

2021

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Maria Papazachariou-Christoforou

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Recommended Citation

Papazachariou-Christoforou, Maria (2021) "Investigating the Music Learning Journeys of a Student from Cyprus: A Case Study," *Visions of Research in Music Education*: Vol. 38 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/vol38/iss1/7>

Investigating the Music Learning Journeys of a Student from Cyprus: A Case Study

By

Maria Papazachariou-Christoforou
European University, Cyprus

Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to explore the music-making and learning practices of a male elementary student from Cyprus in different settings, inside and outside school. It considers that individuals take many different pathways to become musicians. Their journeys might include contexts in a broad educational spectrum from highly structured and sequential, to informal, and enculturating. The study investigated the characteristics and practices of the diverse teaching-learning contexts involving the participant, the intersection of those settings, and the student's perceptions, feelings, and thoughts about the value of music experiences in those settings for his musical growth. The study considered school music classes, private piano lessons, community choir rehearsals, traditional folk dance ensembles, drum exploration, and writing musical arrangements at home.

Thematic analysis revealed the influences from others that motivated student's attendance and continuation in music classes. Specifically, the research considered the elements inherent to the settings themselves, and the factors that affected his persistence in music learning and supported his musical growth. The participant's enjoyment and valuing of the music settings were connected to his need for active and meaningful participation through which he could express his musical ideas.

Keywords: meaningful participation, diverse music teaching-learning settings, musical growth, case study

Music is practiced around the world as an integral part of different cultures and carries with it the potential to shape social, personal, and community identities, simultaneously embodiment of human values and attitudes (Campbell, 1995; DeNora, 2000; Hargreaves & North, 1999; MacDonald, Hargreaves & Miell, 2017; Wright, 2016). Campbell (2000) found that school is only one of the places where children acquire music skills. Music can be learned in any place where there is music, and through interactions with teachers, families, friends, and in social and religious communities. Music learning also takes place through radio, TV, recordings, videotapes, and films, CD-ROMs, and other late-breaking technological avenues. Following Campbell's (2000) notion Folkestad (2006) understood the multidimensional character of music learning and considered music education in a broader context that happens beyond the school setting. He pointed out that we have a shift of focus in this change of perspective, from teaching to learning.

A growing body of researchers in music education investigated different settings in which individuals learn music and how experiences in these different settings inform their musicianship (Blacking, 1973; Campbell, 1995; Finnegan, 1989; Green, 2002, 2005; Jaffurs, 2006; Koops, 2006; Louth, 2006; Veblen, 2007; Waldron, 2006). Current research directs the focus on observing, analyzing, discussing, and interpreting these various ways. Yet, further in-depth studies that focus on individual students and their paths in learning and interacting with music in their lives could provide richer insight on how individual students gain musical experience and how these experiences affect musical development.

This research explored the music-making and learning practices of a male elementary school student from Cyprus in different settings, inside and outside school.

The specific questions of this study were as follows:

1. In what ways does an elementary school student from Cyprus describe and explain the characteristics and ingredients of music-making and music-making things inside and outside school?
2. In what ways do the various experiences intersect among and between different learning settings?
3. In what ways does the student's perceptions of the value of the various music-making and learning settings influence his musical growth?

Review of literature

Music as social practice

According to Bowman (1998), music is a human activity mode, a cultural phenomenon constituting a fundamental social entity. Engaging in musical behaviors is an everyday activity for all human communities and in all places (Nettel, 1944). Music means different things in different cultures and among different people. Therefore, using the term 'music' encompasses diverse practices and various meanings in different cultures.

For Elliott (1995), musicking applies to all forms of music-making, performing, improvising, composing, arranging, and conducting. "Musical works are not only a matter of sounds. They are also a matter of actions" (Elliott, 1995, p. 49). Christopher Small, in his book *Musicking*, proposed a definition for the verb 'to music' and shed light on the nature of music as human activity: "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" (p. 9). Small valued the function of music as of central importance to our very humanness and as important as taking part in the act of speech. So, musicking is for every human being and is a right that all people have from birth.

