Music Mediators as Builders of a Public Culture Based upon Love?
Philosophical Concepts of Love as a Compass for Music Mediation Practice

Daniela Bartels

Introduction

In music mediation projects that focus on the social potential of music-making, music is often used as an aid to create interpersonal encounters and to connect people – especially people whose paths would not cross for more than a few seconds in everyday life. As a philosophical researcher and a practising music mediator, I try to better understand what it takes to connect participants coming from socially and culturally heterogenous backgrounds through music projects, and for them to interact and communicate on equal terms.

Both my practical experience and my study of philosophical literature have led to the hypothesis that there are specific emotional and social capacities that music mediators need to develop and cultivate if they want to successfully realise music mediation and music education projects in which they communicate on equal terms with participants (Bartels 2021). One of the books that inspired me to think about these capacities, was Martha C. Nussbaum's *Political Emotions. Why Love Matters for Justice*. In this book, she identifies the need "for a public culture based upon love and extended sympathy, which can support the goals of a just society" (Nussbaum 2013, 58). She states:

> In the type of liberal society that aspires to justice and equal opportunity for all, there are two tasks for the political cultivation of emotion. One is to engender and sustain strong commitment to worthy projects that require effort and sacrifice […]. The other related task for the cultivation of public emotion is to keep at bay forces that lurk in all societies and, ultimately, in all of us: tendencies to protect the fragile self by denigrating and subordinating others. (ibid., 3)

The question how philosophical concepts of love, such as the one Martha Nussbaum has developed, can guide human actions in music groups and projects – especially the actions of musical leaders – has been touched upon in several texts within the philosophy of music education and community music discourses (Silverman 2012; Lapidaki 2020; Jorgensen 2021; Lines and Bartels 2023). Marissa Silverman has referred to bell hooks' thinking, and it is my intention to also pick up this thread. In this chapter, I portray and connect hooks' and Nussbaum's philosophical concepts, which are based on analyses of society. Their definitions of an ethic of love have the potential to serve as a compass for music mediators who are willing to critically reflect on their actions, and on the social and emotional capacities they need to cultivate if they want to become builders of a public culture based upon love.

What do reflections on one's actions and their effects on others in music projects look like? In order to find answers to this question, I conducted two group reflections with participants in a music mediation project called *Marie, Musik und das Meer* [Mary, Music and the Sea] that took place after the successful termination of the project. I initiated, planned, and realised this inter-generational project with four music education students and a shanty choir between April 2022 and February 2023. In March 2023, it became a small research project. My intention was to find out whether the social and emotional elements that are defined in bell hooks' and Martha Nussbaum's theoretical concepts of love – elements that have the potential to transform communities – could be discovered in this music mediation project.

Before describing the music mediation project and its main goals, I will present the philosophical concepts that serve as a foundation for the analysis of this project. I will then portray and analyse selected participants' perspectives on the music project, because these perspectives can actually reveal how musicians realise the social and emotional elements that are needed if we decide to live by an ethic of love that bell hooks and Martha Nussbaum have described in theory. Finally, I suggest some possible consequences for the education of future music mediators.

The Foundation for a Public Culture Based Upon Love: Philosophical Concepts

In my experience, discussing love in educational contexts can unsettle people. One reason for this might be that the first meanings of love that come to mind are physical attraction, or sensuality. It is a sad fact that there have been schools such as the Odenwaldschule in Germany where teachers abused their power

by forcing sexual acts on their students (Haas-Rietschel 2019). That is why it is important to emphasise: When people force others into doing things they do not want to, the exact opposite of the philosophical concept of love is realised.

hooks (2001) and Nussbaum (2013) have developed philosophical concepts in which they specify ethical ideals that humans can strive for if they want to create just communities on a local level. These ideals can be a compass for our actions in all the relationships we enter into, not just the romantic ones. hooks and Nussbaum have presented substantial answers to questions such as:

- What are central elements of a public culture based upon love?
- What does such a culture demand from the humans who create and shape it?

In this section, I intend to break down the big word: I will explain philosophical notions of love and the social and emotional elements that are linked to these notions. The underlying assumption here is that both musical leaders and musical participants can realise and develop these elements when interacting with each other in music mediation projects. If this happens, they build just communities on a local level.

