: Musicking and singing can contribute towards quality of life and well-being in many ways, some of which are mentioned here: Individually, it shapes our identity and sense of self, allows us to experience mastery and build up our resources, as well as expanding our emotional experience. In an interpersonal setting musicking contributes to our sense of belonging and meaningfulness, as well as allowing us to experience Flow. In a choral setting musicking can also contribute to the transformation of lives.

Theories presented in this thesis include: Fredrickson's 'Broaden and Build' theory, Grandjean, Sherer and Zentner's theory of 'GEMs,' Juslin and Västfjälls mechanisms for the induction of emotion through music, and Antonovsky's theories of Salutogenesis and Sense of Coherence.

Some concepts included in this thesis are: *Musicking, Singing, Quality of life, Well-being, Flourishing, Music and Emotion, Peak Experiences, Identity, Internal and External motivation, Elitism, Virtuosity, and Transforming power of Music.*

Foreword

I wish to thank Hallgjerd Aksnes, my tutor at the University of Oslo, for her hard work, input, helpful feedback and encouragement along the way.

Thank you to my family for their interest, support and inspiration during the writing process, and a special thank you to my parents for their help with proofreading.

The topic I have chosen to write about, exploring singing and musicking and their impact on quality of life, well-being and health, is a many-faceted and exciting one. I hope this thesis will be interesting for people who read it and that it can contribute valuable insight and thoughts with regard to the debate surrounding the status and value of music.

Simone Krallmann, Oslo.

Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction

But none has succeeded in giving a satisfactory answer to the question – or rather, pair of questions- *What is the meaning of music?* And *What is the function of music in human life?* (Small, 1998, p. 2).

Our answers to these questions express something about the way in which we view music and the value we attribute to it, both individually and as a society. Our view is in turn influenced by our understanding of music itself. Christopher Small, educator and philosopher, suggests that the questions posed above are – in fact - the wrong questions to ask when routed in a perception of music as an object as opposed to an activity, whereby music becomes "an abstraction of the action" (Small, 1998, p 2). Small defines music as an *activity*, not an object - a perspective I also adopt throughout. Based on this foundation we can, for the purposes of this thesis, reinterpret the latter question with "function" in addition being understood as "effect" or "value." Thus a re-formulation of Small's second question, which I will attempt to address in this thesis, may read as follows: *What effect or value does active musicking have on/for the lives of those who engage in it?*

The *status* of musical activity today is debated, and there is a dichotomy of opinion surrounding the value of music in different areas of society. On the one hand music has been recognized as a healing force, being used to promote health through music therapy, for instance. The popularity of musical activities such as singing in a choir or going to concerts also indicates a societal interest in music. However on the other hand, music as an *academic* subject and also as a profession, seems to be losing ground on various fronts. Music education in schools is being reduced in favour of "more academic" subjects and workplaces for musicians are also being cut.

Why is this happening? Perhaps the following quote from an interview with the committee leader of the German Musical Trust (Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben - DSM) in the Magazine GEO, can give us an indication. When asked what the main preventative of music education was, she answered: "The politicians who make decisions regarding the curriculum today often haven't learnt to actively make music. So to them music is dispensable – despite their lovely Sunday speeches"* (Broschart, 2003, p. 86). An important point is made here, namely that our valuation of music is dependent upon our *personal* experience with music-making. It is these kinds of personal experiences I will look more closely into as part of this thesis.

The aim of this research

I hope to provide more insight into the ways in which active musicking can positively affect people's lives and what this can mean for quality of life and well-being. When we look at today's society, we see that on the one hand people continue to seek happiness, a sense of well-being and fulfilment. On the other hand, aside from physical illness, feelings of loneliness, lack of hope and lack of meaning in life seem to have increased (Fugelli, 1998, cited in Ruud, 2006, p. 24). According to an article on choral singing written by the researchers Bailey and Davidson, it may also be necessary to find out more about the effects of different *types* of activities: "At a time when more and more of our leisure hours are filled with sedentary and isolating pastimes, it may be important to determine the differences in the psychological and physiological effects of active and passive activities" (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 298).

My primary aim is to shed light on the value of music by exploring the ways in which musicking affects the lives of those who participate in it, and how this activity may contribute to greater quality of life (QoL) and an improved sense of well-being. The main research questions of this thesis are: *Can music and singing positively influence people's lives and increase their quality of life and sense of well-being? If so, how?*

As a singer I am interested not only in exploring the way in which musicking in general affects people's lives, but also want to find out more about what singing itself means for those who participate in it, either professionally or in an amateur setting such as a choir. My thesis comprises a combination of data gathered from my own interviews with singers and choral conductors, and the presentation of a selection of theories and research relevant to the subject matter. Essentially my work can be placed within the research field of *music and health*. Furthermore, I will not only look at the effect of musicking upon the individual, but also at musicking's effect in an interpersonal, collective setting.

As we can see, this is an exciting and highly relevant topic today, and I hope that my thesis can impart valuable thoughts also with regards to the debate surrounding the legitimacy and importance of active musicking opportunities in wider society.

Defining the core topics

Before I look more closely at the main focus of my research, I wish to briefly mention some topics which I have decided *not* to explore, as research into music and health covers a wider range of scientific exploration than I can go into here. Research topics include music's effect on hormonal and neurological functions, on behaviour and intelligence, and how music is used

for therapeutic purposes in order to combat illness in various forms. Such illnesses range from mental illness such as depression or bipolarity (Clift and Morrison, 2012, pp. 4, 15-16), to physical illnesses including heart attacks. Furthermore, research has been done into the effect of music upon different age groups, including children and the elderly. For the purposes of this thesis I will not specifically investigate these groups of society, but look more widely at the effects of music upon the general population as a whole. While it would be impossible for me to explore and do justice to all of these areas of research, I will nevertheless refer to some of the therapeutic effects of musicking later on. I have chosen to focus mainly on music and health related to psychological, social and cognitive processes which occur through musicking and singing. Although I have chosen to focus on these aspects of musicking's influence, research from other disciplines will also be presented, as the connection between music and health can best be explained using by an interdisciplinary approach.

Originally, I included a section on music education and the importance of how it is carried out. Due to the direction my thesis has taken, this was ultimately not included in its entirety, however I have adressed this topic in the section on possible future research. All the research ideas discussed there are grounded in the positive view of musicking and singing, presented here with theories and research evidence.

1.1 Contextualising the research

Music and health

The idea that music can affect our health or our state of being is not a modern one. Early philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle spoke of the way in which music affects people's behaviour and well-being and that it awakens feelings in them (Schneider, 2010, p. 77). However *research* into this relationship between music and health has increased over the last years. Investigation has also been done into the effect of singing on people's well-being, and there appears to be a growing interest in this field. The research can be grouped into two main categories: qualitative research in the form of questionnaires and interviews, and quantitative research seeking to test various hypotheses. The latter has for example tested physiological changes in relation to music. (Balsnes, 2010, pp. 3, 5). Qualitative research has for example been carried out to test the effects of choral singing on choir members, including those with mental health issues (Clift and Morrison, 2012) – an aspect which will be picked up later.

People's health today

As mentioned above, in western society today we are confronted with new, or rather other forms of illness than previously (Ruud, 2006, p. 24). Health is no longer merely defined as the absence of physical illness, one now highlights the fact that - apart from biological factors - social and psychological conditions must also be taken into account. Consequently, we now speak of a 'bio-psycho-social'* model of illness. According to Ruud some artists dislike the idea of connecting art to well-being and therapy, as this can lead to it becoming more of an instrument, a means to an end. He, however, points out that one should rather focus on the fact that institutionalisation leaves the task of creating art to the specialists, and threatens the everyday activity of creating art (Ruud, 2001, p. 27, 29). If the arts are left to specialists and privileged individuals, how will 'normal' people be able to enjoy the benefits of creating art, or of participating in musicking, regardless of whether it is used for health purposes?

1.2 The Structure of the thesis

The main part of the thesis will be a combination of two principal elements. For one, as I have carried out my own research in order to gather more knowledge about singers' and conductors' personal experiences with singing and musicking, my thesis will contain a sample of the data I have gathered. This will appear in the form of quotations from the interviews and insight into the experiences the participants shared. Quotations will also be used to introduce different key themes that have emerged whilst working with this topic, contributing to the framework for the thesis. Secondly, through a process of deduction I will use existing research, theories and hypotheses to support and explain my own findings, which in turn may be seen to support existing theories.

According to C. Wright Mills, theory and data are interdependent and essential in order for research not to be "blind"* or "empty"* (Hylland-Eriksen 2010, p. 35). Both will be represented here, and this combination and synthesis of new data and existing theory will hopefully give the reader an enlightening and stimulating glimpse into the way in which music and singing can enrich individuals' lives, contribute to their increased psychological, social and cognitive well-being, and allow them to enjoy greater quality of life. The different topics addressed in the main part of my thesis will be divided into two main sections: musicking's effect on the individual and its effects in a more interpersonal, collective setting. Towards the end of the thesis I will discuss future research opportunities and reflect on the possible bearing

of the presented findings on wider society, as well as attempt to address some of the issues raised in this first part of my thesis.

It is challenging to take complex constructs such as quality of life, human nature and emotions which encompass so many perspectives, and to make them adhere to a more linear structure, such as that of a written work. Here follows a short description of the thematic progression in the two main chapters of this thesis, and an overview of how they are structured. I begin chapter two by looking at how musicking and singing shapes an integral part of who we are: our identity. The next sections explore how we relate who we are to the performance setting, the importance of being authentic, and the way in which music provides a mode of communication and expression.

The next section presents a deep exploration of the field of emotion, which constitutes an essential part of our lives, not least in relation to musicking. Joy, as well as more intense peak and transpersonal experiences play a key role in our continued engagement with such activities, and as we will see musical experiences have the potential to shape our lives, at times also resulting in long-term consequences. I begin by providing some definitions, and by looking at emotion more generally. I then explore theories of emotion based on the individual, and continue by examining emotions in relation to music. Rather than dedicating a separate section to such a theoritical immersion, this is included here, also providing a foundation for better understanding music-related emotions. Corresponding with the structure of other sections in this thesis, theory and research are also here presented side by side and in part interwoven – allowing for a closer relationship between theory and empirical data. The next section following on from this focuses on more intense and potentially life-changing emotional experiences music can provide, including feelings of 'high' and encounters of a religious nature.

The three sections following this provide insight in the ways in which musickers are motivated – also a key aspect of continued engagement with music, the importance of mastering singing and life more generally, and how this can lead to feelings of control and a sense of continuity.

Chapter three which focuses on musickings effect in an interpersonal and collective setting, explores the role of others in our musical development, on musickings effect on our sense of meaningfulness and belonging, and experiencing flow in collective settings. The final, and largest section in this chapter looks more specifically at the choral setting and how musicking together can result in significant changes, both large and small, even resulting in the transformation of lives. Topics adressed include musickings effect on self-belief, on mental and

psychological well-being, and musicking as an aid for re-integration into society. Anthropological and sociological theories of music and emotion are encorporated into this section, as they focus more on the interpersonal and contextual aspects of emotion.

Finally, I wish to note that many quotes from relevant literature and all of my interviews were not originally in English, and that I have translated them myself. Quotes from literature I have translated are marked with an asterisk "*", whereas the unmarked literary quotes were originally in English.

A positive field of focus

It is important to stipulate at the outset that I will focus mainly on the *positive* effects of musicking, and as I wish to show the importance, value and potential that lie within such activities, this is a natural route to pursue. This approach will affect the choices I make both in terms of the quotations I choose to use and the research and theory I present in conjunction with my findings. I am aware that not everyone associates singing and musicking purely with positive emotions and experiences. Unfortunately there have been casualties, and some people have had bad experiences, as also addressed by Åsne Berre Persen in her master thesis in 2005. Furthermore, music education in schools has sadly not always lived up to its potential either (c.f. Small, 1996). It is important to remember, however, that this not only applies to music but to other activities as well. I believe that musicking and singing (and other cultural activities) have the power to affect people's lives for the *better,* by contributing, for instance, to a sense of achievement, self-worth, meaning in life and belonging, and this has been confirmed through my own interviews. Self-worth and other such elements are important factors contributing to people's well-being and quality of life, and the thought that musicking can play a part in achieving this, is exciting! *This* is what I first and foremost wish to focus on and present in my thesis.

Important terminology

Before looking more closely into this stimulating field of research, I wish to present some key definitions which will appear consistently throughout my thesis, and which are important for the reader to understand.

Christopher Small has coined the term "musicking" and gives the following helpful definition**:**

> To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing (Small, 1998, p. 9).

Furthermore, as Small emphasized, the act of musicking not only applies to professionals but also to amateurs. Thus when I refer to musicking throughout, this is the definition I wish the readers to bear in mind. Musicking can furthermore be used within therapy as a means to promote health through "informal musical learning" (Batt-Rawden and DeNora, 2005, p. 289).

In order to understand more about the correlation between musicking and health - more specifically quality of life - we must also define what is meant by these terms. According to the World Health Organisation's 1946 definition, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Clift, Hancox, Morrison, Hess, Kreutz, and Stewart, 2010, p. 22). According to Medin and Alexanderson (2000) health can also be described as "a *condition*, an *experience*, a *resource* and as a *process"** (Ruud, 2006, p. 19) and Ruud goes on to say, that "health as an *experience* means that health is the same as experiencing well-being or experiencing meaning in life"* (Ruud, 2006, pp. 19-20).

'Quality of life' can be defined as "a person's perception of his/her position in life within the context of a culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns" - WHOQOL (World Health Organization's Quality of Life group, 2004, cited in Clift *et al.*, 2010, p. 22). Another definition of 'quality of life' has been suggested by the pychologist Siri Næss who points out four main constituent components:

1) Activity, which contains the dimensions of engagement, energy, self-realisation and freedom.
2) Good interpersonal relations which are realised through friendship and intimate relations.
3) Self-confidence which has to do with self-esteem and self-acceptance
4) A basic sense of happiness which is maintained through emotional experiences, safety and joy" (Nordenfeldt, 1991b, cited in Ruud, 1997, p. 90).

From this we can see that the terms 'health' and 'quality of life' embrace many aspects of our lives. Health is more than biology, it also involves social and psychological factors. The definitions of 'quality of life' can be seen as an augmentation of the concept of health, focusing on the specific parts that make up good social and mental health, both on a personal and social level. The original definition of 'health' from 1946 has been criticized in the past for being unattainable, utopian, and unrealistic (Fugelli, 1998, cited in Ruud, 2006, p. 18), and this is a legitimate criticism. However, even though this definition as a whole can appear unattainable, there are many "small" factors contributing towards our health and well-being, giving us many opportunities to enrich our own and other people's lives in some small way. Let us not be intimidated by the bigger picture but remember that the big picture is made up of many small details.

To *enrich* is an important word to note and leads me to the next relevant term, namely that of "well-being." According to Vernon (2008) the term 'well-being' has its origin in the Greek concept of Eudaimonia, having originated from Aristotle, and given the meaning of "an activity of the soul in accordance with excellence" or "higher flourishing" (Vernon, 2008, p. 43 cited in Ansdell and DeNora, 2012, p. 110). Ansdell and DeNora refer to Michael Wilson (1975) who states that our understanding of well-being is influenced by our perspective on what health is for. Well-being, according to Ansdell and DeNora, involves us thriving, flourishing where we are, together with others in the culture of which we are a part. Enrichment becomes an active way of creating this sense of well-being, of thriving.

A further concept I wish to highlight in this section is one introduced by the American sociologist Aaron Antonovsky who has concerned himself with looking at health holistically. He notes, "*all* human dis-tress [sic] is always that of an integrated organism, always has a psychic (and a social, I might add) and a somatic aspect." (Antonovsky, 1996, p. 11). He introduced a new concept called salutogenesis into the field of healthcare, an approach to medical research and practice which seeks to *promote health* rather than merely treat causes of illness or prevent future illness. (Antonovsky, 1996, pp. 12-14). Further, salutogenesis also provides a counterweight to the pathological understanding of health by focusing on everyone, not just the ill, and on the whole person, not just the root of an illness (Antonovsky, 1996, p. 14). Based on Antonovsky's theories, Ruud writes that quality of life includes feeling like you have control, the power to take your life into your own hands and do something about it (Ruud, 2001, cited in Ruud, 2006, p. 25).

This idea of promoting health and consequently also quality of life and even well-being, not just in those who are ill but also in those who are healthy, is a perspective I share in my thesis. As Bjerke Batt-Rawden writes, "it is important to focus on salutogenesis; in other words factors that make us healthy and resilient and which promote a surplus of energy [overskudd], enjoyment, joy in life and mastery in everyday life"* (Bjerke Batt-Rawden, 2006, p. 221). "Surplus" infers that there is no lack to begin with, instead one has more than one needs. This again relates to the concept of well-being; not primarily focusing on meeting someone's existing health needs or deficits, but enriching someone's life and helping them to flourish.

1.3 Presentation of Methodology

In this section I will give some insight into my methodology, qualitative research interviews, and how I have gathered and analysed my data.

Research method

The psychologists Kvale and Brinkmann write that "the purpose of the qualitative research interview discussed here is to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspective" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 24). The aim is to gain insight into the personal experiences of the research participants, to see life through their eyes.

The qualitative research interview method encorporates both structure and spontaneity. An interview guide provides the framework and is composed of questions put to the participants during the interview, or topics one intends to address. The participants received such a guide prior to our meeting, and the reader can find a copy of the Interview Guides in the appendix. The questions included topics such as memories of music in childhood, who or what inspired the interview participants to start singing and how music or singing affects their lives. Time to think about these questions beforehand allows participants to feel more prepared and relaxed, as they know what awaits them during the interview. At the same time there is a spontaneous element to this method which allows me to pursue certain topics in more depth, to ask questions which the participants have not prepared for beforehand, and there is also room for them to share experiences and thoughts as they come to mind.

The "semi-structured" nature of the interview according to Kvale and Brinkmann "is neither an open everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p. 27). They describe a "postmodern movement from knowledge as corresponding to an objective reality to knowledge as a social construction of reality;" that is we no longer merely observe but interact and converse with the world (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009[1], pp. 282-283). The concept of knowledge now encompasses subjective experiences as well as quantitative, objective facts, thus adding validity to the growing base of qualitative research. According to Kvale (2008), conversations and stories "are today regarded as being central to gathering knowledge of the social world, scientific knowledge included"* (Kvale, 2008, p. 24).

Sociologist Tia DeNora highlights a further strength of interviewing as a research method in the context of studying *music and emotion*, a topic I will look at in sections 2.4 and 2.5. She states that interviews "provide a more naturalistic form of data than do surveys or experiments, permitting better glimpses into the processes by which articulations/connections between music and action (and emotional experience) take shape" (DeNora, 2010, p. 172).

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[1] APA style doesn't utilize ibid. thus the names are written out throughout the thesis.

Consent and Anonymity

Prior to the interviews I sent out a brief to the participants describing my thesis and asking if they were interested in being interviewed. The participants will remain anonymous, and participants were informed of this beforehand. For ease of reference they have been given pseudonyms which correspond to their gender. Regardless of obtained written consent from most of participants, they all still had the right to withdraw from my study at any time. I also applied to NSD (Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelige Datatjeneste AS, i.e. the Norwegian Social Science Data Service) to obtain permission for my research, and will dispose of my data once my master thesis is handed in and graded, as required by NSD regulations.

Processing and Analysis of the interview material

The interview material has been processed through transcription from recordings made during the interviews. The latter have been edited to some degree, for example through the removal of unnecessary words, sounds and many of my responses as a listener. I have also edited some sentences with regard to structure and style, in order to allow for better flow or expression; however, I have been careful not to alter the meaning of the sentences. The form of analysis I have used can be classified as "Dialogue" during which, as described by Kvale and Brinkmann, "the information is conveyed through the interview interaction, but formalized and stylistically edited" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 284-285).

As previously mentioned, I have personally translated the interview quotes. The coding methods I have utilised to analyse interview material have included reading through and highlighting and/or commenting on various topics addressed. Furthermore I have selected quotes from the different interviews and sorted them according to subject matter, also focusing on central themes addressed or discussed in several interviews. Such topics have included music and emotion, social aspects, and music and motivation. In this way I have also been able to apply a validation method called "Communicative Validity,"[2]* in which the similar experiences of several people can be used to confirm ideas or theories. There are several common experiences to be found between the participants, although they do not share the same perspective on everything, and this is also worth looking into more closely. Individual differences are to be expected even within a small pool of participants. Aside from the topics

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[2] Ruud, E. (22.9.2014) Lecture on music and identity given as part of the subject *MUS4311: Musikk og kulturstudier* at the Institutt for Musikkvitenskap, Universitetet i Oslo, Norge.

that overlap, I will also look at some themes not discussed in *all* the interviews, such as peak experiences with music, an aspect which I incorporated into the more recent interviews.

Conducting research is a reflexive process, where one gathers more experience over time, and perhaps even adapts and changes one's approach during the course of one's research. The interview guides in the appendix are the latest versions used (in English, even though the interviews were conducted in other languages). Further reflections on my research approach can be found in Part 5. Introducing several of the elements, experiences or effects of singing and musicking with a relevant quote from my interview data has provided a thought provoking way of systematising and coding the material, as well as effectively highlighting important issues discussed during the interviews.

Introducing the interview participants

An important ingredient of my study has been to interview singers and choral conductors with regard to the ways in which music and singing affects their lives and those of their choir members. I wish to briefly introduce the participants, giving a little insight into the background for the quotations and musical experiences presented later.

"Joy" is a young lady in the transition from amateur to professional singer. She already has a bachelor degree in vocal pedagogy and wishes to go on to do a master degree in singing. She also has some experience as a singing teacher.

"Anna" is a professional singer with many years of experience both on stage performing as a soloist and in ensembles, and as a singing teacher. She feels most at home within the classical genre but enjoys working together with musicians with other fortés.

"Sarah" now focuses mainly on teaching but has also worked as a professional singer. Her career highlight has been to be part of a professional vocal ensemble.

"Paul" is a musician who plays and sings as well as conducts many choirs. He has been a choral conductor for over 20 years.

"John" is a professional musician who also currently directs a choir for homeless people. He has seen first-hand how music can contribute to changing people's lives.

"Michael" enjoys singing as a hobby, sings in a choir on a regular basis and also performs at church services and concerts. He takes singing lessons and sings a lot when he's alone.

"William" is a professional singer and conductor with many years of experience in both fields and currently directs two choirs – one of them is project-based for amateur singers, while the other for more experienced singers meets all year round.

Chapter 2. Musicking's effect upon the individual

According to Balsnes (2010) the effects of singing can be divided into five main categories: social, psychological/emotional, cognitive and physical, as well as those effects related to meaning and coherence in life. She also notes that singing affects the *whole* of us, as these different dimensions are interlinked (Balsnes, 2010, pp. 6-7). These are helpful groupings; however, I prefer to categorize the experiences shared by my interview participants into *two,* rather than five, main groups: the effects of musicking/singing upon the *individual* and within the *interpersonal*, *collective* setting.

Increasing amounts of research have shown that musicking in its various forms has an effect on us as individuals. Amongst other things it influences our perception of ourselves, our feeling of self-worth and sense of identity. As mentioned in my introduction, music is also used as a form of therapy, in order to help people achieve greater quality of life. Music therapy can be described as follows:

> Music therapy is the use of music and/or its musical elements (sound, rhythm, melody and harmony) by a music therapist, and client or group, in a process designed to facilitate and promote communication, relationship, learning, mobilisation, expression, and organisation (physical, emotional, mental, social and cognitive) in order to develop or restore functions of the individual so that he or she can achieve better intra and/or interpersonal integration and, consequently, a better quality of life (Barcello, 1996, quoted in Ruud, 1997, p. 88).

Music therapy aims to achieve progress in many important areas of the clients' lives, and I suggest that musicking can be used to achieve similar goals in healthy people as well. This idea is corroborated, for example, in the work of music therapy specialist Even Ruud and within the Norwegian music therapy community which has shifted focus from music therapy to music and health. Achieving greater quality of life is not something that only concerns those working with 'patients' or clients; it is desirable to offer this to everyone, regardless of their life situation or health status – as Antonovsky's concept of salutogenesis suggests. Better communication, expression and integration are all desirable goals for a healthy society. Providing people with the opportunity to improve their current situation through musicking can also work as a preventative measure, for example by combatting loneliness or depression. As Antonovsky and Bjerke Batt-Rawden suggest, we have to focus on salutogenesis and take steps to make people more resilient. Furthermore, it's also about enjoying *everyday* life (Bjerke Batt-Rawden, 2006, p. 221); that means everyday life in sickness *and* in health. I will now look more closely at the effects of musicking and singing upon the individual.

2.1. The singer's identity

"I was kind of local child star. So I really saw myself as a singer."
(Anna)

Even before we are born we experience musical communication; already in our first year of life the foundation is laid for our awareness of 'self,' through sensing our physical bodies (Ruud 2013, p. 45). Then as we look to others for definition, their response further influences and forms who we are. Ruud goes on to write that both our class and our geographical and historical background are important factors in forming our identity. This is also shaped by our beliefs, the things we are involved in and live out. However, it is we who *choose* which of these elements we include in the story of ourselves, and who we create ourselves to be for the outside world. (Ruud, 2013, pp. 19, 43, 54).

Looking at these factors in terms of singing, Anna for example tells me that she began singing for others at a young age, that she enjoyed singing and that it was a natural form of expression for her. If the things we are involved in shape who we are, as Ruud implies, then Anna was already forming her identity when singing at a young age. Also for Michael, singing became a large part of his childhood when he sang in two boys' choirs, rehearsing four days a week and performing at weekends. He even sang throughout the period where his voice was changing: "…singing was my life. So I *never* stopped. I sang all the way through my voice breaking and just changed group."

Our identity and our involvement with music can even be said to be mutually dependent. When we are good at something and receive positive feedback from others, it makes us want to practice and achieve more, something Anna described from her own life: "once you start receiving positive feedback about what you're doing, you want to do more of it." This in turn leads to music becoming an even more significant part of ourselves. Professor of Psychology Raymond MacDonald writes that any "individual involved in musical activities (i.e. both listening and performing) develops aspects of personal identity that are inextricably linked to these musical behaviours" (MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell, 2009, p. 462). This relationship between music and identity *can* be positiv because it helps us to define ourselves and can give our lives direction.