Music as 'praxis' in the Aristotelian philosophical perspective (Gruhn, 2006) manifests that acting musically in different social contexts provides pathways for different understanding and meaning for individuals involved in music-making. Referring to the social meaning of musical practice, Green (2006) has stressed the importance of the delineated meaning. Thus, what is taught and learned in the various settings of music interaction (i.e., in music classrooms, private lessons, rehearsals, and jam sessions) is related to the elements embodied in the different settings outside music that determines the behavior, attitudes, and preferences of the individuals involved. Green (2006) emphasized the importance of investigating the organization of diverse musical practices and the way one constructs meanings, maintains, and contends them. She argued that the various ways individuals and social groups produce, distribute, and consume music fundamentally form and reform musical meanings. Therefore, examining and focusing on the multiple fields of music teaching-learning could enrich our understanding of human value, enjoy and persist in music practice.

Setting the Scene: Formal and Informal Music Learning Practices

Music learning does not always fall into neat categories (Szego, 2002). Therefore, it is necessary to view music learning in a broad spectrum where multidimensional involvement in different learning settings happens, either using instruction or osmosis, practice or participation, example or observation (Jorgensen, 2003).

Literature (Bowman, 1998, 2004; Campbell, 1995, 1998, 2000; Cope & Smith, 1997; Folkestad, 2006; Fornas, Lindberg & Sernhede, 1995; Green, 2002; Jorgensen, 2003; Kastner, 2014; Prouty, 2002; Rodriguez, 2009; Strauss, 1984;) refers to two forms, which define different learning pathways. The first is formal or institutionalized music education. In this case, learning occurs mainly in school settings, has specific curricula, includes assessment and usually results in a certificate of attendance. The other informal, out-of-

school and institutional music learning, which occurs without the guidance of a teacher. This includes spontaneous, unconscious, random, and without set goals or sequence of musical engagement processes. Each form is applied in different learning environments with a different structure. It includes different processes of acquiring musical skills and different ways of mixing and participating in the musical act.

Hargreaves (1996) proposed a conceptual model of music education based on formal and informal dimensions. Each falls on a continuum on the control autonomy axis. On one side of the first continuum, we can find formal learning settings where music education is offered by a music specialist. It is a structured and sequential approach. On the other side, we can find the informal self-directed learning settings that hold on to the frame of socialization and enculturation (Jorgensen, 1997).

According to this perspective, individuals take many different pathways to become musicians. Their journeys might include conservatories, studios, private lessons, community ensemble participation, self-teaching, or music-making with peers and friends. Their music learning settings can be wildly different from one another in terms of many of their characteristics. These include the place where music is learned, the kind of music studied, the methods used, and the psychological and sociological conditions of the setting. This perspective presents the notion that the great majority of musical learning takes place outside schools, in situations where there is no teacher, and in which the intention of the activity is not to learn about music, but to play music, listen to music, dance to music, or be together with music.

Several scholars in music education have commented on the gap between school music and the music that children and adolescents choose to listen to, perform, and create outside of school (Bowman, 2004; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2006; Griffin, 2009; Harwood, 1998; Kratus, 2007; Waldron & Veblen, 2009). Green (2002) addressed the relationships

between informal and formal practices. In studying fourteen rock musicians, Green questioned the extent that formal and informal spheres of music education and learning exist in isolation and ignorance of each other; the ways these spheres involve approaches that are irreconcilable or complement each other; and the options that they could develop in tandem, without riding roughshod over the nature of either, in ways that would benefit a more significant proportion of children and young people. She found that there is a multitude of ways in which to acquire music skills and knowledge.

Formal music education has not reconciled the music learning or the enjoyment of those who experienced it and has often turned potential musicians away. On the other hand, popular musicians, by playing their own music choices with friends and having fun, are motivated and unavoidably develop their musicality with different learning techniques. Most interesting is that the values that accompany such practices emphasize developing a passion for music, a broad knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of various kinds of music, and commitment to gaining enjoyment and satisfaction from playing music. Green (2002) defined formal learning practice as 'conscious' and believed that learners are aware that they are learning or attempting to learn. With formal learning, explicit goals are combined with procedures for reaching them, such as a structured practice routine. Learners engaged in formal learning can consider, name, or otherwise conceptualize and isolate their learning practices. Conversely, informal learning is 'unconscious;' it occurs without an awareness that learning is occurring.