What do philosophical notions and, more importantly, definitions of love look like? At the beginning of *all about love*, hooks states that it is important to believe in "the idea of love as a transformative force" (hooks 2001, xix). This transformative potential of love can only be developed by people who regard love as a human capability and develop it in themselves. Here, hooks takes up Erich Fromm's thinking. In the 1950s, the social philosopher and psychoanalyst stated that love is an activity and as such the "realisation of a human capability"[1] (Fromm 1956, 33). hooks suggests that one should "begin by always thinking of love as an action rather than a feeling" which includes assuming personal "accountability and responsibility" (hooks 2001, 13). According to her analysis, all the great movements for social justice have strongly emphasised a love ethic: "A love ethic presupposes that everyone has the right to be free, to live fully and well." (ibid., 87) This love ethic includes "various ingredients – care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment, and trust, as well as honest and open communication" (ibid., 5), and it also includes "the courage to take risks" (ibid., 11). People living by this ethic "make choices based on a belief that honesty, openness, and personal integrity need to be expressed in public and private decisions" (ibid., 88). These ethical choices "affirm our interconnectedness with others" (ibid., 94). In hooks' concept, this includes "the will to nurture our own

1 This is my translation, since I worked with a German version of *The Art of Loving*.

and another's spiritual[2] growth" (ibid., 6). When it comes to human relationships and interactions, many of the social and emotional elements mentioned so far can be observed and analysed. People who do this are building and cultivating awareness:

> Being aware enables us to critically examine our actions to see what is needed so that we can give care, be responsible, show respect, and indicate a willingness to learn. Understanding knowledge as an essential element of love is vital because we are daily bombarded with messages that tell us love is about mystery, about that which cannot be known. (ibid., 94)

According to hooks, this awareness, the knowledge and the art of loving can best be developed in communities, not in nuclear families. She even considers the possible co-dependency in nuclear families as a "breeding ground for abuses of power" (ibid., 130). With regard to possible abuses of power, or imbalances of power between people, she states very clearly: "Cultures of domination rely on the cultivation of fear as a way to ensure obedience" (ibid., 93) and "[d]omination cannot exist in any social situation where a love ethic prevails." (ibid., 98) That is why personal reflections on possible inner fears that can influence actions are very important if people want to build a just community based on an ethic of love.[3]

Nussbaum also argues that an ethic of love is needed if we want to build just communities. She challenges the belief that "only fascist or aggressive societies are intensely emotional and that only such societies need to focus on the cultivation of emotions" (Nussbaum 2013, 2) and underpins this point by describing the actions of influential political leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. They "understood the need to touch citizens' hearts and to inspire, deliberately, strong emotions at the common work before them"

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2 Here, she refers to the definition of psychiatrist M. Scott Peck which was published in the late 1970s. She mentions that many people "have difficulty with Peck's definition of love, because he uses the word 'spiritual'" (hooks 2001, 13). hooks makes it clear that this definition does not mean that an individual has to be a believer in a religious sense.

3 In her book *Radically emotional*, the German neuroscientist Maren Urner also argues that personal reflections that aim at understanding our own subjective values and the emotions connected to them (Urner 2024, 37) are highly significant if we want to build just societies that can actually solve today's challenges such as the climate crisis, debates about migration, or identity politics (ibid., 30). The argument of this book is based on a critique of the widespread belief that 'reason' and 'emotions' can be separated from each other. Urner asks us to consciously connect reason and emotions and to act on this basis. This is her suggestion as to how we can live together constructively.

(ibid.). When it comes to power relations between people, her line of argument is very similar to hooks', because Nussbaum also states that a just society can be realised through the efforts of individuals who seek "not a dominating, hierarchical type of relationship with others, but, instead, a mutually respectful love that invites and delights in mutually responsive conversation, by turns playful and aspiring." (ibid., 112) Nussbaum's philosophical concept or vision of love requires of all human beings

> a delighted recognition of the other as valuable, special, and fascinating; a drive to understand the point of view of the other; fun and reciprocal play; exchange, [...] and, finally and centrally, trust and suspension of anxious demands for control. (ibid., 176)