However, one should be wary of *forcing* someone to pursue music because this can also be negative and lead to negative associations regarding both self and music. John adressed the

idea that every child *has* to play instrument, something he doesn't support, and made several valid points:

> I think one needs a lot of *patience* to learn an *instrument,* in that respect I think singing in a choir is *much* better! One can join in *straight away!* And with regards to the other stuff [playing an instrument], one has to really work on it, because otherwise it's *stupid* when I don't want to practice at home, and don't have this *discipline*, then it's awful…

As his statement infers, forcing someone who neither has the motivation nor the patience to learn an instrument can have a negative outcome. Singing is not something to be forced either, however if desired it can provide an easier route into musical activity and - at least at the outset - be less demanding than playing an instrument. Furthermore, there is a difference between musical activities being made available and compelling a child to pursue music. John is of the opinion that "ideally, everyone *should* have the opportunity to do something like that, yes."

The role of *parents and significant others* is important in forming our identity as musicians, both through encouragement and discouragement. Joy talks about learning the piano and not being allowed to quit unless she really *meant* to quit. Anna describes the role of others in confirming or labelling her as the girl who sings, and its effect on her sense of identity: "That was what I was, that was what I could do, it was 'the girl' who could sing. It's still like that. 'Oh, that's the girl who sings.' And so I became 'the girl who sings.' And so that became part of my *identity.*"

Others can play a vital part in opening the door for us to pursue music. Several of my interview participants told me that someone else encouraged or inspired them to start playing an instrument, or introduced music into their lives. For Joy, her sister was a source of inspiration. Prior to singing, she was also encouraged to play the piano, as was Sarah. For Paul, music was present at home and his grandfathers were also musicians. For John, his first piano teacher was the most significant person for his musical career, whereas Michael describes how he and his brother were introduced to professional greats by their father, a hobby musician: "I was raised in a musical family where my father introduced us to music, and where we listened to it. And we, my older brother and I, were placed on the couch and father played examples [pieces] for us where we had to hear who was best."

Our identity as a musician, singer or musicker, also becomes an important part of *who* we are, part of the schema constituting our sense of self (Stern, 1998, pp. 54-60). For Anna, the part of her related to singing is, in fact, just as important as any other part of her; it has become integrated into her identity as a whole. For Michael being a singer is who he is: "It's the way I express myself, it's through singing. I am a singer." He reiterates that music is his life and even

goes so far as to say, "if I couldn't work with choirs and singing, I might as well die." At this point, one can say that music truly has become an essential and integral part of his life and identity.

Developing a sense of self is extremely important for QoL and mental well-being. According to developmental psychologist Daniel Stern, our sense of self, or rather lack thereof, can have serious implications for our continued development, social interaction and QoL. He mentions many different senses of self and possible negative implications if these are greatly impaired. Some of these are mentioned here in order to demonstrate how important our sense of self is. Stern mentions for instance: "the sense of agency (without which there can be paralysis, the sense of non-ownership of self-action, the experience of loss of control to external agents)." (Stern, 1998, p7). Further selves include:

> the sense of continuity (without which there can be temporal disassociation, fugue states, amnesias, not "going on being," in Winnicott's term); the sense of affectivity (without which there can be anhedonia, dissociated states); the sense of a subjective self that can achieve intersubjectivity with another (without which there is cosmic loneliness or, at the other extreme, psychic transparency) (Stern, 1998, p. 7).

So many of the aspects mentioned above tie in with components consituting QoL and well-being. Further problems such as loneliness, problems with socialization and being culturally excluded are also mentioned. In short, the development of a healthy sense of self, be it through musical activity or other identifiers, is fundamental to our lives and further development. (Stern, 1998, pp. 7-8). Music provides one way of shaping and developing this sense of self and can be consciously utilised for this purpose.

Aside from helping us develop our sense of self, music can allow us to express a part of ourselves that *already* exists; in other words, bringing our identity to light. Sarah told of how being able to take the stage and express herself felt like she was able to show people something new:

> I was a very quiet youth, child too. Very contemplative and very quiet. And then I started to sing and I think it's safe to say I was able to express something of myself I couldn't express in any other way. I felt that others got to know me in a new way; there was something inside of me too.

Through music we are able to reveal another facet of our identity and personality. Not only can that experience be satisfying, but showing that side of ourselves to others can also become a *need*. Anna told me that if "i'm leading a Masterclass, for example, my need to show who I *am* is also met 'This is what *I* do.'" The urge to show those around us who we are is not only present in our youth. This is also an aspect of psychologist Maslow's theory that people have a needs

hierarchy (Schäfer, Smukalla and Oelker, 2014, p. 526), the pinnacle of which is self-actualization, experiencing that we can live out who we are and reach our potential. QoL and our feeling of well-being are impacted by self-actualization and freedom to express ourselves; being able to blossom and thrive by being ourselves in all its forms, our musical selves and personalities included.

Cultural experiences as a whole are important with regard to the forming of our identity. Ruud explains that the memories which form and become a part of our story, are often associated with emotions which in turn are connected to cultural experiences: "Music has a strange capacity to frame and highlight periods in our life or transitions from one phase of life to another"* (Ruud, 2013, p. 20). These emotional memories or experiences are stored in our bodies, and the stories that make up our lives often occur in relation to time, existential questions, and other people. In that way stories about experiences with the arts always reflect who we are, or the way in which we wish to be seen by others and ourselves. A strong identity is also rooted in the ability to take action in one's own life, the ability to master life. This ability can for instance be traced back to the encouragement we received after our first performance or the joy we experience through mastering an instrument. (Ruud, 2007, pp. 13-15). I will look more closely at mastery in section 2.7 on mastering singing and life.

Although the role of singer or musician may become an integrated and important part of us, it can also be a relief at times to *change* roles. Anna shared with me that when she became a mother, it was a relief to have a different identity than that of a singer; something else took priority over singing. The roles we have in life change constantly and can evolve or merge (MacDonald *et al*., 2009, p. 463). Our identity as a musician can easily become connected to our sense of self-worth. I asked John whether he felt that his sense of self-worth is connected to his musical achievement, or whether he manages to keep these separate, to which he replied: "I think that goes together, I don't think I can separate it, I can't separate it at all." Again, this strong sense of identity is a two-edged sword. It can be freeing and motivating to feel like we have found ourselves and can define who we are with a label, however it can also become constricting to always be known as one thing. We may even feel relieved to put aside that part of ourselves for a while, as Anna described, or receive praise and recognition for other skills and other parts of our identity. For Paul conducting is a part of him, however he perhaps doesn't weight this role as heavily as others would:

> I don't get a kick when I look at other conductors. Perhaps because it's been such an important part of my life; a part of me is being a conductor. I do so many other things too. I don't *just* do that. Consequently perhaps I don't put as much stock by it as many others who are just conductors.

As we have seen, culture, people and experiences shape us and vitally contribute to forming our identity, however, it is also important to note that our identity is not determined by external factors alone. We are not merely products of our upbringing or environment. According to Ruud, we *ourselves* decide what our life story includes; we construct our identity by creating narratives about ourselves. With regards to music, *we* choose the degree to which it becomes a part of that narrative, we choose what meaning we appropriate or give to music in our own lives, and "in which way the musical experience will be a part of the story of us"* (Ruud, 2013, p. 70). Although our background and the influence of other people play a part in shaping us, we ultimately have *personal influence* on how we allow this to happen, whom we choose to be, how we choose to present ourselves, and which of our talents we decide to utilise.

It becomes increasingly clear that the concept of identity, just like those of health and quality of life, is many-faceted and intricate. Our identity is not based merely on *one* experience, on *one* part of our nature (physical or psychological), but is a complex and unique combination of many things including: experiences, memories, interaction with others, stories about ourselves, and the way in which the world reacts to us. When we take all this into account, it is easier to understand how everyone truly is *unique*; no two people are put together or formed by all these factors in the same way. Likewise, each of our identities as musicians or musickers are unique and framed by personal musical experiences. If we look back at the WHO's definition of quality of life, it is important for us to know who we are in relation to the culture in which we live, which goals and expectations we have, and so forth. Our identity as a musician ascribes us a role within society and is attached to certain expectations and goals. Furthermore, having a defined identity also allows us to feel safe and more self-confident, and knowing who we are is key to experiencing continuity in our life; all of which Næss suggests are elements of a life of quality (c.f. page 7). So how do we relate to, or preserve our identity and our experiences through our musicking?

2.2 Authenticity as a singer or musician

"It's not possible for me to fake it."
(Paul)

A note-worthy aspect pertaining to the performance side of musicking when talking to my interview participants, was the question of authenticity versus taking on a role when performing. Does our identity play a part in our performance? I found there were some differences of opinion regarding the idea of taking on a role and the extent to which one is oneself in a performance situation. For Sarah, it is a case of presenting a different side of herself to the audience when she performs; she is not the same version of herself as when she is relaxing with friends: "You have to put on a different attitude." On stage one is a performer: "Of course you have to go on stage when you go on stage. You are not one hundred percent your everyday self. And sometimes in part you have to step into a role. But that also becomes a part of you, doesn't it?" Singing, as mentioned earlier, has for her been a way of taking the floor and showing people a new side of herself, so in a sense the stage has given her a new arena for self-expression. However, the self she expresses there is specifically connected to the performance aspect. For Joy singing also involves immersing onself in the thoughts and worlds of others, at times adopting emotions one doesn't feel personally. In that sense her experience can be said to support the idea of taking on a role, wearing "a different attitude" as Sarah phrased it.

Anna, on the other hand, highlighted the importance of being yourself when performing and how communication is affected by this: "You can't change yourself, you *are you* and you have *your* history and your baggage; your experiences. And that's your starting point. If you start with *that* and are *honest* and uncompromising then the communication is *usually* good and gripping." She also described how she is moved by watching other people on stage who really want to convey something, and who do it in a selfless, honest way. The audience will also see through the act if one pretends on stage and one should instead offer something to them: "to offer *something*, that works I think. Being honest and uncompromising." For her there is a connection between being authentic and being a good communicator, regardless of which genre one is performing. William described how being honest and open during a performance is important both as a conductor and singer: "You have to be passionate, you have to be completely open, you have to go into the music in a very honest and open way, and you understand that you're an interpreter." He also spoke of opening one's heart, being naked and

vulnerable, which is more natural when one is being honest and authentic than when one is playing a part.

Honesty and being able to stand for the things one sings is important to Paul. Not being able to do that affects the believability of the performance and if you fake it, he says, "then it's not *believable* and the music won't be believable either." Being authentic, allowing others to see us for who we are, and to share in our stories and experiences can also move an *audience*. William speaks of how passion is transferred from the choir over to the audience when: "The audience is moved and senses 'here, here is someone who wants to say something.'" Passion and authenticity resonate with the listener. As Joy and William pointed out we can share ourselves with others through our musicking, and others can share themselves with us through their performance or composition; authenticity goes both ways.

In conclusion of this section we can say that as performers we take on a role or show the world a certain side of ourselves, a side which perhaps isn't our everyday, relaxed persona, but it is still a version of ourselves if we go into it honestly and authentically. That is ultimately what touches the audience the most and perhaps also what leaves us as performers feeling most satisfied. Being able to be ourselves when performing and musicking allows us to truly engage with the audience and not have to worry about our mask slipping, or the audience seeing through us. When we, for example as singers, take on roles or characters that are different from ourselves, there are perhaps in most cases still elements we can relate to; personal experiences we can use for inspiration, allowing us to integrate a part of ourselves into the role. This is something Anna addressed during our interview.

With regard to our own psychological and emotional well-being, it appears to be important to be honest with who we are: to be authentic. As the WHO's definition states, QoL also incorporates the way we view ourselves in light of our values and concerns. Living contrary to who we are, in constant conflict with our true identity and values, will ultimately not make us happy or satisfy us. Clearly, taking on a role in a piece of music is different from living one's whole life in denial, as someone else. However, it is important to be aware of where one stands with regard to one's essential sense of self in relation to one's role as a performer; to be conscious of where one part of us ends and the other begins. For as we have seen, our identity as a musician and consequently as a performer can fairly easily become an important part of who we are.

2.3 Singing as expression and communication

"then I started to sing and I think it's safe to say I was able to express
something of myself I couldn't express in any other way."
(Sarah)

The experience that music or song expresses something in a different way than words or other modes of communication can, is acknowledged by many. Victor Hugo has said: "Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and cannot remain silent" (quoted in Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009, p.1).

What is it about music that makes it such a good medium of communication and expression? In the book *Communicative Musicality*, musician Ian Cross and psychologist and paleolithic archaeologist Iain Morley explain that music initially was understood as an active medium. This resonates with Small's perspective of music as an activity as opposed to an object (Small, 1998). According to Cross and Morley, "'Music' as a universal human behaviour is marked by sound, action, interaction, non-efficacy, and a multiplicity of social function and emotional effects" (Cross and Morley, 2009, p. 67). Further, music and language may complement each other: Whereas language can communicate very specific information and is open to less interpretation, music has a certain ambiguity and enables as many interpretations as there people in the world. Musical encounters are subjective, due to the fact that every person interacting with music has their own set of references and experiences through which they interpret the interaction. (Cross and Morley, 2009, pp. 67, 69). This can also be an indication of why one person is profoundly moved by music while another is not. The fact that music is so *ambiguous* in nature and open to a greater level of interpretation than language is, makes it at times a better – or even the best - vessel for the communication of emotions or experiences, including those that are difficult to put into words. Consequently music is more universally accessible as it is open to so many different interpretations.

At the same time, it can become a mode of communication and a language between those who interpret it in a similar way; those who conform to a similar culture and become integrated in the ways of that musical culture. Integration in turn contributes to our sense of belonging and identifies us as part of this culture. (Ruud, 2007b, p. 23).

The effectiveness of music and singing for expression and communication has also been discovered by several of my interview participants. Anna put it this way: "'music expresses the

inexpressible.' And that is a truth I come back to time and again. I am very verbal as you can tell, but not everything can be said. Not everything *needs* to be said." Singing is, for William, a natural form of expression because he *is* a singer. Michael shared that the reason why he likes Musical songs so much is because they are so emotional, and he says, jokingly, that he can express his feelings through them instead of having to talk to people. The void which music can fill was poigniantly described by John: "When words run out, then music comes." Sarah told me that if she stopped singing, she would miss being "able to go out on stage and be able to express myself through music, basically." In her case the transition from singing to singing on stage occurred quite quickly it seems, and she enjoyed having the chance to 'say' something:

> there was something fascinating about me who was so quiet, and suddenly stood and sang for an insane number of people, you know? There was almost something absurd about it. It was very strange. It felt very strange but it felt really good. To be able to express oneself in that way and take the stand.

Using the voice as a way of expressing oneself is also something that has come *naturally* for some of my interview participants. Sarah said that "expressing myself through the voice in that way, being able to do that, has never in itself been a problem for me." An article by singer and singing Coach Beate Ling describes the way in which the voice, or rather the throat, and the soul are connected: "In Hebrew the same word is used for soul and throat. This indicates a reciprocal relationship between the two"* (Ling, 2015, pp. 13-14). As my interview participants have also shared, the voice is an important and personal part of us, one reason perhaps being this connection which Ling describes. Our voice expresses who we are, reveals us to those around us, and on a purely physical level it's an important communicational tool. Ling goes on to write: "Personality and the psychological state have an aurally perceivable effect on the voice and its potential. Working with the voice also means working with the personality"* (Ling, 2015, p. 14). What we feel and who we are influences and shapes our instrument and the way in which we express ourselves, and this occurs naturally. Furthermore, utilizing the voice has an effect on our mental and psychological well-being - something I will explore more in section 3.6. Thus working with the voice both influences, and is influenced by, our psychological state.

In light of the holistic understanding of health and human nature, it is plausible that these different elements, such as the voice, our personality, soul, and psychological state, are interlinked and affect each other reciprocally. The specific connection between singing and personality is supported by the theories mentioned earlier which suggest that singing affects our sense of self and identity. From a psychological perspective our personality can be described as the way in which our behavioural characteristics are organized, as well as the combination of

our mental, social, emotional and physical traits. Singing is one type of organized behaviour which develops and shapes these traits.

The idea of song and music being natural to us, even an *innate* part of us, is something Small mentions: "…I am certain, first, that to take part in a music act is of central importance to our very humanness, as important as taking part in the act of speech which it so resembles" (Small, 1998, p. 8). If this is true, then it could explain my interview participants' experience that singing is a natural form of expression for them**.** A quote from the French Jazz Historian Hugues Panassié also describes the organic, powerful nature of singing: "music is, above all, the cry of the heart, the natural spontaneous song expressing what man feels within himself" (Panassié, 1942/1946, p. 6, cited in Ruud, 2013, p. 29).

We also use singing to give our feelings and thoughts some kind of release. This was echoed by William who said that he would lose "a kind of vent" if he stopped singing; a vent provides release and facilitates expression. Being able to release our emotions and thoughts and to express what we feel is also an important part of feeling *free*, which as we have seen, is one of the elements constituting QoL. Furthermore, we feel better and more at ease in ourselves when we do not constantly repress our thoughts and feelings, and when we can express ourselves authentically and honestly.

Communication not only applies to singing or performing as soloists. With regard to choral singing William believes that the goal should be communication: "We are not supposed to show how good we are, we are supposed to *communicate* something. The composer's intention, sound, the sound of the piece, the meaning of the text, how the text is understood. I think one improves in this more and more as one gets older." He goes on to explain why one gets better at this over time: "One has experience, life experience from one's own life. So *I* believe that one as a conductor understands more and more, knows more and more what one should do, and one dares to show one's own feelings, and that's what it's all about." I would also suggest that this is the case not only for conductors but also for singers. Anna's communicative side has also developed later on: "Due to being a little withdrawn and the fact that I was so focused on singing correctly. That was part of me for quite a long time, but now it's *always* about communication and always about the audience. Because *they* give back that which you give to them." This echoes William's thought that at some point the pursuit of technical brilliance becomes less important than the communication itself; an important change. As a musician, John misses being able to communicate through music when he is not able to perform for longer periods of time, and shared that he cannot imagine his life without music. Perhaps the ability to

communicate improves over time as firstly, the performer has gained life experience and can relate even more to what he is conveying, and secondly, the performer becomes more and more secure in himself, confident in his abilities and identity, and consequently dares to express himself even more.

According to Colwyn Trevarthen, biological psychologist, babies are born with the ability to *communicate* with others and are able to sense timing, tempo, tone, varied expressions and pulse. He calls this innate ability of musical perception *communicative musicality* (Bonde, 2009, p. 133) and this theory echoes Small's belief that music, or in this case musicality, is an innate part of us. Trevarthen's theory provides insight into the way in which communication is facilitated by different musical componants. *Communicative Musicality* is comprised of three elements. Firstly, *pulse* creates a sense of time and structure for the relationship between mother and child and makes it possible to form a narrative of the development occurring. Secondly, *quality* refers to the dialog and interaction occurring between mother and child; the mirroring, imitations and varied expressions made. This also includes rhythmic, dynamic and tonal occurrences. Thirdly, *narrative* involves the consolidation of these former elements and the way they interact with each other; rhythm, vocal expression and gestures harmonize and interact resulting in communication between mother and child. (Trevarthen and Malloch, 2000, and Malloch, 1999, in Bonde, 2009, p. 133). These narratives created by music also allow *adults* to interact and find a common meaning in a shared experience. (Daniel Stern cited in Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009, p. 4).

It is important to note that *musicality* within the context of *Communicative Musicality* does not refer to our traditional understanding of this concept, but rather describes the human ability to appreciate and produce music; abilities which are innate. (Blacking, 1969/1995, cited in Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009, p. 4). According to Turner (1982) this musicality also encompasses "the human seriousness of play" (Turner, 1982, cited in Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009, p. 4) and activities can include theatre, dance, and other temporal art forms besides music. Our musicality allows us to build relationships with those around us and feel like we have something in common with others. Furthermore, Malloch and Trevarthan write that: "Our musicality serves our need for companionship just as language serves our need for the sharing of facts and practical actions with things" (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009, p. 6).

According to Ian Cross musical exchange also gives us an arena in which to bond with others with whom we perhaps would disagree if verbal rather than musical communication was at the forefront. (Cross 1999; chapter 5 in the same volume, cited in Malloch and Trevarthen,

2009, p. 6*)*. Trevarthen and Malloch (2000) and Sacks (2007) point out that the importance of musicality as a part of human nature is also supported by the fact that musical experiences have such a strong ability to impact the self, (Trevarthen and Malloch, 2000, and Sacks, 2007, cited in Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009, p. 6), as described in the section on identity.

Our *ability* to communicate musically is further affected by the reactions of others, either through affirmation, judgement or misunderstanding. In this way we learn how we are to communicate musically with those around us. Scheff (1988) suggests that "adult relationships and negotiations, including those of creative art, are worked out along a pride-shame continuum, with dynamic balance between interacting wills and imaginations." (Scheff, 1998, cited in Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009, p. 7). Pride or positive reinforcement leads us to continue as we have done, whereas shame causes us to act differently in future. As my own research has shown, other people's feedback has been important for the singers' motivation and the integration of singing into their identity. If their musical communication had been met first and foremost with negative responses, they would perhaps not still be singing today. Choirs such as William's or John's which are open to all, can give those who perhaps have received negative responses concerning their musical communication, or ability, the chance to receive positive feedback instead. People who have heard that they cannot sing, have the opportunity to try again, to be met by a different reaction and perhaps even surprise themselves with abilities they for many years doubted. Aside from Scheff's pride-shame continuum, a so-called 'separation-interconnection continuum' refers to the way in which we perceive ourselves with regard to others and how we are connected to them during musical experiences. We move away from a feeling of separation towards a greater sense of being part of a community, being a vital part of the whole (Pavlicevic and Ansdell, 2009, cited in Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009, p. 7). Malloch and Trevarthen suggest that we move within these two continua connected with communicative musicality, and a psyche that is healthy will move between these continua freely rather than stagnating in one position. (Malloch and Trevarthen, 2009, p. 7).

According to Small, Trevarthen and other experts in this field, we can see that both expression and communication through music come naturally to us. They are part of our innate humanity and play an important role in the way in which we communicate with, and express ourselves to the world around us. Thus it is perhaps not suprising that some of my interview participants also find music to be a natural medium for self-expression and communicating the passion they have for music to others.

2.4. Musicking and singing connects us to our emotions

"I get withdrawals [from not singing for a while] because it's a joy to use my voice." (Anna)

An important factor not to be underestimated when it comes to singing and musicking, is the *joy* that people experience through participation in these activities. Why do so many people engage in musicking by playing in a band, singing in a choir, dancing or going to concerts? Why are there so many music artists? Because people enjoy making, and listening to music! According to research carried out by Persson (2001), musical performance is pursued by musicians mainly for hedonic reasons - it affects their emotions positively and gives them satisfaction (Persson, 2001, p. 277 cited in Woody and McPherson, 2010, p. 403). Why should this hedonic motivation not also apply to musickers who first and foremost *participate* in musical activity rather than perform? Bjerke Batt-Rawden suggests that an "'open channel' into our emotional life [følelselivet]"* (Bjerke Batt-Rawden, 2006, p. 230) appears to be created by personal involvement with musical activity especially. DeNora and Batt-Rawden studied 22 participants with chronic illness engaged in musicking, and the latter notes that many of the participants of the study became energized, comforted and strengthened through music (Batt-Rawden and DeNora, 2005, p. 293, and Bjerke Batt-Rawden, 2006, p. 230). In this section I will explore theories of emotion, also in relation to music, and look at how some of these concepts were corroborated by my interview data. The field of emotion, and music and emotion, is a large and many-faceted one and I will present some existing theories, however I cannot do justice to all of them.

What are emotions?

I begin by defining what is meant by the terms 'affect,' 'emotion' and 'feeling.' According to Juslin and Sloboda's definition in the *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications*, all states that are valenced, evaluated as being negative or positive such as a preference, mood or emotion, constitute *affect*. *Emotion* is an intense, brief experience of affect, often characterized by certain traits such as physical arousal, a tendency to act, subjective experience and expression. Emotions are evoked by a certain object, and the emotion, such as sadness or happiness, can last either up to several hours or just minutes. *Feeling* is used to describe an emotion or mood experienced subjectively and is one part of an emotion. Feeling is often measured verbally by the person experiencing it. (Juslin and Sloboda, 2010a, p. 10).

Conforming to the structure of my thesis, the theories of emotion and music are divided up**.** The perspectives which focus more on the individual appear here, whereas those focusing more on the context and interpersonal relationships surrounding music and emotion, can be found integrated into Chapter three, section 3.5. Despite this distinction, however, it is important to emphasize that these theories are overlapping and interrelated, it is thus not unproblematic to try to divide them into clear-cut categories.

An interdisciplinary understanding of music and emotion

To understand the connection between music and emotion and gain insight into how music affects us, and why, it is most fruitful to take an interdisciplinary approach. Sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers and psychologists have developed many different theories trying to explain this phenomenon, of which no single approach is able to fully explain the manifold ways in which music influences emotions. Ideally these various hypotheses ought to be seen as complementary, each one expanding our understanding of this complex phenomenon. (Goldie 2000, cited in Davies 2010, p. 22-23).

The diversity of approaches is not surprising, as each person is uniquely situated, and thus can experience music differently. A general prerequisite for these theories is that the hearer has enough competence to listen in a qualified, informed way: they are "at home with the type of music in question, with its genre, style, and idiom" (Davies, 2010, p. 24). Davies (1994) and others suggest, however, that qualified listeners are seldom *formally* educated in music and not versed in the vocabulary of musicologists (Davies, 1994, and others, cited in Davies, 2010, p. 24)*,* so these concepts may provide explanations for the experiences of both amateur and professional musickers alike. Including those of my interview participants.

With regard to music specifically, philosopher Stephen Davies suggests that the musical work itself does not have the ability to feel or express itself, it is not sentient. However, many musical works *do* express emotions (Davies, 2010, p. 25), and many people are moved by music. How then does this occur?