Informal learning lacks goal-directed design and involves many extra-musical elements. These include practice management and administration skills, language skills practice, and personal identity formation. In this way, the treatment and influence of the musical act on a holistic level is seen (Fornas et al., 1995). Green (2008) described informal learning as "enculturation and extended immersion in listening to, watching and imitating the

music and the music-making practices of the surrounding community" (p. 6). These practices are also related to those reported by the rock musicians Campbell (1995) and Jaffurs (2006) studied. The natural and effortless way of transmitting music through communities was the subject of research by Blacking (1973), Campbell (1998), Dzansi (2004), Finnegan (1989), Koops (2006), Louth (2006), Nettel (1944), Szego's (2002) and Waldron (2006).

To clarify the distinction between formal and informal learning, Folkestad (2006) developed four aspects in which these two learning types differ: *situation, learning style, ownership, and intentionality* (pp. 141-142). Folkestad explained that the situation referred to the setting in which the learning occurred, student learning style, the individuals with power and ability to make decisions in their learning, and intentionality in the ultimate goal. He indicated that formal - informal was not a dichotomy, but rather as the two poles of a continuum. In most learning situations, both aspects are present and interact in various degrees. Folkestad warned that one should not equate informal music learning with popular music, nor should one equate informal music with out-of-school music, limiting all in-school music to the formal realm.

Jaffurs (2006), in explaining the idea of formal and informal practices, wrote that one of the essential characteristics that separate each practice is teaching styles. In formal practices, the teaching style tends to be autocratic, whereas informal practice learning tends to be more democratic. Students in formal education venues may not have had a significant role in specifying what they will learn. The possible dichotomy between formal and informal learning is analogous to two railways, the FME railway (formal music education) and the IME railway (informal music education). The FME is never crowded; it is elegant, sophisticated, and expensive. The IME is always packed with people, apologetic for what it may lack by comparison, but reasonably priced.

Interestingly, several owners of these railways own stock in both, and while there may be some conflict of interest, it is a recognized practice and legally condoned. Often, the two lines move parallel to each other across hills and dale. Occasionally the trains travel very close to each other, and passengers wave to each other as they pass. Then, of course, the lines criss-cross, and the engineers communicate with each other, so they don't collide. (Jaffurs, 2006, pp.1-2).

Green (2002) defined those who have learned music through informal and formal means as *bi-musical*.

Methodology

This study explored the music-making and learning practices of one student from Cyprus in different settings, inside and outside of school. It investigated the ingredients that characterized the various music learning venues and the participant's perceptions of music value, enjoyment, and importance. The intent was to reveal in-depth the participant's feelings, experiences, and thoughts to identify his learning processes and how his involvement reflected his musical growth. The act of describing things in their natural settings and interpreting phenomena in terms of meanings is central to this study. As a result, the research is qualitative (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

Participant and Data Collection

The primary participant in this study was Leri (a pseudonym) a 6th-grade male student at the elementary school where I was teaching located in a rural region in Cyprus. When I met him, I was fascinated with his diverse involvement in various music learning settings. He was an active member of the school orchestra, performing on the keyboard or several other instruments (recorder, Orff instruments) when I asked him to participate in this study. He took private piano lessons outside of school for four years, and he was learning the drums by himself. He was messing with a friend several times a month to make popular

music together. In addition, he was composing his pieces or making arrangements of the classical pieces he learned in his piano lessons. He sang in a children's community choir was a member of a traditional folk-dance group.

Creswell (2018) described that a researcher using a qualitative research design should commit to extensive time in the field. They should apply multiple methods to gather data, and report multiple perspectives using thick descriptions and rich analysis. I gathered data through observation in the participants' natural setting and interviews, and journaling. My role in this study was multi-faceted. First, I was an *active learner* observing Leri as a participant in school settings (music class and school orchestra) and as a non-participant in the other setting. I observed Leri in all of his music settings. I also interviewed Leri's teachers and some of the classmates in the other learning settings in which he was involved. Most of them were close friends of mine and classmates of Leri, and some were attending the community choir with him. Besides their willingness to participate, I chose these secondary participants according to their fluency to express their thoughts and ideas.

The following were the data sources for the study:

1. Field notes from observations during sessions in each music learning setting.
2. An autobiography of Leri, which he wrote specifically for this study.
3. Transcripts of open-ended interviews with the participant, his parents, his piano teacher, his dance teacher, and his choir teacher.
4. Transcripts of open-ended group interviews of the children who participate together with Leri in the school choir and orchestra to explore the learning setting and Leri may not have been revealed. The group interviews were unstructured.