She emphasises that "only a vigorous imaginative engagement with another person's particularity will undo or prevent the ravages of group-based stigma and reveal citizens to one another as whole and unique people" (ibid., 165). This thought is significant for this chapter, because music mediation projects that focus on human interaction and musical or artistic co-creation on equal terms offer manifold opportunities to engage with other persons' particularities. According to music education philosopher Eleni Lapidaki, local music projects are characterised by an "oral being-together of proximity" (Lapidaki 2020, 262). When it comes to human proximity, the emotional and social elements of intimacy and trust are central. She considers "trust in the Other [...] as central to developing interconnections across difference" (ibid., 267), and suggests that in moments of intimacy "something other than mere one-dimensional information is being transmitted" (ibid., 266). Lapidaki states that both trust and intimacy require "the mutual willingness to bend together toward or immerse oneself in each other's differences" and the capacity to "acknowledge and accept [...] recognition of irreducibility" (ibid., 267). She argues that these elements can stimulate openness to unpredictable or unfolding circumstances. Being open in this way is of central importance if music mediators want to initiate and keep up processes of co-creation in which people coming from different social and cultural backgrounds interact on equal terms.

hooks' line of argument has already been taken up within the community music discourse: Silverman agrees that love is "one crucial dimension of social justice" and follows hooks' definition of an "ethic of love" (Silverman 2012, 157f.). She criticises that "CM [Community Music, DB] scholars often overlook and/or avoid explicit discussions of the nature and value of love." (ibid., 160) This situation has changed in the last decade. Today, David A. Camlin also states that "love is a universal human value" (Camlin 2023, 15) which is realised through Community Music activities. However, when he speaks of love, he means a "sense

of 'feeling felt'" (ibid.) which occurs when musicians attune to others. In his line of argument, Camlin refers to neurobiological research. He separates love as a value from the values of reciprocity and justice (ibid.), whereas hooks, Nussbaum, and Silverman argue that just communities can be built *through* love. They state that "love-as-action" (Silverman 2012, 162) can lead to justice, and in Silverman's chapter, love-as-action means much more than attuning to others in the process of music-making. She portrays a music therapy session she attended in New York City's Bellevue Hospital, which offers homeless men the opportunity to make music together, and describes this session as a "communal public space, which encourages collective judgements and creates open networks of self-reflection and critical communication" (ibid.). Silverman argues that creating this form of communal public space is an element of love-in-action (ibid.). According to her understanding, phases of conflict that are "both constructive and negotiated" are an integral part of "love-as-action" (ibid.). For this chapter, it is significant that the ethic of love Silverman depicts includes self-reflection and critical communication, because these two elements can be realised in music projects, *if* music mediators cultivate the emotional and social capacities of reflecting on the actions of participants, as well as their own. For Silverman, this ethic of love can create a life that means something beyond oneself and is based on the will to contribute to a whole (ibid., 164). In her conclusion, she suspects that community music facilitators "tend to embrace this ethic" (ibid.), implicitly or explicitly. Interestingly, in her paper on contemporary intimacy and trust in higher music education, Lapidaki also mentions the capacity to create a life that means something beyond oneself. She quotes the late Irish poet Seamus Heaney: "You have to grow into an awareness of the others and attempt to find a way of imagining a whole thing" (Lapidaki 2020, 261).

At this point, it should have become clear that hooks', Nussbaum's, Silverman's, and Lapidaki's philosophical concepts have a lot in common. The next section offers an overview of the emotional and social elements of love which these four thinkers have defined.

In a Nutshell: Emotional and Social Elements of Love

Authors / Concepts	Social, Emotional, and Reflective Capacities
hooks (2001)	• assuming accountability and responsibility • making choices based on a belief that honesty, openness, and personal integrity need to be expressed in public and private decisions • affirming our interconnectedness with others • nurturing our own and another's spiritual growth • developing trust in oneself and others, commitment, care, respect, knowledge, and responsibility for common projects • developing the courage to take risks • cultivating an awareness for the emotional and social elements named above and critically examining human actions on this basis, i.e. cultivating an awareness for the desire to dominate and exercise power over others
Nussbaum (2013)	• touching other people's hearts and inspiring emotions that support the common work before them • not seeking a dominating relationship with others • realising a form of respect by having mutually responsive conversations • being both playful and aspiring in contact with others • cultivating the drive to understand the point of view of the other • cultivating trust instead of suspending anxious demands for control • engaging with another person's particularity • regarding one another as whole and unique people
Silverman (2012)	• creating communal public spaces in which collective judgements are encouraged • creating open networks of self-reflection and critical communication

Authors / Concepts	Social, Emotional, and Reflective Capacities
Lapidaki (2020)	• creating intimacy by avoiding mere one-dimensional information • creating intimacy by immersing oneself in each other's differences • developing interconnections across difference • stimulating openness to unpredictable or unfolding circumstances

Table 1: *Overview of social, emotional, and reflective capacities needed to realise 'love-as-action'. Source: Own illustration.*

The Goals and Course of Action in the Project *Marie, Musik und das Meer* — The Initiator's Perspective

In this section, I will briefly describe the music mediation project that brought university students of music education together with a local shanty choir from Luebeck. Since I was the project initiator, managed many processes and interacted a lot with both the students and the shanty choir members during the whole project, I want to make my own perspective transparent at this point.