The psychological perspective

According to Davies, emotion can only be expressed by sentient creatures and are the result of an experience. (Davies, 2010, p. 25). Psychologists have tried to define emotions by categorizing them into different groups, some of which are briefly outlined here. A theory centered on 'basic emotions' suggests that certain emotions are universal and innate, and form

the point of origin for other emotions. Basic emotions are said to be unique, contribute to the survival of the individual, and are distinguished by certain physiological changes, amongst other things. According to an evolutionary understanding of these, basic emotions include sadness, anger, fear and happiness. One *criticism* of this concept has been that it does not account for the large spectrum of emotions in existence aside from these basic ones. (Juslin and Sloboda, 2010b, pp. 76-78).

Psychologists also regard emotions as a scientific construct, consisting of physical reactions, feelings and behaviours caused by underlying *mechanisms*. Dennett (1987, cited in Sloboda and Juslin, 2010b, p. 75) proposes various levels at which emotions can be discussed: the hardware level, relating to hormones, brain neurons and genes, the phenomenological level with regard to feelings, and the functional level involving the processing of information in various ways. The main focus in psychological research is on the functional level, although the other levels are mentioned frequently. From a psychological viewpoint emotion not only involves biology but also cultural and social influences (Mesquita, 2003, cited in Sloboda and Juslin, 2010b, p. 75), highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of music and emotion.

Davies writes that emotions can occur both as a result of cognitive thought processes and as mere reflexes without conscious thought. The former can include emotions such as envy, hope or remorse, the latter, disgust or lust. Some emotions can also be assigned to both of these categories. (Davies, 2010, pp. 22-23). Theories of possible cognitive mechanisms leading to emotional experiences include 'cognitive appraisal theory' by which appraisal of our surroundings induces emotions in us. 'Action-readiness theory' suggests that we perceive events that cause us to act or react in a certain way, or at least ready ourselves for action. (Nussbaum, 2007, p. 214, cited in Robinson 2005, p. 10.) Thirdly, theorists focus on feelings as a result of, and as interpretations of bodily changes, in other words, we evaluate our bodily arousal and interpret it as being the manifestation of a certain emotion. Laird's theory of 'self-perception' is an example of the above. (Robinson, 2007, p. 1, and Laird, 2007, p. 9, cited in Robinson, 2005, p. 14).

Emotion as represented by musical dynamic

Wolfgang Köhler, a Gestalt psychologist, has suggested that dynamic terms used to *describe* music such as diminuendo, crescendo or changes in tempo, are valuable concepts for illustrating emotional and perceptual processes (Langer, 1957, p. 226, cited in Gabrielsson and Lindström, 2010, p. 393). Philosopher Susanne Langer defines music as an expression of patterns of release

and tension, disagreement and agreement, motion and rest, excitation, sudden change or fulfilment, conflict and resolution (Langer, 1957, p. 228, and Langer, 1953, p. 27, cited in Gabrielsson and Lindström, 2010, p. 393). These concepts are similar to different affective states we may experience, and thus music can act as a representation of these.

Psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Daniel Stern's concept of 'vitality affect' ties in with this dynamic understanding of emotion. It is used to describe emotions whose essence is expressed by terms of movement and dynamic, and according to Stern, "abstract music and dance are examples par excellence of the expressiveness of vitality affects." (Stern, 1985, pp. 54, 56, cited in Gabrielsson and Lindström, 2010, p. 393). Furthermore, Langer (1967, cited in Stern, 1998, pp. 53-60) suggests that certain affects are connected to our *vital functions,* our everyday lives, and are present whether we think about them or not - bringing us back to the idea of emotions occurring on both an unconscious and conscious level. These vital emotions can be connected to activities such as sleeping, waking up, or transitioning in and out of thoughts and feelings. (Stern, 1998, pp. 53-60). Experiences like these cannot be described or categorized as 'basic emotions' (c.f. Juslin and Sloboda, 2010, pp. 76-77) such as sadness, anger, happiness, and so forth.

Normal affects are said to occur in relation to two different measurements. On the one hand you have *hedonic tone* referring to the quality of a feeling, how unpleasurable or pleasurable it is; on the other, you have *activation*, referring to quality of feeling in terms of its urgency or intensity. *Vitality affects* are those which do not fit on either of these 'normal' scales. Words used to describe these vital sensations can include: explosive, bursting, decrescendo, surging or fading away. Vitality affects may occur together with 'normal' affects, or separately - for instance in conjunction with actions that are not linked to emotion as such. Stern gives the example of someone getting out of a chair explosively. (Stern, 1998, pp. 53-60)

Vitality affects also play a part in infants developing a sense both of self and of those around them, and can accompany the infant's own actions and vital processes, as well as those of the people with whom they have a relationship, such as their mother. Experiences gathered with the help of vitality affects are added to the schema of self, together with all other component parts comprising who we are. (Stern, 1998, pp. 53-60). I would suggest that such shaping experiences through vitality affects occur not only in infancy but also in later life through new exposures and new habits, which in turn become vital parts of one's life. These may include singing or other forms of musicking. Once these functions become vital and

integrated, they potentially become part of our sense of self. For more on this see section 2.1 on music and identity.

Do musical emotions exist?

A valuable theory looking specifically at the connection between music and emotion, is the GEMS model or Geneva Emotional Music Scale, based on research done by Zentner, Grandjean and Sherer (2008, cited in Zentner, 2010, p. 105). Zentner *et al*. conducted research in order to identify those emotions most commonly experienced in relation to music listening. One study was conducted in a more natural environment involving participants at a music festival asked to fill out a questionnaire during, or directly after, being exposed to a musical performance of their choosing. The questionnaire contained 66 terms describing emotional states gleaned from earlier research, and participants were asked to rate how often they experienced these in conjunction with the performance. As a further step in the research process, the affective states actually experienced were categorized under headings such as transcendence, wonder, nostalgia and peacefulness. Affects most commonly felt during the performance included relaxation, stimulation, happiness and joy, whilst anger and depression were much rarer. (Zentner, 2010, pp. 103-106). Zentner notes that these emotions generally occur several at a time, not in isolation, and thus it may be more fitting to look at the different combinations of emotions experienced through music as opposed to single emotions. (Zentner, 2010, p. 109).

In summary Zentner writes that nine primary emotions related to music were identified, and these differed greatly from those comprising basic emotions. Jealousy, fear and anger, for instance, are not typically induced through music, and happiness takes many forms. (Zentner, 2010, p. 109). Moreover he notes that the musical emotions identified are aesthetic in nature, rather than utilitarian or fulfilling the traditional understanding of emotion described above, linked to physiological arousal, action tendencies, expressive motor behaviour and cognitive appraisal. One characteristic of aesthetic emotions is that they are enjoyed for their own sake rather than occurring as a reaction to demands in everyday life. (Zentner 2010, p. 118). Furthermore, he suggests that the theory of basic emotions, from which GEMS differs considerably, better aligns with *perceived* emotions in music. We may describe music as expressing fear or pride (Juslin and Lauka, 2003, cited in Zentner, 2010, pp. 118-119), however Zentner points out that *identifying* the emotions is different from *feeling* them.

Perception verses induction of emotion through music

A debate continues between experts concerning the extent to which music can in fact induce emotions in the listener or merely represent them. Emotivists believe that music *can* induce real emotions. Cognitivists conversely view music as an *expression* of emotion, rather than an evoker of it, (Lundqvist, Carlsson, Hilmersson, and Juslin, 2009, p. 65), suggesting that it is our *perception* of emotions expressed by music that causes our reaction. This latter perspective is purported by Kivy (1990), amongst others (Kivy, 1990, cited in Juslin and Sloboda, 2010, p. 83). Within these two traditions there are many thoughts about the specific processes involved in emotion production, a few of which are described here in conjunction with findings from my own research.

The cognitivist approach

The cognitivist approach is supported by several statements made by my interview participants who spoke of accessing the thoughts and feelings of others through music, involving a process of interpretation and active cognition. Joy, for instance, compares singing to reading a book in that "you gain access to another universe. With books you gain access to lots of things and I think that's the way it is with singing sometimes too, if I really get into it. I gain access to what others have thought and felt." Michael spoke of trying to understand the composer's intention, also as a singer: "When you've peeled away the layer where you want to show how good you are, have learned the technique and so on, gotten to the actual 'what lies here? What does the composer say?'"

While researching musical narratives of music therapy students, looking at which songs had played an important part in their lives, Ruud found that so-called "skillingsviser" - songs which often portray dramatic stories - were a recurring feature in early musical experiences. The dramas depicted in these songs move the children who hear them (Ruud, 1997, cited in Ruud 2007, pp. 14-15). These were mentioned by Anna, and were sung by her grandmother, moving her and her brother to tears because they were so sad: "…we sat under grandmother's kitchen table and cried, and she sang these *terribly* sad skillingsviser." Anna may have responded to the story or the persona depicted in these songs and taken part in the emotions she ascribed to them, emotions which she perceived and consequently adopted.

A further form the cognitive process with regard to music can take is that we experience it as a representation, enunciation or extension of what we are feeling. We recognize our state of affect in that which we hear or sing, and the music becomes a mirror or an extension of that. William

says that music provides a vent for his feelings, and furthermore: "It's a catalyst for feelings. Both sorrow or joy, and it reflects what type of music I listen to. If I'm happy or if I… am down or something. Then I can listen to different kinds of music. And sing." Moreover, he does not try to change his mood with music but rather chooses music dependent on the mood he is in: "I feel an emotion and then I turn on music that fits with that." In that sense music - for him - is not a regulator but rather an expression of emotion. As William's statement implies, *we* do not merely mirror the *music*, but can implement it as a mirror for *our* feelings. This may also suggest an explanation for the phenomenon whereby music fans perceive their favourite artists as being able to capture their affective state (Ruud, 2001, p. 47), and express how they as listeners feel, even though they do not know each other personally. A shared set of feelings creates a rapport between them, a sense of sharing similar emotional experiences.

Psychologists Patrick Juslin and Daniel Västfjäll have investigated in greater depth the emotional *mechanisms* activated through music, including brain stem reflexes, musical expectancy, episodic memory, visual imagery, evaluative conditioning, and emotional contagion (Juslin and Västfjäll, 2008, p. 559). I will focus mainly on the last two mechanisms which are relevant for my subject matter. For one, music can induce certain emotions because we associate it with certain stimuli, so-called 'evaluative conditioning.' This is a process by which a certain "stimulus has been paired repeatedly with other positive or negative stimuli" (Juslin and Västfjäll, 2008, p. 564). The number of associations we have grows with age and life experience: Sarah told me during our interview, that Mahler's Kindertotenlieder (Children's Death Songs) became difficult to sing once she had children herself, whereas it previously did not disturb her. As we gather more life experience - both joyous and tragic – we discover a wider range of emotions and are perhaps thus able to express and also *perceive* these emotions more easily.

Ruud remarks that encounters with music can cause us to become more aware of our feelings and can for instance result in a capacity for both emotional experience and expression. A concept called "vitality," suggested by Monsen, describes the ability to register and express emotions with varying intensity and being able to open up to the world (Monsen, 1991, cited in Ruud, 1997, p. 91). Perhaps we *need* to be exposed to emotions through music, in order to be able to experience life in all its facets? In an interview, the Norwegian musician Guro von Germeten says that musicians do not realize how broad their "palette of expression"* is. She goes on to say: "It's not like everyone should walk around singing hugely dramatic murder ballads, but I believe that we need to be exposed to the big emotions often and as much as

possible, and I hope I can contribute to that"* (Bjerke, 2015, p. 20). This ability to go through many different types and levels of emotion can also be said to play a part in determining QoL, as our ability to interact with the world also affects how we experience it (Ruud, 1997, p. 91). Gaining access to, adopting and utilizing a greater palette of emotion through musical engagement allows us to participate in life more richly, to flourish in the well-being sense.

John shared that for him being moved is not dependent on the genre or the grandiosity of the music: "It doesn't necessarily have to be classical music, it can be anything. It can be a child whistling." Perhaps, for him, the childish whistle brings back a memory of a certain emotional event or state of being which results in that simple tune triggering an emotional reaction.

The emotivist approach

From an emotivist perspective music has the power to stir emotions within us not merely through a cognitive thought process, but directly via induction or contagion. 'Emotional contagion' involves us internally mimicking the emotion we perceive in the music, as described by Juslin and Västfjäll: "peripheral feedback from muscles, or a more direct activation of the relevant emotion-al [sic] representations in the brain" causes us to experience the same emotion (Juslin and Västfjäll, 2008, p. 565). This mechanism can also explain why music is able to affect our mood, making us sad or happy by exposing us to that specific emotion. Support for this theory can be seen to come from Anna's experience with 'skillingsviser' as she may have mirrored the emotions expressed by her grandmother's song, causing them to be evoked in her by means of contagion. Again, this concept is not a modern one: Aristotle and Plato discussed mimesis which according to Greek thinking means "an artistic expression or emotional representation through which observers and listeners perceive psychic processes and emotional states by means of music (based on melody, mode, rhythm) and gestures" (Schneider, 2010, p. 77). Understandably, the reaction to music via certain mechanisms led to the belief that specific types of music elicit similar reactions in people, resulting in the doctrine of affects (Schneider, 2010, p. 77). This idea of transference of emotion or mood can also be seen in the use of music when working out, something William mentioned, stating that music inspires him when training. Perhaps by way of contagion and mirroring, the energy expressed in the music is transferred or awakened in the listener, turning musical energy into kinetic energy.

Mirroring is also an important part of the way in which we *communicate* and *experience the world around* us according to Trevarthen's theory of *communicative musicality* outlined earlier. Through a process of mirroring, babies learn from their environment and communicate

with those around them. Musical elements such as tempo, timing, tone, as well as melody and pitch, are utilized during the development of relationship and communication between mother and child. (Bonde, 2009, p. 133). As the term implies, musicality is linked to movement and pulse, elements which may also play a part in sensations experienced during feelings of vital affect, bringing us back to Daniel Stern's theory.

John shared that he can also be touched by his *own playing*, saying, "And that one is moved by one's *own* playing, that also happens to me, of course; that is a special feeling of happiness." This is such an important point because it highlights another dimension of the emotional experience of music, that of being moved my *making and performing music oneself*, not just by listening to the performance of others. The fact that this leaves him with a *special* feeling of happiness is also noteworthy as it indicates that there is a difference between listening to, and playing music – an opinion shared by Ruud (Ruud, 2013, p. 43). A possible explanation for this particular experience of being moved may be found in Stern's theory of vitality affects and the connection between the dynamic elements in the music itself or its shape and their correlation with similar movements in states of affect. (c.f. also 'Contour theory' in Davies, 2010, pp. 31-33). When the body is actively involved in expressing the music, embodying its form and 'living out' the relationships between release and tension, as Langer for example suggests, the line between music and emotion may become blurred or even disappear. The music becomes a part of us as we perform, we become its conduit and a channel for the expressivity inherent in the music.

Furthermore for a performer, emotional processes can go both ways. Joy shared that "singing professionally and learning new pieces is moving when I really get to grips with the piece and what it means and invest in it emotionally." Performing not only involves receiving or passing on things expressed by others, it also involves personal investment; physically, psychologically, emotionally and technically.

A model for the induction of musical emotions

Sherer and Zentner (2001) developed the IRM (Induction Rule Model) to describe how emotions are induced by music. Both intra- and extra- musical factors were taken into account, and categorized into performance, structural, contextual and listener features. Performance features refer to the execution and the performer's technique, identity and performance state, such as their interpretation or stage presence. Structural features include tempo and timbre. Context involves, for instance, the situation in which listening occurs, whereas listener features refer to the listeners sociocultural and individual identity, and cultural coding. (Zentner, 2010,

pp. 110-112). The model suggests that these factors and their component parts, are mutually dependent or multiplicative. Music is less likely to induce emotions if one of the contributing elements is not functioning, making the induction of emotion a fragile process (Zentner, 2010, p. 110). Furthermore, emotions evoked through music occur less easily than believed, however, the pursuit of harvesting the emotional rewards of music is perhaps a more *universal* occurrence. (Zentner, 2010, p. 119).

Notably Sherer and Zentner suggest certain personality traits in people whose emotions are stirred by music. One is an 'openness to experience,' the other is 'absorption.' Absorption describes a tendency to involve oneself and be imaginative. Openness to experience encompasses intellectual curiosity, aesthetic sensitivity and vigilance with regard to inner feelings. This theory would suggest that my interview participants, and others who have been impacted emotionally by music, may have these personality traits. Further influential factors on the emotional musical experience relate to the listener's mood, concentration and motivation. (Zentner, 2010, p. 111).

What about negative emotions?

Davies raises a further interesting question: Why do music listeners seek out experiences that evoke *negative* emotions, for instance by listening to "sad" music? It is more natural for humans to avoid unpleasantness than to seek it out. It has been suggested that such experiences can expand our knowledge of emotions and our sensitivity in a safe environment, and the listener may find pleasure in listening to a beautiful piece of music even though it evokes a negative emotion. However, why seek out these benefits from negative emotions if equivalent effects can be induced by music that does not make us unhappy? (Davies 2010, p. 38). Aristotelian thinking suggests that not all effects can – in fact - be achieved by positive music (Levinson, 1982, cited in Davies, 2010, p. 38), and the arts provide a good arena in which to purge negative feelings. Music-listening allows us to learn about our feelings in an environment that is safe, rather than in confrontation with a real-life situation. However, in order for engagement with music to be educational, Davies points out that it has to involve a cognitive process rather than merely being a reflexive or instinctual reaction to music. (Davies, 2010, pp. 38-39). With regard to negative emotions, William says that listening to sad music when one feels sad can at times even involve a little self-torture because one becomes even sadder. At the same time, as Aristotle has suggested, this can be cathartic: perhaps being moved to tears is what we need in order to release pent up feelings, or purge ourselves of negative emotions.

A further theory as to why we are willing to endure negative elements in music, is that they are important in order to appreciate and understand the musical experience as a whole. This also reflects the realities of life which involve hardship and difficulty, not least with regard to important aspects such as self-realization and intimate relationships. (Davies, 2010, pp. 38-39). In this context Davies also writes very poignantly about well-being and life's important components: "To achieve a fulfilling life, the individual must honestly and seriously face these in all their dimensions, both positive and negative. Yet it is also true of the way we live generally, even apart from the big issues of survival and flourishing." (Davies, 2010, p. 39). In other words, both negative and positive experiences are necessary in order to experience life in all its richness, both with regard to essential and less essential life arenas. Zentner is of the opinion that sadness in music must be different from the basic emotion of sadness as people are drawn to it and do not avoid it. In the studies done on GEMS participants also more commonly used the term melancholy, rather than sadness, in relation to music. (Zentner, 2010, p. 109).

Music, emotion and quality of life

To conclude this section on music and emotion I would like to return to the aspect of joy initially mentioned. More recent findings indicate that joy and other positive emotions play an important role, not only in helping us to cope in life but also allowing us to flourish. Fredrickson, mentioned earlier, has developed the 'Broaden-and-Build theory,' seeking to demonstrate the unique effects of *positive emotions* upon our lives. The theory suggests that these both broaden our possibilities for action and build up our resources, resulting in long-term positive implications for our health and well-being. Fredrickson refers to Diener *et al.* (1991, cited in Fredrickson 2004, p. 1367), who state that our subjective well-being is affected by the balance between positive and negative emotions: thus both are important objects of focus. Past research has first and foremost focused on negative emotions as these often have the biggest effect on society and individuals. (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1367). Fredrickson summarizes her theory in the following way:

> The broaden-and-build theory underscores the ways in which positive emotions are essential elements of optimal functioning, and therefore an essential topic within the science of well-being. The theory, together with the research reviewed here, suggests that positive emotions: (i) broaden people's attention and thinking; (ii) undo ling-ering [sic] negative emotional arousal; (iii) fuel psychological resilience; (iv) build consequential personal resources; (v) trigger upward spirals towards greater well-being in the future; and (vi) seed human flourishing. (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1375).

She goes on to say that these findings ought to encourage us to cultivate positive emotions in ourselves and others because they not only affect the here and now, but pave the way for

flourishing and future well-being. (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1375). Her reference to flourishing makes this a relevant and thought-provoking concept with regard to my subject matter, as flourishing is a form of well-being and embraces the concept of living life more fully, which I am exploring here in relation to musicking.

Fredrickson suggests that the positive effects of emotions such as joy, contentment, interest and love (a combination of these three) include increasing creativity and awakening an exploratory urge in us, as well as encouraging us to enjoy the moment. Exploration in turn allows us to experience new things, acquire new knowledge and expand our sense of self. (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1369). Expanding sense of self links to Maslow's concept of self-actualization and reaching our potential (Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 526). Furthermore Fredrickson writes that the mindset broadened by positive emotions – through a reciprocal relationship - allows us to build enduring resources beyond the positive emotional experience itself (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1369). As opposed to the downward spiral caused by negative emotions, positive emotions potentially contribute to an upward spiral by helping people to become more resilient to challenges in their lives. (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1373). The idea of *resources* playing an important part in our lives is something I will come back to later in connection with musicking as a collective, interpersonal phenomenon.

Looking back at Siri Næss' definition (c.f. page 7), emotional experiences with music are an integral part of QoL because they keep us happy. Music can move us deeply and access deeper levels of emotion, either through perception, or more directly through contagion of emotion. The perceived relationship established between the listener and composer or performer can feel intimate, as the listener may experience the music or performance as an expression or reflection of their own affective state. In addition, becoming more aware of different types and depths of emotion allows us to experience life in a more vital, colourful way, and allows us greater freedom of expression; freedom again being an operative word in Næss's concept of QoL.

Furthermore, engagement with music allows us to be energized and experience catharsis through a medium that has certain common characteristics with our emotions. Using music as a tool to improve our own state of being, gives us a sense of control over our own lives, to be able to improve our situation if needed (c.f. Antonovsky's salutogenic model of Sense of Coherence in section 2.8). This feeling of control is something I explore in more depth later. Feelings of control also link back to Fredrickson's theory, as believing we have the resources we need to meet life's challenges may provide a sense of increased control over our lives.

During our interview, Paul expressed the following thought: "... I think often music bypasses the head and goes straight to the heart." Although the connection between music and emotion is not easy to explain, perhaps we don't need to understand it fully. There is something wonderful about the way in which music can move musickers so deeply and individually, and influence lives for the better. Significant, irrespective of the specific processes involved, is the potential music and musicking have to enrich, expand and strengthen our emotional life, allowing us to grow and flourish.

2.5 Strong musical experiences

> *"It gave me a high which in a way has continued,*
> *in different forms because life changes too."*
> *(Sarah)*

Peak experiences

As we have seen already music can move us in many ways, and inspire many different emotions. What about the musical experiences where we lose track of time, get goose-bumps or are even more profoundly moved? A phenomenon known as peak experiences are according to Maslow (1959), "moments of highest happiness and fulfilment" (Maslow, 1999, p. 85, cited in Whaley, Sloboda and Gabrielsson, 2009, p. 452), which also occur in conjunction with musical experiences. Leach describes these encounters as "that highly valued experience which is characterized by such intensity of perception, depth of feeling, or sense of profound significance as to cause it to stand out, in the subject's mind, in more or less per-manent [sic] contrast to the experiences that surround it in time and space." (Leach, 1962, p. 11, cited in Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 526). It is important to note that the focus is on peak experiences of music *listeners*.

According to Maslow the highest goal for humans is self-actualization, and from studying healthy peoples' behaviour and feelings, he concluded that the healthiest individuals are those who have achieved this. As an aside, he later added a need called self-transcendence to this hierarchy (Maslow, 1964). Those who were self-actualized reported sensations including deep emotions, being separated from space and time, and having their longings satisfied (Maslow, 1962, 1971). The nature of peak experiences and elements inherent in self-actualization led Maslow to link the two (Maslow, 1954). Those self-actualized through peak experiences are self-fulfilled and healthy, and Maslow suggested that researching the

mechanisms leading to these therapeutic moments was meaningful for psychology oriented towards health. (Maslow, 1964, 1962, 1971, 1954, also cited in Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 526).

A more music and arts related definition of these experiences describes them as the "most wonderful experiences… happiest moments, ecstatic moments, moments of rapture, perhaps from being in love, or from listen-ing [sic] to music, or suddenly 'being hit' by a book or painting, or from some great creative moment." (Maslow, 1968, p. 71, cited in Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 526)

I asked some of my interview participants whether they were familiar with such peak experiences, and John told me: "I think I had that when I heard Parsifal [an opera] for the first time; it was like a drug. It *totally* flashed me. And my father sat next to me and snored." The final comment about his father reminds us of how *subjective* such musical experiences are: for one person they are life-changing, while for another they are sleep-inducing!

A meaningful point was made by Michael about maintaining awareness and control in such situations: "Because then one can be so overwhelmed that one isn't able to sing. That one starts to cry, you know?" Performing involves a combination through which, "one has a sense of 'now I am giving everything I have but I am also in control.'" I asked John whether people almost seek out these types of experiences, and he suggests that they are an important reason why people go to concerts again and again. A peak experiences in his words is: "When something is so fantastic that you just think 'Wow. Please don't stop.'"

According to Ruud such experiences don't just occur in settings where we listen to music with full concentration through headphones or in a concert setting; they occur just as often in spontaneous, *surprising meetings* with popular music and media. (Ruud, 2013, pp. 239-240). In Michael's case a peak experience occurred *suddenly* in a concert setting: "…I remember being so moved that I started to cry. I had tears in the corners of my eyes and my whole body started to shake, I became totally… I remember that! And I remember thinking afterwards '*that* was one of those experiences.'" Moreover he says: "at that point one is so immersed in the music and it's a fantastic experience."

In research done by Panzarella, peak experiences shared by participants were organized into four main categories: 1) 'motor-sensory-peak-experiences' gave them a feeling of reaching a more transient state versus the normal state of consciousness. 2) 'Synthesis-and-feeling-of-ecstasy' caused people to feel that they meld with the music they're listening to and during 3) 'withdrawal-ecstasy' the person loses contact with the social and physical world. 4) 'Renewal-ecstasy' occurs when the person experiences strong emotion leading to regeneration, as well as

motivation and strengthening. (Ruud, 2013, pp. 239-240). Points one to three of Panzarella's theory could also describe the sensation of a 'high.' John mentioned this in conjunction with his choir, whereas William talked about it in relation to something he hears:

> I get a kind of high when I listen to extremely cool arrangements for example, that I haven't heard before, and I get really hooked on a specific thing that's going on in the synth voice or something like that; in a part. And then I get goose bumps down my back every time I hear it. But that's mostly when I listen...