Data were analyzed following the steps recommended by Creswell (2018). First, I developed a detailed description of the case and each music-making/learning setting. Then I began to code the data, using keywords and phrases that appeared vital as I read the data.

Once the data were coded, I organized the codes according to relevant meanings that emerged from the data (categorical aggregation) to draw meaning, and I began to look for emergent themes. Finally, from these categorical aggregations, I identified themes and discussed their relevance.

Trustworthiness and Validity

Trustworthiness strategies included member checks, triangulation, and peer review of the coding of the data. I sent transcripts to interview participants via email, who then had the opportunity to edit their responses to ensure the accuracy of their responses. In the peer-review process, I coded and analyzed interview transcripts for emergent themes that were subsequently reviewed by peer researchers. Because this study has been conducted in a country where English is not the primary language, translation issues were considered. I did the translations of the interview transcripts and Leri's autobiography, but asked colleagues in music education who spoke fluent English and Greek to check them.

Results

Leri was involved in different music learning settings with a variety of teaching approaches and objectives. During his participation in these settings, Leri had the opportunity to experience a diversity of ingredients occurring in each setting because of the different teaching styles, goal orientations, and human interactions. Therefore, he had varied levels of personal involvement in the learning process to satisfy his complex musical needs.

During piano lessons, which were highly structured and sequential, he was focused on the improvement of technique and success on the piano exams. The setting minimized his opportunities for exploration or personal musical expression, which he missed and wanted. Still, he valued the skills gained from his lessons as necessary for his composition and arrangement work. The community choir and the dance had a different structure. These activities were more informal and student-driven. Leri had an active role in the teaching

procedures in those particular settings, especially in the choral setting. He could share his musical ideas and thoughts, work with friends, and express himself through movement and singing activities that he enjoyed. In those settings, he had the opportunity to give public performances and receive approval from an audience. Through his drum exploration, Leri gained knowledge and developed his musicianship through peer-oriented practice with a self-selected repertoire. Leri and his friends used approaches to listening and copying music and experimenting and problem-solving in this setting. School music classes also incorporated student-centered activities and provided opportunities for peer work and creativity. The multidimensional setting in school music class, with various activities (movement, singing, tonal and rhythmic patterns, composition, improvisation, percussion instruments, and the recorder), motivated Leri and satisfied him because of the challenges they offered. However, the time he spent on his composition-arrangement-improvisation practice was what Leri identified as his favorite and the most valuable music activity. He could interpret, use, and adjust the experiences and musical knowledge gained from the other learning settings in this setting and apply them to his creations. He recognized that this was essential for him because, during this process, that he improved his understanding of music and its elements.

Two main theme areas emerged in analyzing the data that shed light on Leri's involvement in his music learning settings and his perceptions about their value. The first theme centered around the influences from others, family, teachers, and friends who had motivated Leri's attendance and continuation in music classes. The second theme centered around the ingredients inherent to the settings themselves that facilitated learning and made Leri want to engage and support his musical growth. These ingredients were a voice in the learning process, self-expression, and being the group leader.

People Matter

Leri received tremendous encouragement from his family, friends, and teachers, motivating his musical involvement. These three sets of people found ways to let Leri know that what he does is important and unique and good at it. In this section, I explain the roles specific groups of people play in Leri's music-making endeavors.

The influence of family

Leri's family provided strong support and a rich musical environment that has reinforced his music learning and has motivated him to make music. Leri's parents believed in the value of music and felt strongly that their children should be allowed to learn music as a way to enrich their lives. Leri's father stated, "I value music very much. I always believe in the saying that any person who does not get involved in music in his life is not civilized" (Parents' Interview – **add the date**). Leri's father was a man who expressed himself through music, and he enjoyed the music. He taught himself to play the drums and was a dance partner to Leri's mother.