The project was situated within the lecture series *MiniMASTER* which is a cooperation of different local universities and public institutions in Luebeck (Germany). At the University of Music Luebeck, the focus of the project is on offering children aged 8 to 12 aesthetic experiences and musical interactions. Apart from this audience (which was set from the beginning), I decided to create a connection between two more generations in the project: a little group of students in their 20s and 30s who were studying in the Master of Education programme, and the elderly members of the shanty choir *Möwenschiet* [Seagulls' Shit] who are in their 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s. We had about four months to prepare our music theatre piece for the children. As project initiator and a teacher working in music teacher education, my idea was that the university students and some of the older men enter into a group process in which they co-create an interactive concert for the children, based on the shanties from the choir's repertoire.

As initiator, I had certain goals in mind that are often at the core of music mediation projects: I wanted to "initiate inter-actions between people from

socially and culturally heterogenous population groups, stimulate communication, [and] initiate communal encounters". (Chaker and Petri-Preis 2022, n.p.) The main goal was that a group of students leave their (assumed) familiar cultural environment by cooperating with the elderly singers and musicians of a local shanty choir. I told these two groups that their task would be to develop an interactive concert for children, based on a storyline that goes well with the repertoire of the shanty choir. This idea was inspired by Christopher Small's concept of "musicking" (Small 1998). My hope was that through the cooperation with the shanty choir, the students would affirm Small's point that "no way of musicking is intrinsically better than any other; all are to be judged, if they are to be judged at all, on their success in articulating (affirming, exploring, celebrating) the concepts of the relationships of those who are taking part" (ibid, 213). The idea was that the students, the shanty choir members and the children would celebrate the relational aspect of their music-making, both during the rehearsal process and the performance.

It almost goes without saying that Christopher Small's concept of musicking blends in very well with the emotional and social elements of love I portrayed above. To give an example, his statement that "all musicking is serious musicking" (ibid., 212) implies that Small regarded all musicians as "whole and unique people" (Nussbaum 2013, 165). And by saying that all musicking is serious musicking – "[from] performers and audience at a symphony concert to drunken ol' pals singing bawdy or sentimental songs in rustic harmony" (Small 1998, 212) – he clearly rejected a certain "dominating, hierarchical type of relationship with others" (Nussbaum 2013, 112) that he perceived in the musical world of his time. Instead, his concept of musicking "affirm[s] our interconnectedness with others" (hooks 2001, 94). One of my underlying assumptions about the music education students was that they are highly trained musicians within the Western classical tradition, trained to be musical craftsmen striving for technical perfection. This focus can lead to forgetting the relational aspect of music-making, which is why the design of the project asked them to enter into an immediate interaction with our project partners: the choir leader and the musicians and singers of the local shanty choir, who value the tradition of sea shanties.

There were weekly seminar sessions at the University of Music Luebeck. Apart from that, the students and I visited the shanty choir in their rehearsal space several times. One of their singers started joining our seminar sessions at the University of Music at some point, because he had decided to take part as an actor, playing the role of Johnny (an experienced seaman). At the beginning of the semester, the students visited the shanty choir in their rehearsal space in order to get to know each other and in order to get an idea of their

repertoire. As a next step, I suggested that the students pick sea shanties and other popular songs from the local choir's repertoire that they thought would be fitting and appropriate for an audience of 8-to-12-year-old children and that could motivate them to sing along. After the first encounter with the singers, the band, and their leader, the students came back to the seminar with a thick ring-binder including all songs that could become the basis of our interactive concert. It was mainly the students' creative task to develop a storyline about Marie, a teenage girl who hides in a ship and is found eventually, but after a while two members of the shanty choir started contributing their ideas as well and became co-creators.