Psychology professor Gabrielsson and his colleague Lindström (1994) found that peak experiences often were "accompanied by *physical reactions* usually associated with strong emotions."* (Ruud, 2013, p. 240). These reactions can take the form of crying, the need to move, complete body tension, relaxation or even numbness. Some also describe hair standing on end or getting goose-bumps. The sudden peak experience shared by William above confirms occurances such as crying and tension in the body in the form of shaking. Both Michael and John mentioned getting goose-bumps in specific musicking situations with choirs, John as a conductor, and Michael when singing. According to Gabrielsson and Lindström the most common emotion in these experiences is joy, however people may also feel peace, safety, love, and even negative emotions such as anger, sorrow, fear or restlessness. (Ruud, 2013, p. 241). The first observation is supported by Zentner's research where positive emotions occurred most frequently during a musical encounter, although negative emotions occurred much more rarely.

Are peak experiences something we can control? According to Ruud one can perhaps develop a ritual or take certain steps in order to reach this augmented state, however, many peak experiences are the result of chance. According to Maslow, preparing ourselves for deeper-reaching occurrences than our everyday ones, is possible as we get older and gain more experience. He uses the term 'plateau experiences' for those experiences which cannot be compared to intense peak ones, but nonetheless involve feelings of "pure enjoyment and happiness" (Maslow 1970:xv, cited in Ruud, 2013, p. 242).

Ruud believes that many of us, in certain situations, are more easily affected by *music* because we are ready for it. For instance when we are more impressionable and receptive due to a life situation. A participant in Ruud's research expressed the following: "What hit me was, that perhaps during the times when I've been in pain, music has meant a lot. During those times, the music that touches me, hits me very hard. Whereas now, when I'm fine, there's a lot of music I listen to, and it's okay, but it's not as overwhelming."* (Ruud, 2013, pp. 242-243).

Moreover Sherer and Zentner suggest that the extent to which we are moved by music may depend on personality traits. (Zentner, 2010, p. 111).

Maslow proposed that there *are* in fact certain *triggers* which lead to peak experiences (Maslow 1964, 1971), the most common being *music* and sex. Maslow himself thought that only classical music triggers us, however Panzerella (1980) found that also rock 'n' roll and folk music could act as a trigger. (Maslow, 1964, 1971, and Panzarella, 1980, cited in Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, pp. 526-527).

Furthermore, Maslow believed that peak experiences could truly be *life-changing* and have a permanent effect after the event itself, changing our perspective of our lives and adding meaning to them. (Maslow, 1962, 1964, 1968, cited in Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 527). For John, Parsifal was a significant *trigger*, as well as being life-changing: "I knew I wanted to be a musician when I was five, when I heard Parsifal. It inspired me so much that I just knew; that will be my profession." He was 'hit' whilst sitting in the audience and this had a monumental effect on his life, determining the direction it would take.

Panzarella (1980) suggests seven main categories of *after-effects* derived from Maslow's (1968) research:

> (1) general appreciation of music or visual art, (2) altering of self-appreciation, (3) altering of relationships with other people, (4) alter-ing [sic] of attitudes toward life or world in general, (5) increased aesthetic sensitivity, (6) enhanced perception of everyday reality, and (7) long-lasting mood effects.(Whaley *et al.*, 2009, cited in Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 527).

One *can* expect positive effects from peak experiences in the long-term, however it is still unclear how these effects occur and how significant they are (Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 527). . When looking at the description above, it is also clear that they can contribute to our well-being and enrich our lives. Our relationship to ourselves and others, for example, contribute to a life we can enjoy and draw meaning from. Peak experiences can give us new perspective and attitudes towards life, consequently motivating and driving us forward, as Panzarella suggests. (Ruud, 2013, pp. 239-240).

Intense musical experiences (IMEs) and altered states of consciousness

A further connection can be made between so-called intense musical experiences (IMEs) and altered states of consciousness, as there are many similarities between these. In an altered state of consciousness our experience is affected by a change in our sense of time, and we believe our mental function to be altered and different from our normal conscious state. (Schäfer *et al.*,

2014, pp. 528-529). Changes occur concerning our thought patterns and experience of meaning, emotions (both negative and positive) and our perception, amongst other things. The power music has, is expressed well by Rittner (2007) who says that "music helps us to temporarily tran-scend [sic] bodily troublesomeness and narrowness, to make audible what is unspeakable, to incarnate what is ineffable." (Rittner, 2007, p. 282, translation by the authors, cited in Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 529). These sentiments were, as previously mentioned, echoed by some of my interview participants for whom music and singing is a form of expression and communication.

Dittrich (1996, cited in Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 529) has suggested 3 main categories of experiences related to *altered states of consciousness*. "Oceanic experiences" involve sensing a higher truth, being at one with the world and oneself, and escaping space and time. "Anxious dissolution of the I" involves losing one's control of reality and self, and "visionary restructuring" encorporates changes in the way we perceive meaning and visions, for instance. The first are generally positive experiences, whereas the second category is linked to negative experiences such as high anxiety levels and negative feelings. If IMEs and alteration of conscious state are similar, this ought to be borne in mind with regards to musical experiences as well. (Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 529).

In their own qualitative study into the *long-term effects of IMEs,* Schäfer *et al.* define these as "an unforgettable experience with music that stands out from usual experiences because of its quality; it is characterized by changed perception, deep feelings, and an intense physical reaction." (Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 529). This description again links to John's engagement with the opera Parsifal, resulting in a change in his perception, and intense physical reactions when musicking mentioned during several of my interviews. The fact that they remember such experiences is also because they stand out in nature from other musical experiences, as described by Schäfer *et al*.

I could go into greater detail about the effects of IMEs, but choose instead to quote the researchers' own description of the after-effects:

> People's locus of control is higher after the IME. As a long-term effect, the IME leads to changes in people's values, meaning of life, social relationships, and engagement; (8) After an IME, the experienced meaning of life is greater; (9) After an IME, personal values are more strongly associated with social relationships, intangible value and morale; (10) The IME moti-vates [sic] people to create, intensify, and/ or maintain social relationships (Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 541).

As we can see several of these effects are similar to those achieved through peak experiences, however this description more explicitly mentions changes in values, meaning of life and morale than Panzarella's (1980) description.

Interestingly, Schäfer *et al*. did not find any evidence of *negative* IMEs despite the possibility of these occurring according to Dittrich (1996) above. Participants only had positive experiences to share! My own interview participants also spoke very positively of the role of music in their lives.

Furthermore, the experiences of Schäfer *et al*.'s participants were *not* affected by their level of musical training (Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 531). This observation is significant because it clearly shows that encounters with music can be meaningful for *everyone* regardless of musical skill; in other words, IMEs are not limited to talented musicians *capable* of having them. This should encourage us to make music available to people with all levels of ability and background, and as both John's and Michael's amateur choirs demonstrate, participation in *singing* activities can be life-changing and powerful regardless of musical ability or experience.

So what do IMEs mean for quality of life? Schäfer *et al.* write that certain *processes* are set in motion after an IME in order to live more in harmony with the values, needs and goals discovered during these sessions (Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 543). The keyword *values* brings us back to an important aspect of QoL according to the WHO, concerning our perception of our "position in life within the context of a culture and value systems" (WHOQOL, 2004, cited in Clift *et al*., 2010, p. 22). Re-aligning our values through IMEs, feeling more at one with ourselves and the value system around us can also increase our sense of mental and emotional well-being. Changes after an IME can also affect other elements contributing to QoL such as engagement, meaning in life, inspiration and relationships with others. Furthermore, the *resources* acquired during an IME can help individuals when confronted with stressors preventing them from achieving a state of fulfilment and harmony, by giving them energy and motivation. Schäfer *et al*. state that the "interviewees had the impression that they could influence and shape their lives with their own actions. Obstacles were no longer seen as a threat, but as a challenge." (Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 539). This experience of taking control, being able to change one's own life is an important extenuating factor in experiencing QoL and Sense of Coherence (c.f. Antonovsky).

Strong experiences with music (SEMs)

A further classification for intense musical encounters is SEMs, or strong experiences with music. Gabrielsson (2001, 2010, and 2011) studied these specifically and, similarly to Panzarella, discovered seven main categories for these: one of which was "existential and transcendental aspects" (Gabrielsson, 2001, 2010; Gabrielsson & Lindström Wik, 2003, cited in Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 527). Some of the participants in the study on which these categories are based, expressed that these intense experiences had been *profoundly* life changing for them. Social and personal effects of these encounters included receiving new insights and positively valuing one's identity and social experiences with others. (Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 527).

With regard to music therapy, the SEM statements analyzed gave valuable insight into what music can be *used for*, such as giving hope, giving new knowledge about the way we live our lives; also in our relationship with others. Music can help us gain self-confidence through confirmation we receive from others, and it can change our state of mind. Gabrielsson and Lindström also suggest that SEMs make intense *religious or spiritual* experiences possible. The ideas put forward here *can* be seen as speculative, and there is – in fact - not much data to show the long-term effects of SEMs. Research focused on people's experiences *in the moment* of the SEM, not afterwards, and only some of the participants mentioned effects over the long-term. This does, however, give an indication of possible effects in the long run. (Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 528).

Concerning the question of whether strong experiences with music only affect *listeners* rather than *active musicians,* studies were conducted by Lamont on both music listeners (2011) and young musicians (2012). They concluded that music *making* can encourage feelings of happiness through engaging the musician and creating meaning. *Listening* to music, on the other hand, can lead to increased happiness through the creation of *memories* that are incredibly happy and valuable. (Lamont 2011, 2012, cited in Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 528). I would like to suggest that active music *making*, not only listening, leaves us with memories we can enjoy and learn from beyond the event itself. As my own research has shown, peak experiences or strong experiences with music can also occur when singing and musicking, as opposed to listening. Religious and spiritual experiences mentioned in the previous paragraph bring me to the final part of this section where I will now share some *spiritual* peak experiences my interview participants described. These further confirm that intense experiences with music can occur when personally performing music through singing or conducting.

Transcendent and Spiritual experiences with music

In his book *Music and Identity* Ruud dedicates a section to the room in our lives where transpersonal experiences occur, and also writes about experiences which have a spiritual dimension. During these types of transcendent encounters our emotions are brought into *focus,* rather than being an *accompanying* factor for happenings in our lives, and strong emotions are common. (Ruud, 2013, p. 236). However, religious experiences do not always have to be big 'events.' According to Bossius and Lilliestam there has recently been a *shift* in our view of religion: research has shown that important religious experiences may also occur in small everyday situations, making them more personal. (Bossius and Lilliestam, 2012, pp. 280, 281, cited in Ruud, 2013, p. 248).

According to Ruud, our quest to enter into a more meditative state is often linked to experiencing God. Gabrielsson speaks of aspects such as spiritual peace, paradise, visions of heaven, Christian fellowship and a meeting with godliness (Gabrielsson, 2008, Chapter 8, cited in Ruud, 2013, p. 247). Christian fellowship can also include worship and music, which Joy shared as being part of her faith: "well, I'm a Christian so it's in a way a part of that too. Worship when I go to church, and there the music is also a large part of it." Anna also described that for her, being a Christian adds another dimension to sacred music.

Nelsen describes *spirituality* as "the experiential and personal side of our relationship to the transcendent or sacred" (Nelsen, 2009, p. 547, cited in Schäfer *et al.*, 2014, p. 239), the most important aspect being the transcendental one. Such experiences can be described as moments that do not fit into our boxes of logical thinking, we do not understand them, and they consequently expand how we think, act or feel. Transcendent experiences also allow us to have epiphanies, be inspired and intuitive, and even though they can be described as *spiritual*, they are not to be generalized as being *only* spiritual in nature. (Italian Psychologist Assagioli, 1988, cited in Ruud, 2013, p. 238).

Words used to describe *music* are frequently used to describe *transcendent experiences*, including words such as joy, sense of freedom and regeneration (Italian Psychologist Assagioli 1988, cited in Ruud, 2013, p. 238). Schäfer *et al*. write about intense musical experiences (IMEs) and transcendence: "Self-transcendence can lead to the experience of relatedness to all the other aspects (superior being, nature, social envi-ronment [sic]) only after a conscious and deliberate involvement with the IME." (Schäfer *et al*., 2014, pp. 539-540). This last point highlights that such experiences as a result of an intense musical encounter are not subconscious chance occurances. Furthermore, the experience of being part of something bigger, as described

above, does not have to be purely religious in nature; we can feel this with regard to *other people* as well.

Goldberg and Dimiceli-Mitran refer, in an article about GIM (the Guided Music and Imagery method developed by Helen Bonnie), to Vaughan who makes an important point: namely that experiences such as these, affecting our spirituality and sense of existence, are extremely important for our *mental health*. He suggests that our need to seek out transcendence must be *acknowledged* in order for us to develop fully. (Vaughan, 1985/1995, p. 9, cited in Goldberg and Dimiceli-Mitran, 2010, p. 9). During musical encounters, whether they make us feel we have transcended life's normal boundaries, or that we have been 'high,' music can be seen as a catalyst. We are introduced to new dimensions or we alter our reality for a while through music. (Ruud, 2013, pp. 248-249).

Looking back at the nature of SEMs, which also included transcendent and existential aspects, (Gabrielsson, 2001, 2010; Gabrielsson & Lindström Wik, 2003, cited in Schäfer *et al*., 2014, p. 527), we see that these strong experiences were also described as being deeply life changing. This was touched upon by Paul who told me, "many whom I've had in choirs over the years have found faith *through* singing their songs. Without having a defined faith beforehand. I think that's very exciting. Without pushing anything onto anyone, through music one actually touches on something essential." Faith can change lives profoundly and give a new perspective for life.

Both Michael and William shared how performing Händel's Messiah, conducting in Michael's case, has been one way of living out religion. William described a peak experience he had whilst singing Messiah, where he had

> been standing for three hours and get to the final 'Amen' movement. Which is extremely big and beautiful and pompous, you just give all you've got and then in a way everything disappears; then I don't think about the fact that I'm tired or my back hurts. Then I can get hefty goosebumps and tears are building up, and it becomes very powerful. Not just because it's beautiful but also because it's very spiritually powerful.

He experienced the sensation of getting so caught up in the moment that other problems, in his case physical fatigue, were forgotten; an effect which Panzarella calls 'withdrawal-ecstacy' (Ruud, 2013, p. 239). He was affected both on a physical and spiritual level, and went on to say that performing this piece has perhaps been the time when he most experienced singing as something *spiritual.* Moreover, preparing for, and singing at church services with his choir is his way of practicing his faith: "I live out my faith through doing music. Through singing sacred

music and taking part in church services and so forth." Michael told me, "when I conduct the great works such as Händel's Messiah or the Mass in B minor… then I feel that the music has a spirit [beåndet musikk]. And that is *my* way of living out religion."

Vaughan's statement regarding our spiritual *nature* and its relationship with mental health, highlights that these experiences are vital also for QoL and well-being. The need for coherence and a sense of living up to one's own expectations and being true to one's own identity, including our spiritual nature, are likewise essential. Spiritual experiences such as those described above can allow us to transcend beyond our current situation, feel that we are part of something bigger, or connect with something spiritual. A personal faith and relationship to God is a further example of an intimate, meaningful relationship, mentioned in conjunction with Næss' definition of QoL. Relationships with others help us to feel that we belong, have purpose, and are necessary for strengthening our emotional and psychological well-being.

A final thought to close this section: In Goldberg and Dimiceli-Mitran's article it becomes clear that a *holistic* understanding of human nature is now more generally accepted. Music therapy has also embraced a more holistic approach in its treatment methods, giving more credence to Bonny's GIM therapy method, and recognising its *spiritual* element. (Goldberg and Dimiceli-Mitran, 2010, p. 17). It is important to acknowledge and treat the *whole* person, and accepting that humans are unique and comprised of body, mind and soul, provides us with a much wider range of therapeutic possibilities and methods of treatment. Likewise does the acknowledgment that active involvement with music, for example through singing, provides a way of achieving deeper contact with oneself, and one's spiritual nature.

2.6 Motivation for musicking

> *"Of course, one always has pressure. I feel pressure before every performance.*
> *[…] but I think without pressure, one wouldn't practice as much."*
> *(John)*

What is it that motivates us to musick and sing? What drives us to invest hours of hard work, in some cases isolated from others, to achieve personal goals? Motivation is without doubt an essential part of involvement with music, on both an amateur and professional level. Several of its componants were also described by my interview participants.

Experts have tried to explain this complex concept many times and the two main motivational factors they propose are: *internal* (personal) and *external* (routed in the environment), and the interplay between them varies. Professor Susan Hallam refers to Bronfenbrenner (1979) who describes the interactive relationship between these factors in the following way: "Human development depends on mutual accommodation which occurs through-out [sic] the life-course between an individual and the various systems which they or others close to them encounter in their environment" (Hallam, 2009, p. 285). In other words, we continue to develop our whole lives, affected by who we are and the influence of the environment and those close to us. Environmental influence can occur through reward or punishment of behaviour, internal influence comes from the individuals themselves who can determine how they behave. Furthermore, feedback from the environment can affect later behaviour of the individual, as well as their thought patterns.

According to the newest theories, the way we perceive events is "determined by our construction of them" (Hallam, 2009, p. 285), and our self-esteem, motivation and self-efficacy are influenced by the way we interpret them. In other words our motivation is defined by our reaction to events that take place, and our reactions are in turn formed by the way in which we see ourselves.

With regards to *music* and motivation, there has been little focus in research on what motivates us to compose, listen to music and engage in musical activities, and more focus on motivation relating to learning and continued playing of an instrument. (Hallam, 2009, p. 285). I will now investigate some types of motivation, also those addressed during my interviews, looking first at external and then internal sources.

2.6.1 External motivation

External pressure and expectations

John's quote used to introduce this section, shows that a sense of external pressure - the expectations of other people - or even personal expectations, can motivate a musician to practice more and to invest more time into perfecting their art. John describes how the orchestra he is playing with at the moment has performed with well-known musicians and in that respect, perhaps, he feels a lot of pressure to perform well. He says, however, that it also means he prepares himself more which in turn can be positive. Aside from feeling pressure he mentions *fear of failure* as being a motivating factor, and adds that this not only applies to music: "But,

I think with regard to all high achievers, the pressure and of course the fear of failure, is what makes you better, because I think that's not typical in music, I think that's the case with *all* jobs." Thus, in John's eyes it seems, pressure and fear of failure are not necessarily negative; they actually drive him to be better at what he does.

Anna told me that she wanted to be a good girl and do things right, and perhaps in that respect she was motivated by external expectations and significant others around her as well. In William's case the external motivation was not pressure but rather an incentive in the form of money: "It was mum who wanted me to start there [in the children's choir] and I got [a certain sum of money] every year for going there." Despite money being the original incentive he reflects, "…I didn't feel that that was pressure. That was a kind of enticement. It wasn't as if I cried and didn't want to go to the choir rehearsal. It was very pleasurable anyway. Once I started there I'm sure I would have continued even if I hadn't received money for it."

A challenging environment

Another external source of motivation is an environment that provides us with challenges. Sarah talks about a hunger for new experiences, for being challenged, as an important part of singing: "longing for something new, you know? It's also a fascination." New experiences provide new challenges and for her, being "challenged is perhaps one of the most fascinating aspects" of singing. However, in order for challenges to be motivating, there must be the right *balance* between the level of difficulty and our resources to meet and conquer these challenges. (Hallam, 2009, pp. 285-286). If the challenges are too great it can either *demotivate* us or spur us on to work *even* harder to achieve our goals. Insufficient challenges can mean we get bored over time and stagnate, or even regress, with regard to our abilities. (Hallam, 2009, p. 288-289). These thoughts are reflected in several statements William made during his interview. For one, motivation with regard to choral singing occurs

> if [the conductor] comes with a piece for example […] that seems completely impossible and completely illogical, sounds like a computer modem from the 90s when you listen to the practice file, but which suddenly falls into place. And becomes very logical and nice; that's very motivating.

Getting to the point where music which at first is not so easily accessible becomes accessible, makes you "feel you've moved up a notch." I asked him what he meant by this last statement, "are you thinking of your own development or the culture you've acquired, or…?" to which he replied that it is a bit of both and that: "It's very fun to learn a vocal part that initially sounded impossible." Furthermore, he is not only motivated by his own achievements but also by those

of the choir as a whole: "I become motivated when I see that everyone can do it." *Demotivation* comes when choral music is either too easy or not challenging enough, or with regards to music one never learns to like for reasons which are not always easy to identify. As William's statements show there is a fine line at times between challenges being too big, too small or just right, and consequently being motivating or demotivating. Bandura (1989) suggests that we are most motivated when we feel we have what it takes, but are a little uncertain as to how we will succeed; we feel challenged. (Bandura, 1989, cited in Hallam, 2009, pp. 288-289).

Having *defined goals and expectations*, either from external or internal sources is another key motivating factor. These are also important with regards to choral singing according to Paul who said that "faith and a concrete goal for the choir are essential for achieving a good sound. When one has a concert or aspires to certain ambitions, it affects everyone." Perhaps for John as well, certain goals are the result of external expectations, and these together with the fear of failure, or maybe of looking bad in front of others, give incentive to improve, prepare and to work towards the goals that have been set. Again, the challenges leading up to achieving these goals must be conquerable, otherwise he can become demotivated.

With regard to *ambitions,* it is also essential when working with others to be united and aiming towards the same goal. Paul told me that a choir won't function if the singers have very *different* ambitions: if some people come to socialize and others to sing, that will not work well together. A similar way of thinking is also important during collaborations between musicians, according to John, even if they are skilled: "One has to feel similarly, one has to think similarly, because it can be a lot of work to meet each other, also with *very* good musicians."

Michael highlights the importance of his role *as a conductor* in motivating the choir, and creating an atmosphere in which people can be moved. In such cases it's important for the choir and conductor to realize they are a team: "Well this is something we do *together*. And it's very important that we experience that. We are a unit, the conductor and choir work together, and *communicate* something together." Such unity and goal-focus allow things to flow more easily. Seeing our goal clearly before us motivates us because it gives us a purpose, a direction to work in, and can encourage us to *invest time and effort* in order to achieve that goal. Others working with us can also make it easier to reach the finish line because we can encourage each other, lean on each other and be inspired by one another.

Approval and feedback from others

As human beings we have an innate need to feel special and meaningful, which will in part be met by positive affirmation and approval we receive from others. This may concern our singing, musicianship or other non-musical aspects of our lives. We also especially seek approval from those we look up to, and praise from significant others can enhance our confidence and influence our self-esteem. Feedback from the environment can actually affect us fairly consistently for a longer period of time if it becomes internalised to a great enough extent, and we may also set goals for ourselves influenced by the environment and by our self- perception. This in turn can influence our behaviour. (Hallam, 2009, pp. 285-286).

According to Hallam, our *families* are "the main source of musical stimulation" when we are young and may be foundational to our interest in music later on. (Hallam, 2009, p. 290). Howe *et al.* (1995) have also found that the musical stimulation given by parents affects the age at which we start to sing (cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 290). Their encouragement is an important factor in whether children commit to, and continue with their musical activities over a longer time period (Fortney *et al*., 1993, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 290). William has also reflected on this and says: "It's fundamentally important whether you grow up in a family where there is a lot of music, then you'll most probably be interested in music."

I asked my participants what or who inspired them to start pursuing music, and family members were important inspirators for several of them. Joy's sister inspired her to join the church choir since she already sang there. An important role-model for Anna was her mother who sang a lot with her when she was younger. William was introduced to music by his father. A common denominator for Joy, Anna, Paul, Michael, William and Sarah was the presence of music at home either through listening to or making music, and the fact that someone in the family opened the door to the musical world.

This raises an important point with regard to music and the wider society as well: What about those who don't come from homes where music is played, how can we reach them so that they too can experience the benefits musicking can offer? A glimpse of hope is given by MacKinnon's research which found that although parents play an important role, there is also evidence of people from difficult backgrounds pursuing music, despite not having optimal conditions behind them (MacKinnon, 1965, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 290).

Significant others in our environment can also be teachers or choral conductors. Sarah who is a singing teacher herself, highlighted that these have a large influence over their students, and encouragement and feedback can stimulate students by giving them greater confidence: "to

get a student to understand 'you can move people with your voice' – that's strong and wonderful feedback to receive, also in order to stimulate that ability further." According to Hallam, "teachers motivate pupils to engage with music, identities as musicians develop leading to more positive attitudes towards school music and teachers" (Lamont, 2002, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 290). Furthermore, seeing positive results in those we have encouraged or invested in can in turn encourage and motivate *us* to continue investing in our own skillset, in order to be able to help even more people hone their skills or experience the joy that exists in musicking.

For Paul, as a conductor, an important part of working with choirs includes influencing others by helping them to realise their potential:

> I love to get people to use their gifts and their talents, and to hear a choir that works well, to work with people who have bad self-esteem. It's often more about mastery than singing. For me it's an important channel for perhaps creating a little more happiness for many people in everyday life.

This last point he touches on is key with regards to this thesis. QoL is not only about big, dramatic, life-changing encounters with music, it's also about the small, everyday happenings - experiences that make us happier, more confident and satisfied because we feel like we can use our resources to contribute something. Furthermore, even if we are not teachers or choral conductors, we also have the opportunity to influence and motivate *others*. Telling someone that what they do means something, be it singing or other forms of musicking, can spur *them* on to continue their pursuits and hone their skills. We can be important motivators for others by giving them approval either with regard to their musicianship, or other personal aspects.[3]

Motivation can even *increase* in an environment that helps us reach our goals and where our needs are satisfied (Hallam, 2009, p. 286). This means that we who are teachers or lead musicking acitivities can create environments that *fuel* motivation. Anna tells me that the positive affirmation *she* received actually increased her desire to sing: "I was always told I was so good at *singing* and then of course I want to sing even *more*!" Positive encouragement is important in the beginning of the musical learning process and lays the foundation for a positive identity with regards to music (Manturzewska, 1990, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 290). The fact that the early learning stage is especially important, has implications for the choosing of a good teacher at the outset; someone who inspires us (or our children), someone who fuels the passion

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[3] Bauge, Å. K. (2010-2012). Forelesninger i faget musikkdidaktikk, spesialisert på Sang, som del av Praktisk Pedagogikk Utdanning ved Barratt Due Musikkinstitutt, Oslo, Norge.

and love of music, and who gives encouragement to pursue it over time. For Michael, his teacher in school was essential in bringing him to where he is today. She was a role-model for the class, singing with them and setting a good example for how to sing.