Leri was born into and grew up in a rich musical environment. He has been spending time with his grandmother, who used to sing to him in a beautiful voice, from very early childhood age. He mentioned, "My grandmother has no idea about music; she never took any lessons or learned to play any instrument. Yet she has an excellent voice, and she used to sing to me all the time" (Leri's Autobiography -**add the date of the entry**). Also, his uncle played the bouzouki (which is a stringed instrument with a pear-shaped body and a very long neck), the guitar, and the lute. Family occasions often turned into group musical performances, during which Leri performed on the tambourine, and everybody was involved. In his autobiography, Leri wrote, "During Christmas holidays or other family gatherings, we used to sing and dance. My uncle played the guitar or the bouzouki, the rest were singing, and I played the tambourine. This is what I could do at the age of 4 or 5 years old. Now at family gatherings, I play the piano!" (**Citation with the date is needed here**)

Leri's piano teacher mentioned that his mother was an essential part of their lessons.. She kept herself informed about the goals and activities in the lessons and the homework, and she supported her child in every way. The extended family attended Leri's concert, whether piano concerts, choir, or dance or school concerts. "We go to every concert he performs.... I listen to his creations...We are all next to him, supporting him and encouraging him in his music-making," says his mother (Parents' Interview – **date needed**).

Leri experienced music as a regular part of family life from a very early age. The rich early childhood musical environment probably helped to support Leri's musical development.

The influence of teachers

Leri experienced early success in music, which made his teachers take note and give him considerable attention. His dance teacher found that Leri was relatively young, could perform a problematic traditional Cyprus dance, "and I wanted to show that to the audience and promote him in a way" (**Citation needed**). He stated that he has never forgotten Leri's maturity and correct posture and expression in that particular performance. In addition, Leri demonstrated his improvisation skills that conformed to the context of the dance.

Leri's choir teacher was willing to give up some control during the rehearsal and let Leri take the lead a bit as an acknowledgment of his musical strength. This role was vital to Leri because it allowed him to make decisions on performance style and interpretation and try his ensemble ideas. The choir teacher discussed in her interview this dynamic of authority and power. She appreciated Leri's contribution to the choir and admitted that he acted as her collaborator.

Leri has experienced success from the beginning of his musical journey. This has given him a sense of achievement that has been partly driven by the consistent and positive feedback from his teachers. Leri remembered that his first-grade music teacher told him that he had a lovely voice and could be a successful musician when he grew up. Praise of his

musicianship, like this, has been a consistent theme in Leri's life. In his autobiography, Leri wrote, "There was one music teacher in the first grade who I cannot forget. She told me I had a very nice voice, and she told me I could be a successful musician when I grow up. She used to give me special attention in her class. I was one of her favorite students. She was my music teacher for two years." (Leri's Autobiography- **date needed**) This teacher distinguished him from the rest of the children, gave him special attention, and clued to his musical capacities. She encouraged him to continue music-making.

This type of praise and acknowledgment continued as Leri has grown older. For example, his piano teacher stated, "Leri was born to make music! I feel that it is rare, once every many years to meet a student like Leri...He is musical in everything he does" (Piano Teacher Interview – **date needed**). Similarly, his dance teacher said, "I can tell you that if Leri because for any reason does not become a musician, 'music' will lose a talent" (Dance Teacher Interview – **date needed**).

Leri's teachers' support and confidence in his musicianship had encouraged Leri to continue his musical study. Their approval and acknowledgment of his musical participation and success and some of their decisions during the learning process had motivated Leri. In addition, his teachers had allowed him to reveal his musical achievement and strengthen his self-esteem. As a result, Leri was confident that he had exceptional musical capacities.

The influence of friends

His friends considered Leri to be a 'star' who was talented in music. During the focus group interview, one of them said, "He is going to make a career outside Cyprus, maybe representing Cyprus in music competitions! Something significant!" (Student Focus Group Interview – **date needed**). Another friend expressed his certainty that Leri would become a musician. When I asked them to guess about what Leri will be doing in the future, he

answered, "I cannot see anything different from music...He is going to be a musician a hundred percent!" (Student Focus Group Interview- **date needed**).

Leri's friends at school also gave him positive feedback by listening to and enjoying his performance during school breaks or music class. They spoke about him with enthusiasm and feel lucky to have him in their choir and orchestra and their class. During the focus group interview I did with some of the school choir members and orchestra members, I received consistent positive and enthusiastic answers from the students when I asked them to tell me what they thought about Leri and music. Some of their answers were the following: "He has great rhythm," "He dances beautifully," "He sings accurately," "His voice has a broad range," "Did you know Ms that he composes his songs?" "As soon as he listens to a song, he can figure out how to play it on the keyboard" (Student Focus Group Interview- **date needed**). These spontaneous answers from his classmates showed how consistently and strongly they admired his musical achievement. This admiration might have been one of the factors that fueled Leri's drive to excel musically.