The Following Research on the Project — The Researcher's Perspective

As mentioned above, in the beginning of the project I took the role of project initiator and facilitator. The decision to contribute a chapter to this book meant that I became a researcher afterwards. In that role, I organised two group reflections with homogenous groups: the group of four music education students on the one hand, and a group of three shanty choir members and their musical leader on the other hand. I invited those shanty choir members to the discussion who were highly involved in the planning and realisation of the project. I informed both the students and the shanty choir members that the aim was a group reflection in which all participants express their individual points of view on the project and the effects it had on them personally. My hope was that the participants would reflect on personal and group processes that came into being in our music mediation project.

By explaining the goals of the project above, I have already made my own position transparent. In the first group reflection with the students, I decided to do the same: I made my own preconceptions and the goals I strived for in this project transparent once again. This was important to me as their teacher, since it had been my idea to cooperate with a local shanty choir and to contact the choir a long time before the semester started. Hence, this decision had not been taken democratically and there was one student who disapproved of it. That is why I had an open conversation about the project with the students – about the values they see, and the values I see. The group reflection with the members of the shanty choir took place a couple of months later. On that day, I had planned to be a moderator and listener who does not share her own views during the discussion. However, the shanty choir members caused me to leave this role several times. They wanted to know what I think about certain aspects

of the project. I replied to their questions briefly, because not answering them would have meant me preventing a mutually responsive conversation, which is one central element of a public culture based upon love.

In both discussions, I decided to control the topic of the group reflections (Flick 2017, 254) by giving the following discussion incentive (ibid., 255) at the beginning:

1) What were beautiful moments of the project for you?
2) What were challenges you had to deal with during the project?
3) In what ways did you experience personal growth during the project?

These questions were connected to the hope that the participants' accounts would provide specific answers to the question about the ways in which social and emotional elements of a public culture based upon love can be realised in music mediation projects. Apart from that, the participants' accounts have the potential to provide answers to the other important question mentioned above: What does such a public culture of love demand from the humans who create and shape it?

The following analysis of significant parts of the group reflections was inspired by Hanne Rinholm's, Ida Heiberg Solem's and Inger Ulleberg's "deductive approach, in which theoretical concepts function as lenses for studying practice" (Rinholm, Solem, and Ulleberg 2023, A62).

Analysis of the Discussions — The Participants' Perspectives

The main aim of this section is to analyse statements from the group reflections that gain significance through the theoretical lense of hooks', Nussbaum's, Silverman's, and Lapidaki's concepts of love. Hence, I selected passages from the group reflections that I consider to be of significance in this regard.

To begin with, I want to quote some statements made by the co-participants that literally contain the words love and heart:

> B1: These are [...] seniors who mean really well, these are grandpas, they probably have grandchildren, and they are people who have a good heart.[4]

4 This and the following quotes are taken from the transcripts of the two discussions, which I translated into English. To differentiate between the speakers and for reasons of anonymity, I chose A1-D1 for the students, and A2-D2 for the shanty choir members. I used the transcription rules suggested by

> C1: Let's suppose that students would have been chosen, and possibly led by a professor, would have performed shanties, that (.) probably would have been on a higher level, musically speaking, (.) but I believe that this (.) this VERVE, this love for this music, that was transported much better by this choir.

These statements reveal how two students perceived their project partners. With regard to the group reflection of the music education students, it was interesting that they talked a lot about the way they see themselves and their musicking, and the way they see the shanty choir and their musicking. C1's statement reveals that a reflection about different definitions of musical quality was part of this discussion. This statement also shows that she still differentiates between a "higher level" of music-making that she attributes to professional ensembles such as the ones at the University of Music. However, since she stresses the verve of the shanty choir, which made their performance special to her, she shows that she started thinking differently when it comes to musical quality. In the end, the group of students acknowledged the shanty choir's love for the music they make and seemed to agree that this love is a central quality of their musicking. It is striking that B1 stresses that the singers are men with "a good heart". This is of significance, because at the beginning of the project he really struggled with some of the lyrics the shanty choir sings[5] and it was my impression (as a facilitator working with this group) that this highly influenced his overall perception of the shanty choir members. At that point in the process, this focus seemed to prevent this student from overcoming "group-based stigma" (Nussbaum 2013, 165) which makes it difficult to build a community that practises love-as-action. In the end, he seemed to have opened his perspective on the shanty choir members and their musicking, which I attribute to the simple fact that he had heard several stories about the culture that forms the basis of the shanty choir's repertoire, and these stories were told by his co-participants.