> And when I was at school this was an important part of the teaching method. Break up the lesson with a song. And then the teacher said, 'children, now we're going to sing a song. Now we're not going to concentrate on sums for the moment, now we're going to sing.' And then we were all supposed to stand by our desks and the teacher would stand at the front, and then we sang together.

Other people have an important role in forming the way we *think* about ourselves. With regard to our cognitive thought processes, feedback from others and comparing ourselves can affect our self-awareness of our musical ability. Comparing ourselves with those who are high achievers may discourage us. (Hallam, 2009, p. 287). Hallam uses the term metacognition to describe an awareness of how one personally learns. One can also become aware of one's own weaknesses and strengths, and our metacognition may also be affected by "the way that we manage our attributions." (Hallam, 2009, p. 289). Moreover, the influence of our environment can be either supportive or critical. (Hallam, 2009, p. 287). For singers and artists, it can be important to have people around them who believe in them, encourage them and spur them on, even when they feel they are worse than others or lack confidence in their abilities. They need parents and teachers who see the potential in them, who introduce music and musicking into their lives, as confirmed by my own research.

When considering the influence of others in our lives, it is important to remember that not all influence is positive. My interview participants spoke very positively of the encouragement they received to start pursuing music, however the possibility of negative influence is there. John's pertinent observation mentioned earlier concerned forcing someone to play an instrument against his will, which is not necessarily the way to go. As teachers or role-models we can influence others significantly, and Sarah addresses the risk of *manipulating* students, making it important

> To not dominate [overkjøre] an identity, a personality. Letting a personality grow of itself, and I think that's especially important with regard to singing because it's so easy to hear a voice and to assume that it wants to go one way, but that's not necessarily the case. You can manipulate someone to a large degree especially if you're a strong singing teacher, you know? To make [the student] believe something that doesn't really come from *them*.

In the process of helping a student find their identity, dialogue is key: "of course all students need input and advice, and need to hear what suits them. However this must always take place through a dialog with the student so that they themselves can develop their personality."

As I mentioned in the section on identity, *we* ultimately decide who we are – we are not merely products of our environment. However others can have a significant influence if we let them and young people are more impressionable at a time when they are exploring themselves and trying to find their place in the world. Thus it is important to encourage where necessary but also let them influence their own lives. The element of choice, feeling one has the freedom to stop playing an instrument or singing is important. (For more on this see section 4.1). With regard to instrumental tuition, research has shown that those who stop playing an instrument tend to have achieved less, practiced less (Sloboda *et al.,* 1996; Hallam, 1998, cited in Hallam, 2009), have received less encouragement from home, see themselves as having less musical ability and as being better at other recreational activities (Frakes, 1984, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 291). There are also extenuating factors that can play a part in ceasing musical training. (Hallam, 2009, p. 291). Thus the familial influence, positive feedback and positive thought patterns regarding one's own ability are key in maintaining musical motivation. In the case of my participants, inspiration and feedback from the environment has been significant, and the expectations or even pressures some of them described appear not to have been overwhelming or detrimental, as all of them still pursue and enjoy music today.

How external motivation can become internalised

According to Deci and Ryan (1985) and Ryan and Deci (2000) the desire to learn and master new things of one's *own volition* is called 'self-determination theory' (cited in Woody and McPherson, 2010, p. 407). With regards to music this theory implies that motivation begins extrinsically and becomes more intrinsic over time. External motivation can include hearing a piece performed by someone else and being inspired to learn it oneself. Once one gains approval from others, for example, the internal motivation to practice increases and reaches a stage of 'introjected regulation.' The next stage of 'identified regulation' is reached when the musician sees the value of practice in order to hone his skill and technique, for instance. He is motivated by the value of the activity and its benefits – even when the activity is not always pleasurable. (Austin, Renwick and McPherson, 2007, p. 225 cited in Woody and McPherson, 2010, p. 407). Once a musician reaches so-called 'integrated regulation,' practice has almost become second nature, and performing has become part of the musician's identity - the motivation has become internal. (Woody and McPherson, 2010, p. 407). It appears that several of my interview participants have reached this stage of integration, as for them life without music is now either unimaginable or has become an integral part of their identity.

2.6.2 Internal motivating factors

"...it's good to feel it yourself and not feel pressured to practice."

(Joy)

Nature-given factors

Some factors making us distinct are nature given, such as our gender, age or biological temperament. Shaping occurs through our surroundings and makes these traits a part of our personality, self-perceptions, cognitive processes and gender identity. (Hallam, 2009, pp. 285-286). For some, music is also an important part of their *identity* (Pitts, 2005, cited Hallam, 2009, p. 287), as discussed in section 2.2. Perhaps some personalities are better suited to pursuing music as a profession as opposed to a hobby for, as John expressed, one needs discipline to learn an instrument, and some people don't *want* to play an instrument. People are different and have different passions - that's what makes the world so colourful. Some are also better able to cope with the pressures of performance, the attention and fame, and the reviews one receives, which at times can be scathing.

There is a difference, however, between this and pursuing music as a hobby, and individual differences should not discourage us from making music available to many people with different backgrounds and personalities. Paul, when asked whether everyone can benefit from singing or music, said that music "is really only tones and sounds put into a system and we are surrounded by it all the time. So I believe many would have improved quality of life by doing music, and by being part of a choir especially. I think everyone would benefit from that." William reflected that an important factor in developing an interest in music is exposure:

> I think it's just about getting to that level where it becomes accessible to you. You have to have a certain amount of insight. I didn't enjoy snooker at all until I learned the rules and started watching and following it, and it's the same with singing. I think that everyone who gets enough input about a type of music can benefit from it. And enjoy it.

It is also important to not write off those who at first glance appear not to be predisposed to music or singing. Michael tells me that people in his project-based choir, many of whom were previously discouraged from singing, enjoy participating and even go as far as to say that it has changed their lives. He shared: "they are so grateful for being allowed to join in and sing, both those who have been rejected in their time, and told 'but you can't sing. You have to do

something else.'" First impressions of people's nature-given predispositions are not always correct.

Individual needs

Anna described how her motivation for singing is, in part, also *internal.* Individual and internal aspects of motivation, i.e. our *needs* as influenced by our personality, are also varied and include the need for *self-actualization, curiosity* and *desire for achievement* (Motte-Haber, 1984, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 287). Anna also feels a *need* to sing, as described in Panassié's quote (c.f. page 23). She says that "the pull and the need to *sing* was *very* strong. And still is." Perhaps this ties in with the need for self-actualization, the need to be fulfilled, to be oneself and to use one's resources. Sarah spoke of this fascination with singing, to experience new things, tying in with curiosity mentioned by Motte-Haber above. Other motivating factors include *satisfaction* derived from positive responses given in performance settings, the fulfilment given by music inducing emotions in us, and a desire for voyeurism (Nagel, 1987, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 287).

According to research, there are also differences in what motivates amateur and professional musicians. Amateurs can take music as seriously as professionals do, or do it for personal amusement (Gates, 1991, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 287). For John as a professional, music appears to become more invaluable the more he *invests in it*. He tells me that practicing more makes it increasingly difficult for him to imagine his life *without* music, which indicates a certain amount of pleasure on his part. Practicing more also brings him joy and Hallam writes that joy is an important factor contributing to the internalization of motivation and its integration into our sense of self: "Intrinsic motivation is a crucial aspect of devel-oping [sic] self-identity as a musician. This may take several forms, but one key element is enjoyment of the experience of engagement with music." (Hallam, 2009, pp. 290-291). Michael's motivation to do music is so strong that he will continue doing it for as long as he can: "…when people ask me how long I'm going to keep going I say 'until I am stopped' … for one reason or another."

Our thought-patterns

The way *we* think is important with regards to us meeting our needs and behaving in a certain way, which brings us back to the idea of setting goals. Our actions will be influenced by thinking through the consequences they will have (Hallam, 2009, pp. 285-286). We must have the right mind-set in order to take on new challenges and achieve our goals. Our *self-esteem* is affected by our thoughts, and we tend to attribute failure or success to causes consistent with

the way we see ourselves. Success in a task, and the boost in self-esteem and motivation it gives, will then affect us the next time we face new learning opportunities. (Hallam, 2009, pp. 285-286). Concerning our *musical abilities* this means that succeeding in musical tasks in turn boosts our motivation and self-esteem. William talked about the relationship between singing and self-confidence, sharing that positive feedback from someone listening to the choir, someone complimenting his voice: "That's a boost. So there have been a couple of times […]. At the time that was a huge boost, a self-confidence boost... in that…" For him the approval of others is also important with regards to motivation and satisfaction: "to feel that one is doing something that's good, that people think is good, others think is good."

Furthermore we are motivated (or not) by whether we believe we can *conquer the task before us* (Bandura, 1982, cited in Hallam, 2009, pp. 287-288). Researchers have discovered that "for intrinsic motivation to flourish, feelings of self-determination are also necessary" (Hallam, 2009, pp. 288-289). A certain internal drive or determination, as described by Anna for example, is necessary for us to develop internal motivation that will help us to keep going, even if we lack motivation from external sources. Positive experiences will contribute to increasing our self-belief and give us the courage we need to take on new and even bigger challenges, also with regard to musicking activities.

The *goals* people set for themselves are determined by their *self-concept*, their view of their abilities and identity. Having positive ideas about ourselves and what we can achieve can motivate us greatly, whereas a negative vision of what we can achieve is unlikely to keep us going. (Hallam, 2009, p. 288). Therefore our self-concept regarding music is very important in order to keep us motivated. MacNamara *et al.* found that self-belief became more important for musicians as competition and "more critical appraisal" increased (MacNamara, 2006, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 288). Furthermore, achieving our goals is not a purely pleasurable experience, and sometimes sacrifices have to be made in order to get to where we want to be (Howe and Sloboda, 1991, in Hallam, 2009, p. 288). At such times motivation plays a significant role, and goals that we feel are ultimately achievable are the ones we are motivated to work towards. (Hallam, 2009, p. 288).

We also wish to have a generally positive *self-image,* and in order to create and maintain this, we develop strategies we can use (Covington 1984). One of these is defining the causes of our failure or success. These causes can be seen as controllable or uncontrollable, stable or unstable, and external or internal. According to Harter (1985) it is best to attribute failures to external factors and successes to internal factors, as our motivation for musical activities is

probably sustained in this way. (Covington, 1984, and Harter, 1985, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 289). So when we have a good performance, it is important to attribute that to ourselves, whereas bad days should be linked to external factors, if the aim is to keep motivation at its best.

A combination of internal and external factors

Looking at all the motivational keys mentioned above, we can see that motivation for musicking and other areas of life is many-faceted, yet essential in order to achieve progress and mastery in what we do. Bronfenbrenner, (1979) as quoted at the beginning of this section, clearly suggests that both individual and environmental factors influence our development. Sarah reveals that singing had a developmental effect during her youth, saying that "singing, regardless of the musical side of it, also had a personal meaning with regards to my personality. And a developmental meaning. I would say very strongly in fact during those years."

QoL can be describes as an experience, a process and a resource according to Medin and Alexanderson (2000, cited in Ruud, 2006, p. 19) - all of which are signifiers of motivation. As the WHO suggests, QoL is influenced by the way in which we view ourselves in relation to our goals and expectations and both of these have an important motivational role; thus motivation and what we can achieve through it, is significant in making our lives meaningful and fulfilled. Motivation is also an important part of conquering new tasks and facilitating mastery, which I will now explore.

2.7 The importance of mastering singing and life

> *"Then you feel you've moved up a notch."*
> *(William)*

Mastering life and the everyday situations we are confronted with is one of the key components of a satisfied and happy life. Ruud notes that mastery and assertiveness are central to the *musical* arena as well (Ruud, 2013, p. 23). Constantly feeling inferior to the challenges of life and the tasks assigned to us, regardless which area of life they occur in, would leave us feeling incompetent and dissatisfied. Conversely, we can *gain* satisfaction from mastering a task and doing it well. This was expressed by William with regards to choral singing when asked what he would miss if he stopped singing: "I would miss the feeling of performing and singing well."

He refers here to the satisfying feeling of receiving praise after a choral performance, because it confirms a job well done.

As described in the previous section on motivation, in order to experience mastery, the balance between our abilities and the size of the challenge is important. We *need* to be challenged, for without challenge there is no mastery; however the goals must essentially be achievable, and the same is true for musicking. Furthermore the feeling of mastering a task is not only important for the task itself, mastery creates a ripple effect improving our overall sense of self-worth and self-confidence. Self-confidence regarding music and singing can boost the self-belief needed to meet and conquer new challenges in other areas of our lives.

According to Ruud, our overall self-confidence can be affected by feeling more secure and progressing over time in our musical ability. (Ruud, 2010, cited in Balsnes, 2010, p. 22). In a choral setting, feeling secure is also important, as expressed by Paul: "Security creates mastery. Security creates calm, security creates better tone because then one dares to let it out, to sing loudly, to make mistakes." Feeling secure allows us to blossom, to attempt new challenges and even to fail or "make mistakes" as Paul described. A study done on school children by Harlam *et al*. showed that self-esteem and confidence especially were affected by children's engagement in musical activity. (Harlam, 2000, cited in MacDonald *et al*., 2009, p. 474.) As per the definitions given initially of QoL, self-confidence is one of the contributing factors, and participation in musicking provides an arena within which to improve this. Sarah describes that for young people singing means that their "self-confidence grows, they become more secure in themselves. Having the chance to hear your own voice in a room alone does something to you." Even if the progress we make is slow and the steps we take are tiny, success will empower us to take new steps.

Earlier in my thesis I discussed that joy is an important reason why people sing and musick. In contrast to this Sarah made the important point that it can be very frustrating for a singer when they cannot express themselves in the way they want to due to technical difficulties with the voice. This may in turn demotivate the singer and rob him of their feeling of mastery. It can be very tough, as she described, when you really love singing and your voice is not working as expected. According to her, the voice is very "personal and the fact that it works well also when speaking, means more than we are aware of until it doesn't work." Anna also shared that singing is not always a joy, for example when one does not accomplish what one wants to, or one is ill. However that's why she tries to take care of her voice and receive new

impulses by taking singing lessons occasionally. This can again lead to new experiences of mastery.

How do we actually experience mastery? Experts suggest that there are varying types of mastery, and people achieve this in different ways. For some people success means striving and then completing a task put before them (task-oriented mastery). Those who are accomplishment oriented experience mastery when comparing themselves to others, and some people experience a feeling of *contentment* when they master a task, so-called experience oriented focus. (Nicholls, 1989, cited in Säfvenbom, 2005, p. 78). Our surroundings play an important role in our positive feeling of mastery as well, as we "harvest"* reactions from our surroundings and can experience mastery through that. (Ruud, 2013, p. 115). When looking at singers these different types of mastery are evident: For some it is rewarding to see progress regarding one's own technique after hours of solitary practice. For others it feels good to beat the competition at an audition or feel that one masters a task more successfully than others. For some perhaps the applause and reaction of the audience after a performance give a feeling of mastery. Paul shared with me that he aims to create magical experiences for people so that they are touched by the music and that for *him* that is the measurement of success.

Mastery leads to feelings of control

Positive experiences of mastery also help build up our belief that we can control our lives, that we can change our situation for the better. Mastering certain tasks, such as singing or other musicking activities, may strengthen our self-belief. Feelings of control can consequently give us *hope* that we can move forward and progress in our lives, also with regard to our skills. This in turn is a motivating factor for singers and musickers when they feel they are having an 'off' day, or things are not going the way they had hoped.

Mastering musicking affords people greater confidence to take chances and attempt to conquer new challenges because they believe they can achieve new things. Faith and hope that change is possible also play an important part in combating depression and lack of meaning; these being prevalent health issues in today's society. Furthermore, hope and faith in one's abilities can restore direction and drive in life.

In their article on GIM, Goldberg and Dimiceli-Mitran describe a case study of GIM participant "Emma," and the effect of many GIM sessions on her life. One result has been to help her gain more control over her life, allowing for a "…movement towards an inner locus of control" with regards to her life at work. Peak experiences through musicking and singing, for

example through GIM, are one way of achieving a sense of control, and creating hope and faith in one's own abilities and resources. Attaining greater influence, or perceiving that we have control over our lives is also an important part of achieving QoL. *Regaining* control, as in the case of people with mental health issues or those who merely feel incapable of dealing with life, believing they have the power to form and influence their lives can give them a stronger foundation for taking steps towards change. Antonovsky suggested that control plays in important part also in achieving Sense of Coherence in our lives, which I shall now explore.

2.8 Musicking contributes to continuity and coherence in our lives

So singing and singing technique is my life. And it's clear that music means everything to me. It's what I live for. And [the choir that meets each week] is my life's work. So, it means everything. Music is, well… I can't imagine a life without music.
(Michael)

As the quote above expresses, music and singing can become such a big part of a singer's life that it becomes *them*, it becomes what they *live for*. As Ruud describes we develop a sense of who we are by feeling that we are *the same over time*. Experiencing stability in ourselves relates not only to us personally but also relates to the way we experience ourselves with regard to others; identity is not just biological, it is also social, cultural and psychological. (Ruud, 2007, p. 12). Furthermore, experiencing our identity as something stable is important in order for us to achieve a sense of continuity and coherence, as well as feel secure in ourselves, the latter linking back to Siri Næss' definition in which safety contributes to our happiness and QoL (c.f. page 7). Through talking to Michael, it becomes clear that he also identifies himself as a singer and has dedicated himself to working with singing and conducting. Perhaps this has also provided *him* with a sense of stability as his identity as a singer, and singing itself, have been present almost his whole life; to such an extent in fact that he cannot imagine life without music. Psychological stability is one of three factors comprising salutogenesis according to Antonovsky, the other factors being social relations and internal emotions. A further key concept connected to salutogenisis is *empowerment* which involves us taking *control* over an object or phenomenon. In this context this also means trying to help people acquire the knowledge necessary to impact their health by taking control of those things that promote health. (Lønne, 2015).

Furthermore, individuals who can access and utilize the *resources* around them and in themselves, will be able to experience a greater sense of *coherence,* bringing us to a further theory Antonovsky developed called 'Sense of Coherence' (SOC), also embedded within the salutogenic health tradition. (Lønne, 2015). Ruud writes that everyone has resources but that these can be difficult to find or access for different reasons including social or personal factors. The result being that people "cannot turn their potential into action."* (Ruud, 2001, p. 34). The objective for Antonovsky was to provide people with the opportunity to develop a *strong* SOC, improving their ability to cope with life's stressors using fitting resources. These resources can in turn enable people to assume control over the lives and take action.

Antonovsky sought to answer the question, "What explains movement toward the health pole of the health ease/dis-ease continuum?" He looked at how people coped with life and different stressors they were faced with and tried to develop a theory based on his research. Certain denominators seemed to be common in those he analyzed, factors which occurred repeatedly and contributed to an understanding of life, making life more comprehensible emotionally, instrumentally and cognitively. Moreover, Antonovsky proposed that three aspects are interlinked with regard to our individual understanding of life: Firstly, whether we think the situation we face is manageable, secondly, whether we believe we can overcome the challenges we are faced with, and thirdly, whether we believe that the situation is explainable. Consequently there are three keys contributing to a *sense of coherence* in life: meaningfulness (the person seeks to cope with the stressor), comprehensibility (the person feels they understand the stressor or challenge they face) and manageability (the person believes the resources necessary to cope with the stressor are available to them). Antonovsky points out that the unique composition of this theory lies in the three inherent components which are behavioural, cognitive and motivational. Moreover, SOC is not culturally restricted as the different components are open to many different interpretations. Resources available to us, and the way in which stressors are interpreted can vary from person to person or culture to culture. The objective for the theoretical and practical application of SOC is ultimately to move people in the direction of health, which brings us back to the question Antonvosky originally sought to answer. (Antonovsky, 1996, p. 15 and Lønne, 2015).

Three ways of strengthening SOC through *experiences* are: for one, the balance between overload and underload, the second is consistency, and the third involves participation in making decisions that are socially valued. Antonovsky does not suggest that taking part in one meaningful activity will drastically change someone's SOC, however he says it can work as a

preventive for future damage, perhaps strengthen someone's SOC or create a chance for someone to change their situation in life in a meaningful way. (Antonovsky, 1996, pp. 15-16). Further resources we can utilize to reduce feelings of tension caused by stressors include support from our social network, biological and physical resources, values and religion, material belongings, control and continuity, and intelligence and knowledge. Close emotional bonds are especially meaningful (Antonovsky, 1987, cited in Lønne, 2015). Furthermore, two especially meaningful *mastering strategies* are ego identity, which relates to the way in which someone sees themselves, as well the condition of the support they receive socially. (Lønne, 2015).

When we look at all the essential factors for promoting health and achieving SOC, we see that many of these are covered through musicking and the interpersonal setting in which musicking often takes place, which I will look at more closely in the next chapter. Musicking gives us access to new relationships and social interaction with others, and it impacts our emotions; even at times at a profoundly deep level through intense experiences with music. In addition, musicking allows us to take part in meaningful activities on a regular basis, giving us continuity both physically and mentally. In Michael's case, it is apparent that singing and teaching others about singing technique is a *meaningful activity*. It's his mission and he wants to pass on his knowledge to others. Engaging in a meaningful activity, such as passing on acquired knowledge and investing in other people, also factors in the salutogenic understanding of health. Furthermore, musicking can be meaningful because it provides an oasis in a regimented, routine-based life, or because it gives us the opportunity to implement our own resources. Further, we are stimulated by the culture we have become a part of and we acquire new knowledge. (Ruud, 2001, pp. 26, 34). If these factors truly contribute to promoting health as Antonovsky suggests, then musicking is an important tool we can use to impact people's health, and contribute to salutogenesis and an enriched life.

Chapter 3. Musicking as an interpersonal and interactive process.

Seeing musicking as a social, interpersonal and interactive process raises interesting questions: Are musicking and singing ever truly "asocial" or are they inherently interactive? Anna described the interactive and collective nature of music performance saying: "I have a slightly problematic relationship with the concept of being a soloist. One is never a soloist. One *never* sings alone unless one sings a cappella." Ruud writes that there is "something about music itself that offers us involvement"* (Ruud, 2013, p. 25); music invites us to participate in some way. *Active* involvement with music is also different from passively listening to music, and active participation, playing an instrument, cannot be replaced by merely listening to music. Participation allows us to experience working together with others and being a part of something. Furthermore, musicking together with others also contributes to us experiencing conformity, bonding with others and building group identity, as well as helping us define ourselves socially. (Ruud, 2013, pp. 25, 43, 46).

During my own research I asked some of my participants whether they preferred singing or performing alone or with others, and the trend was that they either like both equally or preferred performing with others. John said: "I like playing with others a *lot* more, *much* more. Yes. I used to not like it, but at some point I realised that I found that a lot more fun." Anna told me: "I prefer the Chamber music setting where there are more of us and where something emerges than you cannot put into words." Performing with and working with others adds another dimension to musicking and the result turns into something different than it would with only one performer. With regards to singing in a professional ensemble Sarah said, "when it works it's a very moving experience, actually possibly more moving then doing something alone." Michael expressed that the biggest moments in choral singing are the peak experiences, moments when both the choir and the conductor sense that they have arrived and are in a state of surrender to the music. He told me that he can be moved to tears as a conductor as a result of the choir working together and creating and producing something that is stirring.

According to Small it is important that we don't see the value of music as only being inherent in the music itself. Music is interactive and the meaning of music is found in the *practicing* of it; what people do when they take part. He also writes that many musical experiences take place in social settings rather than in isolation. (Small, 1998, pp. 1-2). The fundamental nature and meaning of music is not found in objects "but in action, in what people do. It is only by understanding what people do as they take part in a musical act that we can hope to understand

its nature and the function it fulfils in human life" (Small, 1998, p. 8). Thus we also need to study music as a social, interpersonal phenomenon in order to reveal all the ways in which is affects our lives! According to music technologist Raimund Vogels the social function of music is undoubtedly a part of its nature. He states that no culture can afford to do without music or music-like forms of communication; they are used to communicate the culture's values, and goes on to say that: "Especially in religious, social and medicinal settings, music plays a paramount role in all of the world's cultures."* (Broschart and Tentrup, 2003, pp. 80, 82).

The idea of music being interactive and culturally constructed is echoed by the anthropological view of interpersonal experiences with regard to music and emotion. Anthropological theories suggest that the ways in which we respond to music are affected also by the *culture* we are part of. Furthermore, our views on the purpose of music and the reactions to music we deem appropriate are also culturally influenced. Bourdieu (1977) speaks of *habitus*, a specific kind of environment which forms us and leaves us with certain dispositions concerning the way we are, certain habits (especially physical), certain tendencies or predispositions, and more. This formation process takes place through interaction with those around us, and occurs collectively as opposed to us being influenced solely by one person (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 14, 72, cited in Becker, 2010, p. 130). By and large however, anthropologists and musicologists assume that music listeners are influenced by a combination of their personal biography, by time and place, and a shared culture. (Becker, 2010, p. 130)

The thought that culture and the interaction with our habitus influences our relationship with music is supported by the statements of several of my participants. They were clearly influenced by their upbringing and developed an interest for music, and early musical engagement definitely shaped their behaviour and habits. Perhaps they also adopted the views and behaviours of their role-models and peers when engaging in musical activity with them; several of them tell me they learnt an instrument or songs from significant others. I will now look more closely at how different types of support from significant others can further our musical engagement.

3.1 The role of other people in our musical development

*"I don't want to sing solo just to sing solo, it has to be
because people think it's nice to listen to."
(William)*

How can significant others such as family and friends influence our musical development and our learning? As mentioned in the section on a music and identity, significant others in the lives of my interview participants have been family, parents, siblings and grandparents. They have sewn a seed, provided a musical atmosphere at home, or encouraged my participants to begin playing an instrument. There are different ways in which family members, more specifically parents, can support their children in their musical endeavours and this support is not to be undervalued.

> Davidson *et al.* (1995) demonstrated that paren-tal [sic] commitment to assisting, encouraging and supporting the child in the early stages of learn-ing [sic] was a more important predictor of successful musical outcomes than any specialist knowledge on the part of the parent. 'Without positive involvement of the parent in the process, the highest levels of achievement are likely to remain unattainable' (Davidson *et al.*, 1995, p. 44, cited in Creech, 2009, p. 297).

As well as feeling supported, it is important for the students to develop independence and to have their own say in things so that they develop *autonomy*. According to Ginsburg *et al.* (1993) this can decrease if parents are too strict with their home surveillance. This thought is reflected in what Joy told me, saying, with a laugh, that she perhaps wouldn't be doing what she is doing today if she *had* felt pressure from home. Interestingly a so-called musical mid-life crisis occurs between the ages of 12-18 and signifies a time when a child must decide whether or not to continue with their musical pursuits (Bamberger 1987). During this phase, as the young musicians develop, it seems that personal and intellectual/cognitive support from parents may be of more value than behavioural support. According to Creech (2006) it can also be difficult for parents to relinquish their supporting role in order to allow a stronger bond to be forged between the student and the teacher. This phase can be seen as a time of transition. Research shows that this transition seemed to be most successful when the relationship between student and teacher was positive and strong, where children continued to be open to interest from their parents but did not rely on external motivation from them; they took their learning into their own hands. (Ginsburg *et al.*, 1993, Bamberger, 1987, and Creech, 2006, also cited in Creech, 2009, p. 297).

Behavioural support with regard to musical tuition can take the form of parents attending lessons, participating in and tracking practice and taking on the role of the teacher at home. (Creech, 2009, p. 296). *Cognitive/intellectual support*, on the other hand, involves parents providing the resources necessary for their children to develop their musical intelligence. Such resources include discussion of, and listening to music at home, instrumental lessons, taking their children to concerts, providing an instrument of good quality, and encouraging their children to take part in extra-curricular activities. (Creech, 2009, pp. 297-298). Michael and his brother were challenged to start evaluating music when they were asked by their father to judge which performance was best, comparing two recordings of the same piece. Both Sarah and Joy were encouraged by their parents to start taking piano lessons before singing lessons became relevant, and Joy also travelled with her mother when she performed in churches. Music was present in the homes of several of my partipicipants through singing together, listening to music, or being sung to by someone in the family. Anna shared that she learned to play the guitar from her cousin and that her mother "sang for me and *with* me from when I was very small. And taught me a lot; many songs."

Aside from the musical influence, children also seem to internalize their parents' educational goals and their *values* (Marchant, 2001). Communication between parents, and parents and adolescents, concerning educational aims also seems to be important for whether or not the early-adolescent continues to live by the same values as their parents (Smith, 1991); specifically values related to attainment and motivation (Marchant, 2001). (Smith, 1991, and Marchant, 2001, cited in Creech, 2009, pp. 297-298). In an interview with the music artist "Sting," he tells the interviewers that he tries to set an example for his own children with regard to music, and echoes the idea that actively making music is different to merely listening to it, saying: "I have six children. And I teach them by being a role-model – and practice scales every day. Several of my children are already musicians themselves. It's a huge difference whether one only hears music or whether one makes music."* (Broschart and Meister, 2003, p. 76). By being a role-model and showing his children what it means to work on one's technique and skill every day, Sting can instill good work ethic and good values in his children. The last statement he makes above brings us back to the point Ruud also makes, that listening to music cannot replace the act of making music oneself. This is merely one more reason why musical activities should be made available to even more people.

When it comes to *personal support* from parents it is important that the child experiences some independence and that support is given in the right way; with warmth, acceptance and

democracy. Support can be given for example by showing continued interest in the child's progress or by attending extra-curricular activities or school programmes. (Steinberg *et al*., 1992, cited in Creech 2009, pp. 298-299). According to Ginsburg and Bronstein (1993) there is also a difference between extrinsic motivation triggered by parents keeping an eye on their children and giving them behavioural support, and curiosity and intrinsic motivation on the part of the student, which arises from parents giving their children praise and encouragement. (Ginsburg and Bronstein, 1993, cited in Creech, 2009, p. 299). Joy said that "there are times when one is a bit down, where one isn't equally motivated all the time" and that it's good when the motivation to practice comes from oneself; "…it's good to feel it yourself and not feel pressured to practice." William started out by being externally motivated by money he received from his mother, however later on when he rejoined a choir as an adult he was perhaps more internally motivated: "I don't know what my motivation was for starting in [the choir he sings in now], whether it was the social aspect of it. At that time I think I just wanted to sing again."

With regard to children's musical education, *emotional support* may help them to get to the point where they become internally motivated and practice from a belief in themselves, their capabilities, and from a joy of music as opposed to being pressured from outside to act in the right way. As I mentioned earlier, John is an example of someone who is intrinsically motivated as well, as he expresses that the more he practices, the less he can imagine life with music. It is also interesting to note that social status doesn't affect how much parental support means to children. Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) and McNeal (2001) found that parents showing interest at home, having discussions with the children and supporting them had a large effect on educational outcomes regardless of the family's social status. (Sui-Chu and Willms, 1996, and McNeal, 2001, cited in Creech, 2009, p. 299). This is important to bare in mind when considering whom to make musical tuition available to.

Parents who show the most personal support (Creech, 2006) also seek to understand how their child sees things and are willing to put their own wishes (expectations and goals) aside when these vary from their child's. They also aim to support their child no matter what they choose. (Creech, 2006, cited in Creech, 2009, p. 299). Joy experienced this at home, and tells me "…I could always independently choose what I wanted to do…" Her parents "didn't get involved. They have been supportive but not….yes. No pressure at all." Research showed that most of the parents wanted their children to become independent with regards to learning but at the same time receive their support. It was also appreciated if there was a good

understanding between the teacher and the parent and this in part made it easier for parents to step back more and more with regards to the learning situation. (Creech, 2009, p. 299).

A model has been developed by Leary (1957) to show different relationships between the parent, the teacher and the pupil, and research has been done into the prominence of different relationship scenarios in different phases of the child's musical education or maturation. The type of relationship which seems to be most successful (Bandura, 1997; Hurley, 1995) is the so-called *harmonious trio* where the parent is central in the relationship with regard to the child's development, whereas the teacher is responsible for increasing the child's skills and knowledge (Henry, 1996). (Bandura, 1997, Hurley, 1995 and Henry, 1996, cited in Creech, 2009, p, 303).

In conclusion we can say that research suggests that ideally parents ought to vary how closely they follow their children and sense when to leave more room for the teacher-child relationship to develop. Continued support from parents is valuable also at times when motivation to practice is lower, as is showing unending interest in what their child is learning. Involving the child in decisions and discussions about practice and the desired degree of parental involvement, encouraging a good relationship between child and teacher, and being a captive audience are also important factors in good parental support for learning. (Creech, 2009, pp. 301, 303, 304).

As this section, and that on music and identity show, significant others play an important part in our engagement with music by forming us, our identity, fueling our motivation and inspiring us to follow their example. As parents, musicians and teachers we have the opportunity to be examples and inspirators for others through our own involvement with music and by providing personal, emotional, cognitive and behavioural support, as well as instilling good values by setting a good example. This is a responsibility not to be taken lightly.

3.2 Feeling like you mean something to others

> *"That it makes a difference whether I'm there or not."*
> *(William)*

The quote above refers to William's wish to be heard when singing in a choir, and expresses the desire to feel needed or that one makes a difference. As humans we have a need to feel like we matter; that we are connected to the world and that we mean something to someone. People

who are lonely, who lack a sense of meaning in their lives may not be experiencing this. Musicking and participation in a group activity creates the opportunity to matter, to share a part of ourselves with others and thus contribute something towards the bigger picture. Without our contribution the result would not be the same. This feeling of being needed and being able to impact other people is an essential part of our well-being and feeling that our life is worth living; that it has quality. Ruud describes what it means to us to feel valuable in the following way: "we are most 'at home' in ourselves when we are sure of what we are worth, and *that* we mean something, to others."* (Ruud, 2013, pp. 98-99).

This sense of meaning can for example come from a sense of *contributing something*, through singing or conducting. For some, the feeling of contributing something in an arena where one perhaps doesn't think one has any ability can be empowering. I asked Michael with regard to his project-based choir: "Do you think that part of what they experience is feeling that they have something to contribute? In an area where they perhaps thought they didn't have anything to contribute?" To this he replied "Yes. Absolutely. They feel they are part of it and they sing…" For Paul it is essential that the musical experience is interactive, that he can give and receive through it: He has "to *give* something through the music. If the music can't give *me* something then I can't pass anything on. Then it becomes very boring." This thought of music being interactive brings us back to the question I asked initially in Chapter three, as to whether music is inherently social in nature.

It is also important to note that the feeling of being able to contribute not only applies to talented or professional musicians. It is essential to experience that the little we have counts, and can be used in some way, regardless of our level of ability. A participant in the study by DeNora and Batt-Rawden on the chronically ill shared the following: "…I have been able to contribute a lot […] It has been very important to me that I have been able to focus on my resources and the kind of resources I have through music…" (Batt-Rawden and DeNora, 2005, pp. 295-296). Using the *resources he has been given* is addressed by Paul, and his Christian faith also plays a large part in this perspective. He consequently asks himself: "What am I called to do in life and what am I chosen for? What are my resources? And for me this [doing music] is one of those things and then it becomes important to be able to use the talents one has received." William also spoke of having a *mission in life*: "…my mission, my task, is to teach children and young people to sing. And that's an important task."

Ultimately, a fulfilled life also comes from knowing that one has made the most out of life, out of one's talents and opportunities. Therefore it can be wise to reflect sometimes, as

Paul does, and see if we are living the life we want to live, and what our motivation is. John described how being confronted with others who do not have the same musical understanding as he does, forces him to reflect and question his own actions: "Then one has to ask oneself 'what does one want? Why does one do that and not that? Does one really do that because one *wants* to?'"

As the WHO suggests, QoL encompasses the way we see ourselves in relation to our expectations and values. Are we where we want to be? Being aware of one's own resources and implementing them with intent also expands the social nature of performing together and makes the musical exchange more fun: "then [thinking] 'what can I contribute? What can I learn from them? How can we play off of each other?' That is so much fun," said Anna. Joy shared her thoughts, saying: "if you really want to get it together and sit and listen to what the other thinks and 'what is she doing there?' and so forth, it becomes more social because you have to exchange ideas not just looks." Musicking becomes a more social activity when the participants go into it with the desire to learn from each other and contribute something, not just to play correctly and get the job done, as described by Joy.

Furthermore, "participation and working together for, and during musical activities, where people can use their creative abilities and resources, seems to further health."* (Bjerke Batt-Rawden, 2006, p. 222). In his work Paul aims to create something magical, to touch people through the music they hear. However it doesn't have to be just the audience that is moved; it can be the choir or the musicians. When asked what he would miss if he stopped conducting, singing, everything, he said: "…I think perhaps seeing other people enjoying themselves would be what I would miss the most. In other words others achieving something. More than achieving things myself, because I have experienced that before. Creating tone together and the harmony." He is concerned with helping others through music, helping them to use their talents – and that can mean a lot to people and give them the feeling of having something to contribute.

3.3 Feeling like you belong and are valued

"The best compliment I can receive is to be seen as a member of the group…"

(Anna)

When we conform to a group either with regard to an activity or a way of thinking, we feel a sense of belonging, of integration and of group identity. We identify ourselves with the others in the group and it feels good to be able to define ourselves as "a choral singer, band member,

dancer…" – whatever group it may be. As the quote above expresses, it can even be taken as a compliment to be included in the group. Ruud writes that we "not only have an individual identity but also a social identity. The social part of our identity is the part of our self-perception that roots in the knowledge of belonging to social groups, aside from the morals and the emotional meaning that the membership has..."* (Ruud, 2013, p. 139). The need to feel a sense of belonging may vary during different phases of life, however I think it is important that everyone feels like they have belonged somewhere at some point in their lives. For Joy the motivation for joining the church choir when she was thirteen was that she wanted "very much to be included."

Ruud writes that for many of the participants taking part in his study on musical narratives, music was found to give the participants access to social groups and allowed them to feel like they were a part of something and form attachments to other people. They formed bonds through experiencing music together. (Ruud, 1997, p. 95). Another participant in Batt-Rawden and DeNora's study said that "it's so enjoyable to experiences this togetherness, so this choral singing has a fantastic effect on me, it enriches me…" (Batt-Rawden and DeNora, 2005, p. 298). Being part of a *cultural* group also allows us to build up our so-called social capital with regard to culture. This encompasses more than just feeling like we belong. Ruud writes that:

> Social capital is about belonging and attachment, about reciprocity and trust between people, neighbours- and fellowship in the local community, about being involved in decision and having influence over the local community, and last but not least a feeling of being included.* (Ruud, 2007b, p. 22)

He goes on to say that cultural activities help us to not be alone, to network with others and to bring us together with other people. (Ruud, 2007b, p. 22). This idea is echoed by Michael who described the significance the project choir has for its members: "Especially in the [project-based choir] but also in the [regular choir], it's important that we're good friends and that we have a good time together and have fun together; that people take care of each other and that the new members are taken care of and have someone to talk to."

As Ruud mentions, networking is also important for people and singing in a choir gives us the chance to make new friends. Michael told me: "For people who don't have much else to fill their lives with, those who are widowers or widows or divorced, or whatever it may be. And who perhaps are a little ill and have to make an effort to come to the rehearsal. It means a lot. Not least socially. They get new friends…" For Anna, meeting "new musicians […] that's *very* exciting."

Every culture has a set of *symbols* that have to be understood in order for us to become integrated into that culture. These symbols can be words, concepts or ways of doing things. According to Ruud culture is frequently a bearer of such symbols that give us an understanding of the society we live in, and learning these helps us to feel like we belong. (Ruud, 2007b, p. 23). By learning the cultural symbols of music and of certain social groups related to practicing music, we can achieve a feeling of integration, of being part of a certain culture and of being an insider because we understand the symbolism inherent in that group. Furthermore, the fact that music is a versatile expressional tool makes it a useful medium for bringing people together and creating a sense of unity even though they may be very different from each other. This was also something discussed by Cross and Morley (c.f. section 2.3 singing as expression and communication). The interpersonal and collective musical experience on the one hand encourages individuals to work together and move in a similar direction, creating unity and a sense of belonging. On the other hand, there is also room for individual interpretation of musical experiences within this setting. So-called 'floating intentionality' – or the ambiguous nature of music can, according to Cross and Morley, be very positive for groups because it simultaneously encourages both social flexibility and participation. The flexibility of music's intentionality allows for people with different backgrounds to participate in a musical activity without this leading to conflict; in turn making it possible for us to interact with people we wouldn't otherwise interact with, and find common ground through musical expression. Furthermore, musical interaction and play enables the acquisition of social skills and confidence when interacting with others, and the exchange can be equally rewarding for all those involved. (Cross and Morley, 2009, p. 70).

According to Bailey and Davidson (2002, 2005) music may also contribute to creating an *emotional bond* between those participating in musical activities together because it allows catharsis and introspection, aspects which may be more unique to music making than to other team activities. (Woody and McPherson, 2010, pp. 404-405). This emotional bond can in turn strengthen our feeling of belonging.

Group interaction through music can, however, also have its challenges; for instance when individuals compete for a better standing within the group or when they have to find their place. Professors Woody and McPherson go on to say that members may leave the group if they are not happy with their place or role within the group, or do not feel that others value them. The sense of having a role or being valued is also important with regards motivating the musician, singer or other group members to stay. *Positive feedback* from others is an important

part of feeling valued. (Woody and McPherson 2010, p. 405). As Anna described, being shown respect by other talented musicians was for her a compliment and possibly also an affirmation with regard to her own abilities and her place within that particular performance setting. Furthermore, she said that it can feel wonderful to work with people one *admires*: "Being treated as an equal by such fantastic musicians is a *huge* compliment." Being treated as an equal by those one looks up to can influence the way one views oneself and one's abilities. Being treated with respect may also make it easier to believe in oneself, also contributing to one's self-confidence.

The feedback given not just within the group but also from people outside of the group is an important contributor to motivation and a feeling of self-confidence with regard to one's own contribution to the performance, as William shared during our interview. Paul described how the social aspect is very important for choral singing as well. One does not need to like everyone in the choir, however in order for singers to stay in the choir over time they must feel like they have connected with someone there. He also says that "it's about people mastering and enjoying themselves and in that respect the social aspect is important. If that's not present then definitely no one in the choir will function. When people get along it affects the tone." Both enjoyment and connection with others play a part in finding one's place and one's role within the group and remaining there.

My participants also shared other interesting thoughts about the social aspect of singing. For one, the *atmosphere* within the group was very important. Anna is very sensitive to negativity and said that competition between singers when it occurs must be set aside in order to be able to create music together, "for me the chemistry and the communication between us is *extremely* important. […] It's not the same for everyone but it's like that for *me*. It doesn't work if there are negative feelings involved." This perspective is confirmed by research which has shown that the progress made by a musical group, as well as group dynamic, is affected by the mood of the musicans themselves (King, 2006, cited in Woody and McPherson, 2010, p. 405). In Anna's case having *fun* when she sings has become more and more important, and since she is an established singer and teacher she has the luxury of being able to choose which projects to participate in. In some cases she *chooses* projects depending on the conductor or singers participating, in other words also dependent on the *social setting*. For John, as for Anna, the chemistry between him and his fellow musicians is important: One must have similar ways of thinking, otherwise it makes the process of finding each other more difficult.

An important aspect is also the *attitude* with which one enters into these collaborations. Do you come in humbly, hoping to learn, or do you come in with an arrogant attitude thinking that you're better than everyone else? Joy said: "personally I try to always have the perspective that we are creating music together. It's not them accompanying, them playing and then I come in as the star." Also with regards to those he is responsible for, John is of the opinion that one should put oneself beneath those one is helping: "…I can only work, also with my students, if I *actually* even set myself *beneath* then. And say, okay, *you* have to improve, I want to help you." He also said: "…I think one has to be good with power, and has to feel like a serviceman, and *not* like a boss."

In settings where one comes together regularly over time to participate in musicking, *friendships* can also solidify and deepen. (Ruud, 2001, p. 26). Paul shared that in the choir setting "long-term relationships develop. I have seen many friendships formed through choir. Many who have found each other." Michael also mentioned that couples often find each other in choral settings. Additionally, for members of Paul's choir new relationships have been vital to mastering and overcoming social anxiety, amongst other things: "I have had many people in choirs over the years who have suffered from anxiety, social anxiety and such, where choir has been their salvation, also through meeting new people. That's an important part of it." In his opinion it is also good to have a mixture of men and women: "…I think is very healthy to have a combination of men and women in a choir, it's significant for the atmosphere and for the social factor. Much more variation and better dynamic."

According to Anna it can also feel great to come together with people who have the *same interest* as you. She reflected on the time she started participating in a music course: "It was such a fantastic experience to only work with music and to meet other people who did the same." Through reciprocal relationships we can *learn* from each other whilst we musick together encourage each other to reflect and think in new ways.

3.4 Experiencing Flow through collective musicking

"...sometimes you're in a state of flow and you feel able to be a part of the entirety of the music. When it works it's wonderful."

(Sarah)

Ruud describes the experience of flow as "a psychological state when occurrences follow each other in a uniform, organic way, without our conscious interference"* (Ruud, 2013, p. 250). Furthermore, we are fully absorbed by what we are doing and yet still feel that we have control (Csíkszentmihályi cited in Ruud, 2013, p. 250). This echoes Michael's description concerning peak experiences, with regard to maintaining control whilst still giving everything.

Through flow our life expands, gains meaning, and our consciousness and our behaviour become one. Room is created for new experiences when the old structures and ways of thinking are cleared away; when we are absorbed. This void leads us to seek out new connections and new meaning, and can as mentioned earlier with regard to peak experience and the like, perhaps also be a catalyst for change within ourselves. (Ruud, 2013, p. 250).

Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, a Hungarian-American psychologist (mentioned fleetingly above), developed a theory known as *flow-theory*. Flow as a metaphor "is used by many to describe a state when self disappears, time stops and interaction occurs automatically without hindrance." (Balsnes, 2010, p. 20). In such situations the individual is completely immersed in what they are doing and the challenges they face have the right level of difficulty. (Csíkszentmihályi, 1997, in Balsnes, 2010, p. 20). In order to reach a state of flow the balance between a person's level of knowledge and the challenges they face is good, goals are clearly defined and outside response is momentary. (Balsnes, 2010, pp. 20-21).

When, amongst other factors, the balance between our ability and the size of the challenge is right, the tasks are "intrinsically motivating" and we may experience joy and thus continue with the activity. This can also be described as flow. Research done by Csíkszentmihályi and his colleagues (1993, cited in Hallam, 2009, p. 291).) has shown that voluntarily engaging in *music* activities more often leads to flow experiences than peer-interaction or participation in activities that are more oriented towards academics. (Hallam, 2009, p. 291).

William describes situations which could be compared to a flow-like state: "I have *many* such experiences where I sense 'now we're there. Now time is standing still, now it is music.

Now we're in the music, we are in it and we are in a way sailing on, on this wave, of intensity, of enthusiasm.'" He says that he tries to create moments like this during every concert: "a few such moments where music rules supreme. And I believe that that is something that all real singers and conductors *do*." Balsnes links flow to choir settings and writes that other people need to be present in order to respond to what is happening; the external response must be momentary. (Balsnes 2010, p. 20). Sarah described entering into flow as a time when things *work*: "and then when you have the special moments where you enter into a flow and it works, it doesn't always." Flow sensations such as time stopping or becoming lost in the moment may also be possible to achieve when musicking alone, I think.

One of Batt-Rawden and DeNora's participants described an experience which could be said to be similar to a state of flow, and similar to the transcendent experiences we explored earlier: "the strongest effect I gain from music is through playing and singing with other people, this synergy effect is like an encounter of love, it is so mysterious, just like somebody connects you to heaven..." (Batt-Rawden and DeNora, 2005, p. 295). Here musicking resulted in the feeling of being connected to something otherworldly, outside of oneself, as well as an emotional connection; a feeling of being loved. This again brings us back to the experience shared by William as part of a choir singing Händel's Messiah, where his emotions are heightened and singing became more spiritual than at other times.

Experiencing flow or being a part of something bigger together with others can also be an important respite in a musical lifestyle. Paul talks about consciously choosing projects to participate in where he can just be a part of what's happening. He says, "for me it's important to find the arenas where I don't have to carry everything, where I can just be a part of it and float. Both socially and musically." He also talks about feeding that part of himself. Sometimes in order to be regenerated we need to be in an arena where we can 'go with the flow' and musick together with others who give us energy. As musicians it is important that we also find sources of refreshment and inspiration so that we have something to pass on to those we inspire, lead and perform for.

3.5 The transforming power of active musicking in a choral setting

"And especially in a choir, it's not important what I have to say,
but what the music does in us."
(John)

Why do people participate in musicking activities such as choral singing? Does musicking together with others in a choir have a positive effect? The interview with John, especially, was exciting with regard to the transforming power of choral singing. He has now conducted a choir for homeless people for several years. At the outset, about 90 percent of the choir members lived on the streets and all of them were addicted to drugs. The singers were for example recruited personally through friends of his, or by John himself either asking people or telling others about the concept. Initially he was unsure whether the project would even last and it took years before the idea for the choir was realised. The inspiration, John tells me, came from "this girl in the underground who moved me somehow, and I thought, 'well, she's trying to make money here, there has to be something else one can do' and that's how the idea for the choir emerged." He also shared a funny story from when the choir started: "I still remember the first rehearsal, I turned around briefly to look for something, and then no one was *left.* Because they're not used to waiting for one *second.*" The rehearsal setting obviously took some getting used to.

The choir has contributed to *transforming* the lives of its members and John had some amazing things to tell me about the changes that have occurred. For one, many of the members were homeless and did not have jobs when they started coming to rehearsals. Today most of them are back at work: "They all used to be addicted to drugs and unconcentrated […] now almost all of them are working again. Those who have been there for a longer time, they're living normal lives again." In fact, John tells me that so many members started working shifts that they had to change the time of the rehearsal! He says, that's "an interesting thing; before, we always had the rehearsal in the *morning*, just because it was more likely that the people were fairly sober. Now that more and more people are working, we now had to have it [the rehearsal] in the evening." Even the topics of conversation have changed, "at the beginning there was always talk of 'where does one get the next joint?' and other things, and today they talk about their workplaces. It is different. Something i*ncredible* has happened, yes." These external changes are such a testament to the transformation which has occurred!

John is honest and tells me that it is not *only* the music which has brought about this transformation; family, and other factors, have also contributed. However, it has obviously been an important part and perhaps a catalyst for these changes which have affected *everyone*: "Of course they are the same people, but the social competence has completely changed. *Completely* changed. In *everyone*. *Without* exception. And it's the music, it's the family, it's the fellowship; we eat together afterwards; many things contribute." In William's project-based amateur choir the singers have also expressed that their lives have been changed by their participation: "There are people who say to me that their lives have been changed after they were allowed to take part and sing. And that's moving you know. So it *means* so much."

An official study into the effects of singing on marginalized singers carried out by Betty Bailey and Jane Davidson supports John's and William's testimonies that choral singing impacts the lives of those involved. Bailey and Davidson reflect on research done within this field and write that

> in spite of much attention being directed to the 'how' of creating exceptional performances, little attention has been given to the 'why' of musical performance. Results of an investigation with members of a choir for homeless men indicated that group singing and performance, at the most amateur levels of musicality, yielded considerable emotional, social and cognitive benefits. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 269)

Small (1998) also states that books on music performance have focused on the way in which the music *itself* is presented instead of on what the performance means to those *taking part*, echoing Bailey and Davidson's statement above. (Small, 1998, cited in Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 270). In their research Bailey and Davidson (2002, 2003) studied eight members of a choir in the English speaking part of Canada which was started for people who either were homeless, or from very poor environments - a similar demographic to John's choir. The participants were aged between 43-64 years and they all had either a criminal history, mental illness or a drug addiction. Only one participant had formal training on the piano, however most of them had sung in a choir in school. The aim of the study was to find out if choral singing had brought any changes to the singers' lives and to see what the participants themselves thought were the factors that brought about the change. During the interview they were asked about different topics including family, early life and previous musical involvement, their first impression of the choir and their experiences when singing. The interviews were semi-structured as mine were; and they write that the "employment of this semi-structured procedure facilitates differentiation of degrees of interest in, and meaning of, the experience for each

participant." (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 274). The research results showed that adapting to singing in a group had different benefits for the singers: group process benefits, clinical-type benefits, and benefits involving the relationship between the audience and the choir. Despite their difficult situation in life participants were able to articulate their experiences and thoughts about participating in a musical activity. Furthermore, choir membership seemed to give them a chance of escape from the difficulties of life, at least for a time, and encouraged them to change their lives for the better. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, pp. 275-276).