One shanty choir member used the word *heart* as follows:

> C2: We will have to endure this Bavarian fair [The interviewee refers to the famous Munich Oktoberfest.] [Interviewer laughs], due to the absence of, because we, ourselves here do not preserve this, OUR culture. and that (.) is

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Jan Kruse (2015). Hence, I have used capital letters to indicate when the speakers have stressed certain syllables or words and I used (.) to indicate short pauses.

5 One of the songs, in particular, became a topic of discussion between the group of students. The lyrics of this song alluded to sexual acts between a man and a woman in a playful way, told from a male perspective.

> to bestow praise on you, on the University of Music, that you have a heart (.) maybe boldness (.) to get closer to THIS music.

This statement shows how a shanty choir member reflects on the values that drive the choir's (musical) actions. He states that it was something special that this choir was given the opportunity to celebrate local popular culture on the big stage of the University of Music. He asked me how my colleagues and the management of the University of Music reacted after having heard of or even seen our 'unusual project' themselves. This question not only reveals his awareness of the connection between different ways of musicking that happen in different localities and social class, it also shows his curiosity when it comes to the points of view of the people within the academic institution where our project took place. For the shanty choir, it was 'a big thing' to share their music with others in this locality which had not welcomed them until that point. With regard to this aspect, the students did not show the same awareness of the connection between musicking, localities of musicking, and social class. During their discussion, at some point I suggested that this project might have been labelled an inclusive project. C1 challenged this view:

> I would like to come back to the term inclusive at this point, because I think you might see it differently, [...] it implies a certain condescension or hierarchy: we are (.) the GOOD ones, we give YOU the opportunity to join in (.) and I would prefer the term cooperation.

Interestingly, C1 was the participant who also said that music students could have performed sea shanties, directed by a professor, on the big stage of the University of Music and that this would probably have meant that they present this music "on a higher level". Her thinking in terms of higher leads to the question whether there is also a lower level of musical quality? Her statement suggests that she maybe still affirms hierarchical thinking with regard to different ways and qualities of music-making in groups. Directly confronting these two statements made by this participant shows that she might have struggled with acknowledging the cultural and social dimension of this project until the end. Apart from that, her thinking stands in clear contrast with C2's statement that it was a bold decision to get closer to the music the shanty choir makes and to give the choir the opportunity to perform inside the University of Music.

In the students' group reflection, at some point one of them started discussing the question whether the intentions of the shanty choir are actually different to their own:

> D1: ONE problem in our society, in my opinion, is that (.) we are quite good at making accusations (.) toward any kind of group that is different from us, and we say: that's not us. For instance: we are not old white men [...] but we forget that we should talk to each other and (.) that often we really strive for the same goals, only with VERY different means and that this is worth being discussed, [...] and a project like this one makes this possible, that people have to talk to each other and have to discuss.

Here, D1 names an ethical problem she perceives in today's society. The point she makes comes very close to Martha Nussbaum's notion of a just society: a society that can be realised through the efforts of individuals who strive for a "mutually responsive conversation" (Nussbaum 2013, 112). In the project *Marie, Musik und das Meer*, these conversations took place over a period of three months, both in formal group contexts inside of the institution and in informal conversations in other places, and they had a visible effect on the co-participants. As A1 put it: "I have developed a great respect for shanties." The regular conversations also had a perceivable effect on D2:

> This great event in the end (.) is not (.) the only moment of happiness. There are, especially for me, considerable moments of happiness, (.) that had to do with the preparations. When you say: Look, here we could shift something, and this would fit there [...] that was, well, a challenge on the one hand, but a beautiful thing on the other.

This statement is a reflection of the open setting of the project that offered opportunities for artistic participation. D2 acknowledges that this characteristic of the project presented a challenge for him and the students and I sensed and talked about this challenge and the effect it had on us a couple of times. It is significant that D2 described the openness of the project as a "beautiful thing" in the end, when looking back on the whole process. He also reflected on the effects of the interactions between the students and the shanty choir:

> When people join in, when they also contribute musically, and muddle up the usual proceedings in a friendly way, (.) [...] that had the effect that all of us are basically more courageous (.) to cooperate with others who are not choir members. [...]
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> What made me more open, (.) we had different approaches concerning the organisation [...], with me it's like this: everything has to fit exactly, and then there is this other who says: that's going to work out [...] I acquired the openness to let go of this other, this letting go.