Bailey and Davidson did not end their research once they had interviewed the marginalized singers, but went on to ask middle-class singers about *their* views on the effects of choral singing. This is also of interest for this thesis as many of the members of choirs and other musicking activities are middle-class as opposed to marginalized citizens, so I will include some of those findings in this section as well. The aim of this study was to see whether the effects discovered previously were greater with the marginalized group than with a more normally circumstanced group of singers. The amount of previous musical experience in this middle-class group varied, as well as the type of choir that these participants were selected from. Bailey and Davidson found that the results as a whole did not vary from the original studies, which suggests that neither the *type* of choir nor the amount of *previous training* affects the choral singing experience. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, pp. 288-289, 291). This reiterates how worthwhile it is to make musical activities available to the general public as everyone can benefit from it!

Further support for the benefits of singing can be found in earlier research done by Silber (2005) and Bailey & Davidson (2005), for example, which has shown that singers find singing to be beneficial to them in many ways; psychologically, spiritually, socially and health-wise. According to research done by Beck, Cesario, Yousefi & Enamoto (2000), 67% of choral singers who were semi-professionals said in a survey that they agreed or strongly agreed that their well-being had been influenced by singing. Clift & Hancox (2001) and Hillman (2002) also report the emotional and mental well-being of singers. However, it is important to note that many of these studies have been on a small scale and one-time events. (All the studies above are cited in Clift *et al.*, 2010, pp. 20-21).

In a further study carried out by Clift *et al.* on the effects of choral singing on *psychological* well-being, results varied from person to person: "it is also clear that participation in singing has been of considerable benefit to them, in diverse ways, depending upon their particular circumstances and difficulties" (Clift *et al.*, 2010, p. 32). This section presents an

exploration of the potential benefits of choral singing as opposed to a definitive list that applies to everyone, as the effects and experiences are so individual and subjective.

Potential benefits of choral singing

So *how* may changes such as those described by my own and other's research come about? A scientific theory developed by Raphael Núñez, neuroscientist, to explain *intersubjectivity* in biological terms could give valuable insight. (Núñez, 1997, pp. 147-154, cited in Becker, 2010, p. 145). A so-called 'supra-individual biological process' involves the interactive networking of individuals in a given situation, causing changes to take place with regard to the structure of the interaction occurring *between* individuals and in the structure of the participants *themselves*. As we have seen interactive networking also occurs through musicking. With regard to *music and emotion*, Becker suggests that "the relationship […] needs to be understood as extending beyond the minds and bodies of single musicians and listeners, as a contextually situated social practice." (Becker, 2010, p. 145). Although Becker refers here to the emotional side of the musical experience, we can perhaps apply the principles of Núñez's theory to musicking as a whole, within a choral setting. Through members musicking together processes occur in the singers individually and in the interaction between them, acting as a catalyst for change and resulting in the transformation of lives.

In the following, I will address some key factors of a more social and cognitive nature which may contribute to changes such as those described by John in my own study, and by other research done on the effects of choral singing on health and well-being.

As mentioned, a research study was carried out by Clift *et al*. looking at the effect of choral singing on *psychological* well-being. This particular study is important because it is, for one, fairly recent and two, also aims to assess the singers' experience of quality of life - making it highly relevant for this thesis. In this study participants were asked to complete a questionnaire made up of 3 parts: 1) Personal data and their experiences of music making and singing, 2) 3 open questions concerning well-being, quality of life and health, and the effect of singing on these, as well as the 'Effects of Choral Singing questionnaire.' Part 3) was the WHOQOL-BREF (World Health Organization Quality Of Life Questionnaire – short version) measuring quality of life in its various forms; physical, social, psychological and environmental. The study was completed by more than 600 singers in English choirs in Germany, England and Australia, so the research was done on a large scale. The results presented here are from the choirs in England with a fairly high average age of 61 years, and

mostly female participants. (Clift *et al.*, 2010, pp. 22, 24). Average scores on the WHOQOL-BREF scales were high and the positive effects of choral singing were something many agreed upon. (Clift *et al.*, 2010, p. 25). However there were *gender* differences; men were less endorsing with regard to the view that singing benefits health and QoL. An insightful thought with regards to this is that this result "may contribute to understanding why choral societies commonly have more female members than males" (Clift *et al.*, 2010, p. 31), something Paul has experienced as well, during his time as a choral conductor.

Some key findings from this study resulted from the analyses of the open questions put to the participants, which were evaluated to see how singing may affect well-being, and what could be the cause of the feelings of low well-being in the focus group mentioned above. It is important to bear in mind that participants were not asked to share their *personal difficulties* in the questionnaire, thus the indications of certain challenges they faced are not to be seen as definitive. The study of the participants' answers also lead to the identification of several *mechanisms*, as expressed by the choir members themselves, which suggests several ways in which singing counteracts the *threats* posed to our health and well-being. (Clift *et al.*, 2010, pp. 27- 29). Below is a summary of some of these mechanisms, which I will reflect more on in this chapter:

> *Choral singing engenders happiness and raised spirits, which counter-act* [sic] *feelings of sadness and depression*
>
> *Singing involves focused concentration, which blocks preoccupation with sources of worry.*
>
> *Singing involves deep controlled breathing, which counteracts anxiety.*
>
> *Choral singing offers a sense of social support and friendship, which amel-iorate […] feelings of isolation and loneliness.*
>
> *Choral singing involves education and learning, which keeps the mind active and counteracts decline of cognitive functions.*
>
> *Choral singing involves a regular commitment to attend rehearsal, which motivates people to avoid being physically inactive.*
>
> (Clift *et al.*, 2010, pp. 29-30).

"It's the music" (John)

As we have previously explored some of the effects of the musical experience itself in Chapter two, I will not look too closely at this in this section. However, I will briefly mention some key points in relation to *choral singing*. As we have seen, music in itself allows those who listen to it, engage with it, and perform it to get more in touch with their emotions, express themselves

and communicate with those around them. A greater depth of emotion may allow choir members to experience life more richly and provide them with a new mode of expression and communication. This may consequently provide a vent for their feelings and thoughts, as well as contribute to the purging of negative emotions related to the troubles they face in their daily lives. Access to positive emotions can also create a positive spiral, as Fredrickson suggests, allowing choir members to build resources and become more resilient to the challenges they face, for example with regards to homelessness or drug addiction. Furthermore, experiencing mastery through the acquisition of new knowledge such as learning a song or discovering that you can sing after believing you couldn't, instils in the singers new hope and the self-belief that they can achieve more than they thought possible.

Acquiring resources, learning to master new challenges, and coping better with stressors can help choir members achieve a greater sense of coherence in life, as Antonovsky has suggested, ultimately leading them towards better health. Perhaps this process has contributed towards members of John's choir finding their way back to a more normal life by building up *their* resources and self-confidence, spurring them on to seek employment and achieve greater QoL.

A study carried out by Clift and Morrison (2011) on singing groups started by the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health, consisting of both a questionnaire (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation, CORE) and observation, as well as written and verbal feedback from participants, confirms that such activities add *meaning* to life. Responses were given by both users, facilitators and health professionals. One of the participants diagnosed with bipolar disorder reports that the choir brought purpose and structure to their "sometimes empty life." (Clift and Morrison, 2012, pp. 15-16). The idea of life being filled with new content through singing is supported by John's observation of the change in the topic of conversation during rehearsals, which transformed over time from being about finding the next high to talking about work. Their lives were given new purpose and structure through the choir, bringing us back to one of the health issues people face today: lack of meaning in life.

Joining a singing group or participating in other forms of musicking, can help people to find *meaning* again: it gives them a goal to work towards and something to look forward to. It also encourages people to come out of isolation, combatting feelings of loneliness and depression. Having something to look forward to also gives hope of a brighter future ahead.
I want to highlight the importance of remembering that singing positively affects not only those with an official diagnosis, severe mental illness or difficult life situation. Also those with milder symptoms or those living 'normal' lives can profit from initiatives such as those mentioned

above. The aim is not merely to help the ill but also to allow people in general to live a life that is more fulfilled, happy and meaningful.

Choral singing is uplifting

Some specific findings from the study done by Bailey and Davidson on middle-class singers showed that singing affected their *emotional health*. The researchers write that the "singing process seems to foster emotional health by creating an atmosphere which induces introspection, catharsis, relaxation and/or increased energy and improved mood" (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 292). These experiences are similar to those described by participants of IMEs or SEMs for example (c.f. section 2.5). Singing also seemed to provide experiences approaching transcendence or creating a kind of high; confirmed by John in *his* choir. I asked him: "Has anyone per chance spoken of a similar experience to the one you described earlier; that they basically got this high through music instead of drugs?" to which he replied, "Yes, yes. Goosebumps occur again and again." It is amazing to think that music can induce a similar high to drugs, that such a beautiful artform can potentially replace something as destructive and deadly as drugs. What an incentive to use music! Two of Bailey and Davidson's participants also described the kind of high and awe one experiences through music: "Alice: I love it (*choral singing*), I absolutely come home totally wound up and wired and love it, love it." Sue, on the other hand, said, "It just kind of makes me feel in awe that there is that kind of beauty and it just blows me away." (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 292). Joy told me that she feels it's wrong to just go home after a concert: "One has given so much, invested so much emotionally, technically, a little psychologically, physically and everything. One can't just go home and go to bed. It's just wrong." Perhaps she also, in part, is still so keyed up or *in the moment* after a performance that it feels unnatural to just return home. A sense of being uplifted through participation in singing was also observed by Michael in his choir members: "And that's why everyone says that even though they're a little tired when they come [to rehearsals], they are lifted throughout the evening and go home feeling uplifted and are happy and content."

"It's the family, it's the fellowship" (John)

As John points out above, the choir provides its members with *fellowship* and a social group to be part of. In the case of marginalized groups, the choir may perhaps even become a surrogate family in cases where members have lost contact with their biological families due to their drug addiction. Being a part of such a fellowship can also contribute to a feeling of belonging, as we explored in section 3.3. According to Csíkszentmihályi (1997, cited in Bailey and Davidson,

2005, p. 277), this feeling is rare for those who are marginalized, despite being common for the general population. The group provides the singers with support and relationships similar to those experienced with friends and family. A choir member in one of Bailey and Davidson's studies, Philip, said: "Just being with the people (*choir members*), sitting down and sometimes having a pizza together. (*and later*) It's a great experience for me, it keeps me humble. And I'm accepted, it's not what's your background" (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 277). As listed in Clift *et al*. mechanisms, choral singing can also contribute to the building of friendships (Clift *et al*., 2010, pp. 29-30). This is confirmed by both Paul and William, who told me that relationships and friendships form between choir members.

A different kind of fellowship John mentioned is that of sharing a meal together as a choir, also linking to Philip's quote above about eating pizza together. Bailey and Davidson write that normal, simple things such as having a pizza together or talking symbolize acceptance and normalcy for those for whom basic survival is a challenge (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 296). Thus for John's choir members eating together may also have helped them regain a sense of normality in their lives. Nourishment is one of the primary needs which has to be met, according to Maslow, creating a platform upon which further personal development and self-actualization can build (Davidson, 2002, p. 100). Thus meeting elemental needs such as hunger, also in a choral setting, can contribute towards someone's regeneration and further development. Beyond the physical need itself, drinking coffee or tea together and talking with one another during a break is an important part of the rehearsal according to William. This strengthens the sense of fellowship and the bond between singers.

Dedication and commitment are also inspired in choir members, which in turn create continuity and makes life more meaningful. Michael told me about his singers who come to rehearsals even when they are ill because singing means so much to them: "You know, the older generation are also away because they become ill, and people come with hats on their heads because they've been through a course of chemo and don't have hair on their head, and so forth." Perhaps the sense of belonging and the friendships formed have a drawing power and inspire members to commit and invest themselves over time. Furthermore, as Clift *et al*.'s final mechanism indicates, choral membership requires regular attendance, encourages physical activity, and thus also combats isolation. An interesting fact is that in Michael's choir attendance is not recorded, membership is not based on being there every week, and yet the members make it a high priority to attend rehearsals, demonstrating their dedication and how much they value singing and being part of the choir.

As John explicitly mentioned, the *social competence* of his choir members has been transformed as well. This idea of social competence being developed through singing is confirmed by singing coach and singer Beate Ling who writes: "Singing and making music together also changes the social fellowship. The recognition of, and the ability to sense others become sharpened through mutually listening to each other. The ability to sense the mood of the other singers or band members is also sensitized."* (Ling, 2015, p. 13).

Moreover, for choirs 1 and 2 the *social* side of singing in a choir was more important than for the middle-class focus group, who perhaps to a greater degree fill their social needs in other settings with family and friends, than in the choir itself.

William expressed a similar thought during our interview when talking about what he would look for if he was to start in a new choir:

> …if I had to choose I would rather sing in a great choir where people aren't that social, or just go home after the rehearsal and just came to sing. I think I'd rather sing in a choir like that, if it was a very good choir, than a choir that's just messing around but perhaps very fun socially. I don't think I'd gain much from that. I have other friends and social settings where I can be social. But of course, the best would be to have both.

Thus choral singing appears to have benefits for the social life of the members, however the extent to which this is valued varies from person to person, just as the general benefits of choral singing vary according to individual needs. In the focus group of middle-class singers in Bailey and Davidson's study, some members agreed that fellowship is important, as was the case for the marginalized choir members, however the middle-class group was *more* concerned with producing a worthwhile *product* with regards to the music they create together. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 296).

The effect of musical interaction upon behaviour

One focus of *anthropology* is how individuals in a given setting *interact with each other.* Anthropologists suggest that musical experiences go beyond the individual participants themselves: "Each person, musicians and listeners, seem to be acting as self-contained, bounded individuals, and indeed they experience whatever they experience as deeply personal and emotional, but the event as a whole plays itself out in a supra-individual domain" (Becker, 2010, p. 149). *Emotion* is also physical and active: "Emotion is an enactment, not a representation in the mind. It is a way of *being-in-the-world*, not a way of thinking about the world." (Becker, 2010, p. 149). The idea of *being* highlights the fact that emotion is not merely about a momentary experience, but rather a way of life. This is confirmed by the way in which music, not just emotion, has become an integral part of life for several of my own participants.

Becker's statement may also shed light on how John's choir members have developed a very different *lifestyle* in the time they have been in the choir. Perhaps their participation has instilled a new way of being and a new set of behaviours in them. As John's description of the first rehearsal illustrated, the singers were initially not used to waiting for anything and just left when his back was turned – not typical behaviour in a choral setting.

The idea of music affecting behaviour is also supported by *sociology* which in part focuses on how environments create *action and agency* (DeNora, 2010, pp. 178-179). DeNora refers to Willis who studied how musickers link music to their social life and mentions an important shift occurring through Willis's work: namely that sociology from then on looked at the way in which social life is produced using aesthetic objects to understand the world, rather than primarily focusing on the aesthetic objects themselves and what they contained. Thus music was no longer seen as merely being static with inherent values, but represented *movement and ways of being*.

Music can also be regarded as an ordering force, shaping its users. In settings where music is present, it can influence how people conduct themselves, constraining or enabling them. (DeNora, 2010, pp. 165-167). Perhaps in the case of John's choir members, interaction with music in this social setting has helped them re-establish order in their lives, adopt new behaviours and conduct themselves differently, ultimately leading to a new lifestyle and outer transformation. Furthermore, music provides a frame or form through which certain actions or agency can take place. It may become a means for people to *define themselves* as actors or agents of a certain behaviour or emotion. (DeNora, 2010, p. 177). The choir, in John's case, may have allowed members to define themselves in new ways and adopt behaviours more in tune with that group, enabling them to separate themselves more and more from their drug addiction. As Ruud describes, music often accompanies states of transition in our lives, and a process by which we leave old habits behind (Turner, 1969, p. 96, cited in Ruud, 2013, p. 249). Thus one could suggest that engaging with music has aided John's choir members in leaving behind destructive or negative thought patterns and behaviours.

Further, music as a so-called "holding form" provides a base "to which actors may return as they engage in collective expressive activity" (DeNora, 2010, p. 177). John's choir provides a base for its members, a place in which to engage with others on a regular basis, giving them both stability and an arena for self-expression. As we have seen stability plays a part in experiencing a sense of continuity and control over one's life which in turn fuels and facilitates changes, such as those exhibited by John's choir members. For Michael's choir

members, the choir also provides a base and the opportunity for expression and achieving feelings of mastery.

Self-belief and focus on vocal ability

An interesting *difference* between the focus middle-class group and choirs 1 and 2 (the marginalized choirs) in Bailey and Davidson's research, was that only one person amongst the marginalized singers expressed any doubt as to their own voice. Some did, however, comment on the abilities of others. The focus group on the other hand, was *more* concerned with their vocal ability, however despite the importance of also producing a good product, the actual performance for an audience was not so important to them. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, pp. 292-293). They also expressed that singing in a group was a good way to use their voice within a safe environment and that the voice is not as exposed when singing with others. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 296)

John had some interesting observations of his own regarding *his* choir versus other choirs. He told me that his choir can get very into the music even when they sing out of tune, in fact they are often unaware that they are out of tune. Whereas "people with a musical education, when they're unsure, they sing more quietly and more slowly." This ties in with Bailey and Davidson's finding that the middle-class group thought more about their vocal ability and their product. If one is unsure about one's voice or whether one sounds good, one is perhaps more likely to withdraw and sing more quietly, as John observed. He says that his singers who sing loudly can both encourage the more educated singers to sing loudly, or perhaps cause them to become even more withdrawn, depending on the person: "I think, *some* become animated by it, and some probably retreat even more into their structures." Are the marginalized singers to some extent freed from concern about their voices being good enough due to their social isolation? It could also be the case that not all singers in the marginalized choirs fully realize the social expectations surrounding their singing due to mental health problems, whereas the focus group are more aware of these expectations. Perhaps the audience also shows more grace to a choir with a difficult background than to a mainstream choir. Conversely, the mainstream choirs may sense the expectations of the audience and consequently be more apprehensive about their reaction. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 295).

For William, it is important that his project-based amateur choir also knows what is *expected* of them and has faith that they too can produce something good despite, in some cases, having been told that singing is not for them. "We will teach them to sing nicely. That's my goal and so I say that the audience who come and think that this is embarrassing, they will hear

that it isn't at all. 'You can [do it]. And we're going to prove [vise] that and we're going to show them that…'" For William, who doesn't mind his voice being heard and in fact prefers to be heard rather than hiding his voice in a large group, it is important to feel that his voice counts. He tells me about singing with around sixty others: "For example when we've sung Messiah with that type of project choir […] It's fun to sing of course but you don't feel that you're *sigh* heard. So that's a drawback. In that respect it's good to be few [singers] as well."

Performing gave the marginalized singers in Bailey and Davidson's study the opportunity to show society who they are, not as someone who lives on the street but as a choir member. They are also given *a voice*, a way of making their thoughts and experiences known. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, pp. 282, 289, 297). For the middle-class group however, the dialogue with the audience was by far not as important. Practicing is more important to them than the actual performance, and the anxiety associated with performing for an audience often lessens the pleasure they experience when singing (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 297). Bailey and Davidson go on the make an important observation:

> Choral singing also provides considerable rewards for the middle-class singers, but the full potential of the experience appears to be constrained by elitist notions of musicality. The pure joy of singing, especially in public, is inhibited by feelings of inadequacy and the pressure to perform within the parameters of 'good musical practice.' (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 298).

It seems that elitist expectations not only affect those who wish to become professional musicians, but it also reach down to the amateur level. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 299). I will explore the concept of elitism more in Chapter four of this thesis.

However, despite differences between the marginalized and middle-class choirs, the studies have also shown that the *emotional language* of the music speaks to the singers to an equal degree, no matter what amount of musical training or socioeconomic status they have. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 297).

Singing contributes to mental health and aids re-integration into society

> *"I have had many people in choirs over the years who have suffered from anxiety,*
> *social anxiety and such, where choir has been their salvation…"*
> *(Paul)*

As we have seen above, singing can have a positive effect on our psychological health and help those who are marginalized by homelessness to return to a more normal lifestyle, amongst other

benefits. Another group of people who can experience feeling marginalized are those who suffer from mental illness, which as I mentioned at the beginning of my thesis, is a real issue in today's society. Singing groups and choirs also create an arena for re-integration into the community. An article written by Stephen Clift and Ian Morrison about singing and mental health also acts as a guide for those interested in setting up or supporting singing groups for people diagnosed with mental illness living in the community. The diagnoses they have received can include anxiety or clinical depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, psychological addictions and self-harming. (Clift and Morrison, 2012, p. 4). They write that mental illnesses can be long-term and severe, or short-term such as absence from work due to stress. The latter is something that otherwise healthy people can experience as well, *without being diagnosed* as mentally ill. People suffering from mental illness but who are well enough to be integrated into society again "may be ready to engage in activities which can help them improve their sense of mental wellbeing and re-engagement with others." (Clift and Morrison, 2012, p. 6). Moreover, some people do not know they are suffering from mental illness, whereas others do not ask for help because they are afraid of being stigmatized or labelled. (Clift and Morrison, 2012, p. 6). That is where singing groups may come into play.

The same article refers to three case studies written by someone directly involved in such singing groups in the United Kingdom, whereof many have been started across the country. One group in Norwich meets for workshops every week and the group is open to both users of the mental health service and their supporters. The activity involves singing many styles and working with harmony and different arrangements, amongst other things. A key element in this group with regard to helping members *re-integrate into society* and for combating stigmatization, is the "inclusion of staff, carers, friends, family and anyone from the local community alongside mental service users" (Clift and Morrison, 2012, p. 10). This is especially valuable for those who have been isolated or institutionalized due to their diagnosis.

Clift and Morrison write that mental health issues can have a *negative impact* on the following aspects of social and psychological well-being: self-belief, organization and structure, abilities and skills, social support and network, positive feelings, and expectations and hope. Many of these aspects are integral to our sense of well-being and QoL, so there is definitely a need to find preventative and restorative ways to help those with mental health issues. Moreover, they write that people "with mental health challenges need support and interventions to help them re-build or develop these aspects of wellbeing. People who actively engage in group singing can benefit in these many different ways." (Clift and Morrison, 2012, p. 6). All of the social needs mentioned above as being important to quality of life, can be met

to some degree in a singing group. For instance: positive feelings are encouraged by singing being a joyful experience which also counteracts anxiety and stress. Self-belief can be strengthened through a new sense of identity developed by participation in the group, and allows them furthermore to identify themselves as someone other than a person who suffers from mental health issues. Social support and networking, as mentioned above, is also encouraged by bringing people together and building up social capital. (Clift and Morrison, 2012, p. 8).

The New Economics Foundation Wellbeing Program has developed 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' which according Clift and Morrison are reflected in the activity of singing. These are:

* Connect – with people around you
* Be active – walk, run, cycle, dance
* Take notice – catch sight of the beautiful, savour the moment
* Keep learning – makes you more confident as well as being fun
* Give – do something nice for a friend or a stranger

(Clift and Morrison, 2012, p. 7).

If we stop and reflect a little on these various points, we can see how singing and musicking can meet these needs, at least to some degree, and this was also supported by my own research findings. As Anna shared, part of what makes musicking and singing exciting is meeting new people, forming new connections. Singing is also a very physical activity and in that sense fulfils point two listed above. Michael described some of the physicality of singing, saying: "you know when you sing you of course use your body by breathing, you have good posture, and you use your heart." Singing and musicking also requires concentration, taking notice. Mental stimulation and the sharpening of concentration is a skill necessary for everyday activities, not least for being able to work. Perhaps singing in John's choir also stimulated this ability in its members, making them more equipped and ready to return to work again. Singing also gives us access to beautiful pieces and works of art.

Concerning *cognitive stimulation*, Bailey and Davidson write the following based on their comparison of marginalized and middle-class singers: "As was found with members of Choirs 1 and 2, the members of the focus group sing for the enjoyment it provides, but they also seek choral experiences that will challenge their ability, improve their musical skill set, and increase their level of musical knowledge." One of the interview participants themselves said: "Having mental challenge was very important, as well as developing as a musician." (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 294). As we heard from Sarah, during my own research, the "new" knowledge singing provides is fascinating. Joy, in turn, said: "…as a singer and musician I feel

it's marked that everyone thinks that they are never finished. One is never done with learning." Developing her skill is described by Anna as a *need,* even after having sung for many years: "I still have the need to develop as a teacher. And as a singer still…" So both cognition and mental capacity can in fact benefit from singing either together with others or as a soloist.

As we have also seen with regard to peak experiences, musical encounters can provide us with moments to savour, touch our emotions and give us *a chance for escapism* from daily routine and also from life's problems – a fact which Bailey and Davidson's research confirmed. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 271). With regard to the last point on Clift and Morrison's list of ways to well-being, we do something nice for a stranger when we share our art with them, be it music, dance, compositions and so forth. We allow them to be touched and to take part in that which we are creating.

Aside from choirs creating room for interaction and acceptance between the singers and members themselves, singing in the choir also gives the participants a natural way of engaging with *society* via the audience. Marginalized individuals can feel they are disliked by the general population, and by engaging with the audience the choir members can show others more of who they are (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 297). Again, Bailey and Davidson's participant Philip shares: "Singing is a way of sharing, you know, yourself with other people. (*and later*) and eye contact … now I can look around when I sing, you know, I don't have to be ashamed." The idea of shame links back to the pride-shame continuum mentioned with regard to musical communication in section 2.3. Perhaps Philip feels less shame after having received positive feedback and reinforcement as part of the choir, and the singers also feel pride over what they produce. In addition the feeling of contributing something, which we have seen is so important, is especially tangible in this case through giving concerts where proceeds go to helping those who are marginalized. (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 282).

Beyond providing the singers with a way of interacting with the audience, singing in the choir also gives them a *voice*, a way of telling others about life in poverty and homelessness. One of the social workers involved with one of the choirs, Theo, says that choral singing develops "from a kind of personal, spiritual thing, into people challenging the perspectives that have led them into their position, and challenging the stereotypes around poverty and homelessness." (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 289). The singers are thus not only changed internally but can also become a catalyst for change in others and in society through the medium of choral singing.