Here, D2 addresses three emotional and social elements that are also mentioned by hooks, Nussbaum and Lapidaki: the significance of developing trust in others

and in the common project, the courage it may take to do so, and the openness this musical and human process requires. All of the participants in the discussions also put another significant aspect of an ethic of love into practice: they spoke with great honesty about their experiences, and I want to thank them for their openness. Without this honesty and openness, it would not have been possible to connect hooks', Nussbaum's and Lapidaki's theoretical thinking with their real-life-experiences.

The Potential of a Music Mediation Practice Based on an Ethic of Love and Consequences for the Education of Future Music Mediators

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that there are specific emotional and social capacities music mediators need to develop and cultivate if they want to successfully realise projects in which they interact with participants on equal terms. I assumed that the emotional and social elements bell hooks, Martha Nussbaum, Marissa Silverman, and Eleni Lapidaki named in their philosophical concepts can serve as a compass for music mediators in this regard, because they offer them guidance. The analysis of two group reflections connected to the music mediation project *Marie, Musik und das Meer* has shown that the project participants actually addressed several emotional and social elements that can be found in the theoretical concepts of "love-as-action".

I share Lapidaki's perspective that "music interactions cannot change the world." (Lapidaki 2020, 270). But how or where can we start, if we really want to transform societies by means of musical interactions? Our only option is to start with local groups, with the people who are around us, and then believe in the power of the ripple effect. That is why I agree with Nussbaum that "good solutions are typically local" (Nussbaum 2013, 338). Camlin makes a similar suggestion by saying that community music projects are a "kind of modest practice" (Camlin 2023, 21) that can change the worlds within reach of co-participants and audiences. The individual reflections of the participants in the project *Marie, Musik und das Meer* have made transparent how musical interactions and artistic co-creation realised by people coming from different sectors of society and stages of life can change the individual perspectives of *these* people.

The "oral being-together of proximity" (Lapidaki 2020, 263) was a significant aspect of our music mediation project. The conversations about seamen's life in the past, which were initiated by the shanty choir members, changed the students' perspectives on this musical praxis – in particular, the student who was the most critical about the choir's repertoire at the beginning, expressed a

feeling of respect for their musicking in the end. In small projects like this one, in which all participants are welcome to participate musically and artistically, music mediators provide opportunities to discuss what their common artistic work should look like. Such discussions will reveal a diversity of values if we bring together people from diverse backgrounds, with different life stories, and experiences. These discussions can evoke unpleasant emotions in individual participants. Therefore, the most significant emotional and social capacity a music mediator needs might be an awareness that participants coming from different social worlds can make each other feel uncomfortable at times. It is a music mediator's job to sense moments of discomfort and to act in a way that can help everyone to relax, e.g. by embodying or verbally expressing trust in the group and thus serving as an example for utilising emotional and social capacities.

At the end of this chapter, I want to emphasise that even small changes of perspective only happen if both the leaders and participants of music mediation projects are willing to reflect on their actions, on the perceptions of their co-participants, and on their individual ideas of how things should be done in a project. Luckily, the participants in the project *Marie, Musik und das Meer* were open enough and willing to do this. They showed and later on explained how the concept of "love-as-action" can be practised, and that they are individual actors who can start building a society that cultivates an ethic of love in the sense hooks and Nussbaum have described. Nussbaum's philosophical argument that we should not give up striving for the freedom and well-being of all citizens is significant. It can be difficult (in an emotional sense) to be confronted with other participants' points of view and values, but music mediation projects that offer participation have the potential to empower their participants to care about the freedom and well-being of each one of them. When people work together musically or artistically, when they co-create a performance or experience beautiful moments of sharing music with others, they are striving for a common human goal, and this goal keeps their collaboration up when challenges emerge.

As the musical leader of the shanty choir put it: When people make music together, and when they share their music with others, very often they want to put "something good into people's hearts. A good thought, a good feeling". The intention to put something good into people's hearts by means of music-making can be considered as universal. It transcends musical styles and affiliations, and it can serve as an "interconnection across difference" (ibid., 267). In order to get to this point in participatory projects, both music mediators and participants have to deal with their individual emotions when challenges come up. This is what we should openly address and discuss in contexts in which we educate future music mediators. They may need our support in developing social and

emotional capacities *within themselves* first. Trust might be the most important element of the list above. Without trust, there is a certain danger that people might desire to dominate and exercise power over others, and this is not how a public culture based upon love is built. To build a culture based upon love, we have to regard one another as whole and unique people.

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