Change is not limited to the choir members

John told me that it's not just his choir that has changed, but that the choir has also changed *him*. For one, working with the choir has made him more open; not so closed-minded. In addition he says: "It has made me much more tolerant. But also, on the other hand, more certain, to know what I absolutely *don't* want; so both." He also described working with amateurs as being refreshing:

> Well, especially as a classical musician where everything has to be so perfect; I think that's *also* deathly boring. And then it's good for the soul to meet people who look blankly at you when you start to speak in an intellectual way. They just don't understand it, and in some way that's great too.

The first rehearsal has also left its mark in John's memory as being something special: "we *all* had goosebumps during the first rehearsal. We sang three notes, but it was really lovely somehow…" It's also an experience he wouldn't want to be without, and he even compares it to the moment that greatly impacted his musical journey: "So, the first rehearsal was *amazing*. I wouldn't want to *erase* that first rehearsal from my life. That's right, it's actually comparable to Parsifal." It's satisfying for a conductor when the music takes form and when progress is made; something I can relate to being a choral conductor myself. For John the situation is even more unique because of the type of choir he conducts and the people he is instructing: "It's also something to sing a tone with these chaotic people…and until it really becomes *one* tone, and then to make a melody out of it, and then it becomes music; well, that was an experience; that was, that was *great*. …and of course, they felt it in the same way." Even though music is a communicational tool, he believes that the most important thing is what the music *does* to people, as the quote at the very beginning of this section suggests. He also shared that experiencing the power of music makes it hard to imagine life without it: "if one often feels that, I think it's heard to leave that behind, yes. Can't imagine what it would be like without music. Really can't imagine." John isn't the only one who has experienced that music moves people and does something to them. Paul also spoke of this during our interview, saying that for him success is seeing people being moved: "it's not so important for me if I don't get so much feedback, but seeing people touched both in the choir, musicians, but also those who come to the concerts; the audience. *That's* how I measure success." I think seeing people in the audience being moved is also encouraging for those performing. It shows that one has managed to communicate and impart something to the listeners, to strike a chord or hit a nerve with them; emotions have been stirred by performance.

Changes can be small

For the conductor of one of the case-study choirs mentioned in Clift *et al.* (2010), the most powerful moments have not been the huge changes, but the small (yet important) steps she has seen the users in the choir take. She gives the following examples: "The first time someone's lips moved to begin to whisper the words of a song – the first time someone lifted her head to make eye contact - the first time someone managed to stay in the room for a whole session" (Clift and Morrison, 2012, p. 10). Small changes brings me back to a point I made in my introduction, namely that many small factors contribute to our well-being and health, so let us give people the opportunity to take a step towards increased well-being and QoL, however small a step it may be.

As we have seen in this section singing together with others can bring considerable benefits, both great and small, on an emotional, psychological and mental level, and contribute to greater health, well-being, and QoL. This has been confirmed both by my own research findings and studies done by Clift *et al*. and Bailey and Davidson, amongst others. Therefore it is desirable to continue to provide and uphold choral singing traditions and opportunities so that many people may enjoy the benefits of singing and interacting with others through music.

Chapter 4. Discussion of findings and reflections on the implications of the power of musicking for society

In response to the main research questions of this thesis: '*Can music and singing positively influence people's lives and increase their quality of life and sense of well-being? If so, how?'* the answer to question one appears to be 'yes,' and the possibilities for 'how' this may occur have also been presented, some of which I will summarize here.

We have seen that *individually,* musicking affects active participants on many levels. It can contribute to forming our sense of self and identity, becoming a part of our story and the picture of ourselves we present to the world. Anna is an example of this, her singing being a defining signifier in the eyes of those around her, and an equally important part of her as any other part. Singing and musicking also provide a medium for self-expression, allowing us to meet the innate need we have to show the world who were are, as in both Sarah's and Anna's case, and expressing what's inside us: music being also "the cry of the heart" as expressed by Panassié (Panassié, 1942/1946, p. 6, cited in Ruud, 2013, p. 29). Musicking and singing are furthermore means of communicating both one's own thoughts and those of others. As Michael decribed, singing involves reflecting on the composers own intentions, and interpreting the music in an honest and open way. William on the other hand also experiences music as a vent for his *own* feelings, and experiences with music also bring us into deeper contact with our emotions. Emotional depth allows us to experience life more richly, also through more profound musical experiences such as peak experiences or altered states of consciousness. Such deeply moving encounters can lead to escape from life's problems or give new perspectives on life, leading people to seek other ways of living or giving them new direction. As in John's case, his experience with Parsifal was vital to the direction his life would take with regard to pursuing music. Such profound experiences can also increase our sense of control, our resources allowing us to take action in life.

With regards to the more *interpersonal* aspects of musicking and singing together with others, this thesis has shown that potential benefits include a positive impact on our sense of belonging and feeling of having resources to contribute within a collective setting. As also the lives of my interview participants have demonstrated, significant others such as family or teachers play an important part in introducing music into our lives, and in inspiring, supporting and encouraging us to pursue music in the long-term. Social competence, social networks and friendships are developed in collective musicking settings, and musicking and singing can facilitate re-integration into society. A strong example of this has been demonstrated by

members of John's choir who turned their lives around, from being addicted to drugs and homeless to being able to work again and in that respect returning to a more normal life. Choral singing is moreover uplifting and energizing for those involved and can, for those marginalized due to life circumstances for instance, provide a way for interacting with society either by singing with or for others.

All of these factors, individual and interpersonal seem to contribute to increased QoL and well-being in many different ways. A stronger sense of identity and stability in ourselves allows us to feel more secure. Mastering tasks with regard to musicking activities can contribute to our self-confidence and self-efficacy, encouraging us to branch out and take on new challenges in life, allowing us to build up our resources and resilience as well. Gaining access to a wider and deeper range of emotion also expands our tools for self-expression, and contributes to our fundamental feeling of happiness, according to Næss (c.f page 7). Furthermore, profound musicking experiences can help us to attune ourselves to our values, allowing us to experience greater authenticity – a sense of being more ourselves.

As Medin and Alexanderson (2000) suggest health is also a process, and according to Antonovsky taking steps towards greater health involves the whole person; their physical, social and psychological elements. Furthermore, as we have seen here, there is also a spiritual element to our nature, a side of us that according to Goldberg and Dimiceli-Mitran needs to be acknowledged as well in order to achieve good mental health. Musicking provides an important tool and resource for addressing all of these sides of human nature, helping people on their way to achieving greater health, and allowing them to expand their potential, flourish, and experience life in a richer way.

So what implications do the findings presented here have for society? What baring may they have on the way we think about and view musicking?

4.1 Musicking is for everyone

> *"So you have to say something about that in your assignment;*
> *that being allowed to sing is a human right. One has to be allowed to do that."*
> *(Michael)*

Firstly, as we have seen with regard to my own interview participants, music has been an important part of their lives since childhood, and has obviously been something they enjoy

enough to make it a hobby or even a profession. Although they are of different ages and at different stages of their development, musicking gives them great pleasure and enriches their lives in different ways. We have gained a little insight into the positive effects of musicking on children, in the sections on identity and motivation, and into its affect on adults – both those who are marginalized and normal middle-class citizens. The fact that musicking is *beneficial for different age groups* is something to be borne in mind when considering for whom musicking ought to be made available. As Michael's quote above highlights, everyone should be allowed to sing, or as this thesis suggests, musick.

As we have focused mainly on musicking's effect on the general public however, we have not looked specifically at the effect of musicking upon the elderly, which is a large and expanding research field. However, there is evidence of its positive impact on them as well. A study conducted by Cohen, Perlstein, Chapline, Kelly, Firth, and Simmens was published in The Gerontologist (2006) titled *The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on the Physical Health, Mental Health, and Social Function of Older Adults.* The greatest impact in this study was shown with regard to physical health or physical issues such as falls. However, participation in musicking and singing can also help to combat feelings of loneliness or meaninglessness by creating settings where the elderly can meet new people, form new friendships and meet each other on a weekly basis. Michael described some benefits of his project-based choir for older members:

> So you know, also for older people, especially for those who are single, for some or other reason, getting out of the house, going to something, and then especially singing which is so, what shall we say? Enriching, yes. That is important and that is the reason why people enjoy this and say that they feel better when they are allowed to join in and sing.

The participants in the choir also work towards a goal - a concert, which makes their involvement even more meaningful, not just for themselves but also for those they can share the results of their new found hobby and newly acquired knowledge with. Discovering they have something to contribute can also, as we have seen, instill greater self-confidence and self-belief, potentially giving them the courage to try new things and flourish also at a riper age.

Ruud writes that "if the goal is to develop joy of music and the ability to work with others"* then the idea that it is necessary to start with music early in life is a myth. (Ruud, 2001, pp. 107-108). That is not to say that music in childhood should be reduced - quite the opposite - however this research can be an encouragement to us not only to focus on providing musicking opportunities for the young or those "in their prime," but also for people who perhaps are in even greater danger of feeling lonely or superfluous as they grow older.

4.2 Musicking for the elite vs. musicking for the masses

"I believe it [singing/musicking] is an enrichment in life for everyone,
if one had dared to learn."
(Paul)

Secondly, research presented here, including my own, has shown that musicking can have a positive effect on the lives of participants regardless of their level of musical experience or education, their familial or socioeconomic background. This ought to encourage us to provide musicking opportunities for various spheres of society, embracing different levels of ability and perhaps also cause us to reflect on the settings in which musicking occurs. One aim could also be to provide more informal arenas for musical enjoyment where the goal is to enjoy music and its benefits rather than focusing on performing or living up to a certain performance standard. (Ruud, 2001, p. 118).

I wish to quote an interesting statement from Bailey and Davidson's article which describes the way in which too ambitious music thinking can negatively impact involvement with music. They write that the "expert model of performance and increased accessibility to outstanding musical performances have contributed to the creation of a musical climate in which the majority of the population have been relegated to 'procurers' rather 'producers' of music." (Bailey and Davidson, 2005, p. 270). So where does this elitist and performance-oriented way of thinking come from?

Virtuosity and elistist thinking

Small addresses the subject of *virtuosity*, in his book *Music, Society, Education* saying that the goal to be as good as possible, as opposed to virtuosity being a result of pursuing *music itself*, is a Western phenomenon. Furthermore, he writes that the pursuit of this can lead to music being a less *communal* affair because people are only good enough to listen to music, not to be involved in creating it. (Small, 1996, pp. 198-199). This echoes Bailey and Davidson's thoughts above. According to Ruud QoL can be destroyed by "attempts to live up to the traditional idea of musicality, where performance and promoting oneself [selv-hevdelse] are part of the package"* (Ruud, 2001, p. 118). Virtuosity, routed in a more traditional understanding of musicality can result in a heavy focus on performance and being better than others. This may consequently endanger QoL for some musicians by encouraging competition and comparison. Ruud expands on why this traditional way of thinking can be limiting:

> Practicing music within an 'esthetic arena' where the goal is to perfect and develop musical expression and skills has its own worth which I won't deny. However this knowledge cannot always be turned into interpersonal cooperation [mellommenneskelig samhandling], stimulating personal expression and personal development – or create social networks and a feeling of social belonging.* (Ruud, 2001, p. 119).

Pressure on young musicians wanting to pursue music can also be significant due to the focus on results:

> The concern for the product, as usual, means that little attention is given to the process, and we find that the training of these young lions becomes ever more arduous; scales, exercises, *solfège* and studies dominate the life of the aspiring virtuoso to the point that it is a miracle that any love of music survives at all (Small, 1996, p. 193).

The thought of the *love for music being lost* is to some degree reflected in a statement John made during our interview, where in his experience some music teachers are "filled with little music." Small writes that specialist music teachers teaching at schools, more often than not, are musicians who have become teachers after failing to succeed as professional musicians. They usually model their teaching on the tuition they themselves received, and he goes on to say that this completes the "vicious circle which excludes the majority of children from any significant musical experience in school." (Small, 1996, p. 194). Children who are not planning to make a career out of music, which according to Small is the *vast majority*, may not find this type of tuition appealing. For those who become excluded from tuition, their experience with music becomes a fairly passive one where they learn about music but are not involved in *creating* it. (Small, 1996, pp. 194-195).

That's why extracurricular cultural activities are so important! They create an arena where the demands are smaller and where the activities are more gauged towards the individual's wishes. Sarah told me that singing is valuable to "not just those who become singers or who take singing further, but also for those for whom singing is their second instrument, I can see how singing has a positive effect on them." Those pursuing music as a hobby often engage in these activities of their own volition and this has a lot to say for their motivation to continue engaging with music. Small writes that "the freedom to decide for oneself makes the vital difference between a living experience of learning and drudgery" (Small, 1996, p. 202).

However, in order for people to be able to *choose* to take part in cultural activities such as musicking and singing, they have to be *available* and the standard must not be such that only the best can join. In choirs such as Paul's and Michael's, not everyone who joins is a particularly experienced singer but there are other aspects of musicking that are meaningful to their lives

such as achieving greater self-confidence, or being inspired to take singing lessons. Paul believes that everyone should have the opportunity to sing, that it shouldn't be exclusively for the elite as also Small points out.

The lack of classical music appeal for young people today is not necessarily only routed in the focus on virtuosity. John suggests that the attitude of classical musicians could also be a contributing factor: "musicians are often of the opinion that everything around them has to be in place, and that only then can they begin to work. And I think also because of that, classical music is no longer as *interesting* for young people, because of academic, stuffy people." However, he says this isn't the case in good orchestras; "those are musicians." Regarding elitism I asked him: "Would you also say that, in some ways, the elitist culture one often associates with music also ruins the joy of music a little for people who, for example, haven't gone through a musical education?" He replied that it depends on the teacher and goes on to say: "If they make you feel like you're too stupid, then of course that's the case…" Thus as teachers and leaders of musicking activities, the values we promote and they way in which we meet participants is very important.

Evidence for the effects of performance-oriented, elitist notions of musicking are evident in the fear of not being good enough. A focus on technical ability and expertise, also propogated through the ridicule on television of people who don't measure up to the experts' definition of talent, may also contribute to this. During our interview, Paul talked about those who have the desire to sing but perhaps do not having the opportunity, the bravery or self-belief to pursue it. For a particular choir project Paul is leading, he doesn't hold auditions for those who want to take part. I asked him what his thoughts were when he decided not to have auditions, and he replied: "I think that many have bad self-esteem with regard to singing and then one watches [talent shows on TV], and becomes nervous." He continues: "Singing is supposed to be fun. Many are sitting on the fence and haven't sung for many years; been a part of [a teen gospel choir] or children's gospel choir and have perhaps not sung for twenty years, and then having to audition kills *everything*." John believes that everyone can sing, and not having auditions is his way of expressing that: "For me it's very important that everyone can [sing]. And everyone must have the opportunity."

Furthermore he said that there is room for more choirs with a modern style of music, as opposed to the traditional church choirs or classical choirs: "But the pop style; Pop, Rock, RnB, Soul, not many people do that. There are very many people who listen to that type of music and who really would like to sing. So I think there is a large potential and quite a need… in the

nation." He told me that many people perhaps sing in a gospel choir in their teens but then don't manage to find a choir in later life where they feel at home. "I, at least, know that very many don't feel at home in those choirs because of the style and form and the music. And they haven't found their place after [singing in a teen gospel choir]." In fact he believes that *that* is a bigger issue preventing people from joining choirs than their fear of an audition.

So which values are worth pursuing instead? Ruud writes about a type of "communicative musicality"* that involves being able to interpret meaning in musical messages, develop one's own musical taste, sing, understand social references made in the music, to s*hare* experiences with music or dance to music. He states that: "This kind of 'musicality', or better still, musical competence is enough to increase our quality of life…"* (Ruud, 2013, p. 119). He suggests that the more traditional understanding of asthetics has its worth, however we also need to create more relaxed arenas for those who want to enjoy music without so much pressure and comparison with others: arenas with more room for social fellowship and unique self-expression. (Ruud, 2013, p. 119).

The elitist notion of musicking can limit the accessability of musicking for wider society or "the masses," which consequently limits their access to the many *benefits* of musicking explored in this thesis. An elitist notion ought not to hinder us in making musicking activities accessable to those with many different levels of ability or with differing socioeconomic backgrounds, for as we have seen musicking also enriches the lives of those without musical training and those within marginalized groups in society.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Observations and reflections regarding my own research

It has been informative and enlightening to hear the different stories that my interview participants shared regarding their own experiences with music and the ways in which they have seen musicking affect other people's lives. I felt that there was generally a good atmosphere during my interviews and that people have been able to share their opinions and personal thoughts. This also seems to indicate that they felt safe enough to share within the interview setting. The interview method itself left room for individual differences, differing perspectives on certain topics, as well as room for digressions from the official Interview Guide. There have – in fact – been observable individual differences between participants: some have been more talkative whilst others have been more concise. That is one of the strengths of this research method as it to an extent reflects the diversity of human beings; not everyone is the same and not everyone has the same musical story to tell.

With regard to my own role as an interviewer, I feel that I have grown in confidence during the interviews and have been able to ask more informed questions as I have become more familiar with the subject matter. My Interview Guide has been altered to some extent during the research process as I have received feedback on my questions being too 'closed' or 'leading' – although this feedback has *not* come from the participants themselves. It is important for the participants to feel that they could share both positive and negative reflections on their experiences with music, even though I was most interested in the positive effects. Musicking, as life itself, is not experienced as purely positive by everyone; although my interview participants *were* generally positive in their statements.

I also asked questions regarding issues not in the Interview Guide as I gained more insight into my area of research and wanted to get some of the interview subjects' opinions. An example of this was that I asked the last three participants whether they had experienced Peak Experiences in relation to music. Research develops as one goes along, it is a process and a 'work in progress,' and in that respect it is undertandable that one's method may be amended to some extent. The Interview Guides in my Appendix are the latest versions, both for singers and singers/musicians and/or conductors, the latter of these also having been developed later on once I decided to enlarge my scope of interview participants.

I have gained valuable insight from my participants who all have varied amounts of experience and their own unique reflections on music and life. As the readers have seen, they

have made important contributions to this thesis, and my work would not have been the same without their input. An extra thank you goes to them for their investment.

Possibilities for further research

I wish here to discuss some possible ideas for further research, all of which are routed in the perspective presented here of musickings positive effect and potential benefits.

Firstly, through literature and my own interviews in conjuction with this thesis, I have been reminded of how important the quality of *music education* is, as well as the role of role-models in determining whether or not music education leaves a positive impression on the students who have taken part. Michael especially was very concerned with the fact that learning to sing starts with children and starts with a good teacher who is a good role-model, shares their knowledge, and who can ultimately be a vital source of inspiration. As I mentioned in my introduction the importance of music education in schools in today's society is a debated one, and music as an academic subject is losing ground. In light of the findings presented here, we can see that musicking opportunities including those provided in the classroom, can have a positive and far-reaching impact on students' lives. It is a shame if they lose out on these benefits as a result of reduced musicking opportunities, or alternatively because musical education that doesn't facilitate these benefits through the way it is taught. Small raises important points concerning both the way in which the education system with its academic tradition may be caging our creativity, and that musical tuition may be lacking in the way it is carried out: "It is the richness of experience that is the right of all, but is denied to most in our culture in its pursuit of power and the objects of science and technology" (Small, 1996, p. 227). In neglecting to nurture creativity and artistic expression we are, as expressed by Small above, denying people the right to a richer life experience, which as this thesis indicates can also be achieved through singing and musicking.

Research done in England at GCSE level by Harland *et al*. (2000) unfortuneatly revealed that music as a subject was *not* seen by students as being particularly relevant to life outside of school. (Hagen, 2007, p. 39). Although not all students are destined to become professional musicians, they can at least be given the opportunity to reap the benefits of active participation is musicking activities in the classroom. As we have seen, musicking can have such a positive effect on social competence, social and personal identity, self-confidence and resources for tackling everyday life – which are important building-blocks for life beyond school as well.

Musicking provides so many benefits, without even touching on the question of whether or not music affects intelligence or academic ability.

On a practical level, research could involve observing the ways in which musical tuition in schools is carried out, and investigating the effects this has on students, both positive and negative, for example through conducting interviews with students and teachers. Taking this a step further, routed in the knowledge of musickings potential, one could then attempt to adapt classroom tuition to make it more relevant and beneficial for students. These ideas for adapting the tuition could then be implemented in a trail in a classroom setting.

A second possible area for continued research is related to the use of music as a tool for integration and cultural bridge-building. Baring in mind the evidence we have seen in this thesis, as in the case of John's choir and research done on mental illness, singing can aid in the re-integration of marginalized people into society. This process is facilitated by helping them to bond with others and re-discover their own resources, enabling change and transition into a new lifestyle. Furthermore, we have explored musicking as a tool for communication and for creating a sense of belonging, common identity, and providing common ground on which people of different backgrounds can meet. In addition, the ambiguity or fluidity of musical expression allows people of different cultures to express themselves through music as a common medium. Considering the current situation in society with refugees leaving their homeland and seeking asylum in other countries, and where integration is sorely needed, musicking may provide an arena within which social and cultural integration to occur.

Concrete methods for further research could involve setting up musical initiatives in certain communities that are taking in refugees, in order to facilitate social integration and bonding between refugees and natives. These initiatives could involve musicking and socializing together, as well as introducing both sides to musical traditions from their respective cultures. Interviews or questionnaires could then be used in order to gather data on how the participants experience these initiatives, as well as observing how these groups function and the effect they have on those taking part. A method for crossing potential language barriers would have to be found, for example by involving an interpreter. This research could be highly relevant in view of today's situation and perhaps bring valuable insight into how musicking can be used as a tool for re-integration, not just within one culture, as explored in this thesis, but across cultures.

Closing thoughts on the Power of Musicking and Singing

In this thesis we have explored the many benefits that can result from active involvement with music. The fundamental perception and understanding of music and its value and meaning for people's lives, connected to the questions raised by Small in my introduction, can have important repercussions both for individuals and on a larger societal scale. The quote from GEO magazine with regard to music being dispensable according to those who have not actively experienced music making themselves, highlights the importance of active musicking opportunities. By investing in musicking and other cultural activities today we are investing in the future preservation of our cultural heritage and facilitating the enrichment that such cultural activities can bring to our lives and the lives of many others. Making musicking available for the general public not only contributes to the position of music and culture in our society here and now, it also allows us to plant seeds in the lives of future politicians and others who will decide whether music is important or not based on their own personal experiences.

It is not my intention to suggest that music is the solution for all of the world's problems, or that it is the best solution for everyone. As we have seen, we are unique and music affects everyone differently, thus it would be foolish to assume that one solution fits all. However, I wish to highlight the *value* of music and the amazing *potential* that lies within participation in musicking. This potential is important both with regard to quality of life and salutogenesis, as a preventative for several of the struggles we face today including loneliness, lack of hope and depression. Why not make use of this amazing tool and resource when, as we have seen, there are so many benefits to be drawn from it? I wish to quote Christopher Small once again in closing, who makes such a poignant point about what musicking and being creative really means:

> We fail, too, to see that from the moment the beginner first puts his fingers on the piano keyboard, takes up a crayon to scribble or draw a stick figure, or begins to knead a piece of clay, he is exploring both himself and the nature of the material world, exploring it not to dominate it but to live more fully in it (Small, 1996, p. 199).

I hope that I have been able to show some of the ways in which musicking and singing affects participants lives and how these activities can contribute to living life "more fully," as Small describes it. The evidence gathered here suggests that such activities have value and deserve to be prioritized and facilitated further within our society. We can do this by making such activities increasingly available to the general public, both young and old, irrespective of health and socio-status, so that more people may enjoy improved quality of life, and life in greater fullness.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Singers/Musicians

1. *In what way is music and singing a part of your life today, and for how long has music been an important part of your life?*

2. *Were you a) encouraged by someone else to sing or did you b) decide for yourself that you wanted to start?*

   If yes to a) who inspired you to pursue music and singing?

   If yes to b) what inspired you to start singing?

3. *Do you remember music being a part of your childhood? If so, how was it a part of your childhood?*

4. *What is it about singing that inspires you to make a habit of it? What motivates you to sing?*

5. *Is it most important for you to a) sing with others or do you b) prefer singing solo?*

    If yes to a) what do you enjoy about singing with others?

   If yes to b) what do you enjoy about singing solo?

6. *Does music affect other areas of your life, and if so how?*

7. *Have you ever felt pressured to pursue singing or music, or has it always been a natural and pleasurable activity for you?*

8. *Are there other aspects with regards to singing that motivate or demotivate you?*

9. *How does music enrich your life? What would you miss about singing if you stopped?*

Appendix 2: Interview Guide for Singers/Musicians and Choral Conductors

Regarding your own relationship to singing, music and/or conducting

1. *In what way is music and singing a part of your life today, and for how long has music been an important part of your life?*

2. *Were you a) encouraged by someone else to sing/conduct or did you b) decide for yourself that you wanted to start?*

   If yes to a) who inspired you to pursue music, singing or conducting?

   If yes to b) what inspired you to start singing or conducting?

3. *Do you remember music being a part of your childhood? If so, how was it a part of your childhood? This could be memories of your mother singing lullabies to you, playing the recorder in school, singing in a choir?*

4. *Does music affect other areas of your life, and if so how? Does singing or conducting help you relax, find energy, express yourself or vent feelings? Do you feel at home, like you belong, when you sing or conduct, or do you take on a different persona/stage yourself when you sing or lead the choir?*

5. *Are there other aspects with regards to singing or conducting that motivate you? For example the opportunity to convey a message through song, or the social aspect of getting to know the singers or musicians when singing or working with them?*

6. *Have you ever felt pressured to pursue singing, music or conducting, or has it always been a natural and pleasurable activity for you?*

7. *How does music enrich your life? What would you miss about singing or conducting if you stopped?*

8. *What is it about singing that inspires you to use it to help others?*

9. *Can you see evidence that singing and music also affects the lives of those who sing in your choir? If so, in what ways does it affect them?*

10. *How important are the relationships between the singers and do you think is the social aspect is important for your choir members?*

11. *Does music enrich the choir members' lives, if so how? What do you think they would miss at the end of their time in the choir?*