Ingredients of the Music Learning Settings

Across all learning settings, the data analysis revealed that there were common components that influenced Leri's participation and gave meaning to his involvement in the various learning settings. These were a voice in the learning process, means of self-expression, and being the group leader.

A Voice in the Learning Process

A common component concerning Leri's participation in the different learning settings was that he tended to establish an active role and wanted a voice in the teaching/learning process. He was continuously alert and made sure that his presence was evident. During my observations in the choir, he made a point of being in the room a few minutes before the beginning of the rehearsal to play the piano and create a musical

atmosphere that would immediately engage the rest of the students entering the room. He wanted to donate his talents and strengths to the setting. His choir teacher said "Well, he is a boy who has extreme opinions about music. He liked the freedom to express his thoughts. He knows what he likes and what he prefers to sing. When I demonstrate songs, he is the one to express his thoughts, and he always wants to select songs he will perform on the piano or sing solo" (Choir Teacher Interview **add date**).

Leri viewed his teacher as a partner in the learning process. He told me, "At school, you know how it is! But I think there is a difference from previous years because you are teaching us differently. You are not just giving us information...I don't know if you understand. We make music together, you and the students. I feel like we are colleagues" (Leri's Interview **add date**).

In the school choir and orchestra observation Leri also made proposals concerning the interpretation of a song, and he started a conversation to explain his thoughts and found ways to put them into practice. Following is an example from the field notes.

"Students sing the song until the end. After this rehearsal, Leri raises his hand and asks the teacher: 'Is it OK how I closed the end of the song?' The teacher answers: 'It's fine, why are you asking?' Leri asks: 'I was thinking of doing that in the end...!' Leri is experimenting with some arpeggios going up in the right-hand side keys of the keyboard, looking at the teacher. When he finished, he stares at the teacher, wondering if what he performed was OK. The teacher gives him positive feedback but asks for just a four macro beats phrase. Leri tries the arpeggio again, in 4 beats with success." (Researcher Video Notes, School Music Class Observation **add date**)

Leri's persona in the choir and music classes at school stood in sharp contrast to what he experienced during piano lessons. He stated that his teacher made him nervous and

frustrated by controlling his performance, correcting him all the time, having him count all the time, and by interrupting his expression. While observing him, I found that there were times that he felt uncomfortable, giving the teacher ironical grimaces and ticking his nails on the piano while she was giving instruction. "Leri is ticking his nails at the edge of the keyboard with a rhythmical ostinato, while his teacher is setting up the metronome. Leri glances at the clock in the wall..." (Researcher Field Notes, Piano Observation #1 **add date**). He explained in his interview that he wished that his teacher did not stop him all of the time to make corrections and that he could play both hands of the piece together more often, as discussed earlier in the description of the piano lesson setting.

Means of Self-Expression

Leri was involved in music-making because music-making was enjoyable and entertaining, but also it allowed him to express himself. In his autobiography, he wrote, "Music is similar to my existence!" (Leri's Autobiography **add date**). Leri's dance teacher was impressed with his expression and maturity from a very early, which was why he invited Leri to attend the adult group. This gave Leri the chance to perform an essential solo part in a concert. His piano teacher recognized the musicianship in his musical performances as well. She said, "He is an artist! He performs in a mature way like an adult. I remember when he performed *Für Elise* when he was eight years old, and it was the true essence of Beethoven" that he performed" (Piano Teacher Interview **add date**). His choir teacher described his expression similarly when talking about Leri's attitude toward performances and concerts. She said, "He has a very nice voice in a big range, and what makes him different from other students is that he performs with expression even though he is young. He has the maturity; I mean musical maturity, to sing with feeling" (Choir Teacher Interview **add date**).

Concerning his drum exploration, as it relates to self-expression, Leri elaborated more specifically in his autobiography. He wrote, "When I found out that I could have access to

drums because of one of my friends, I took the opportunity to go and try. It is amazing! It is so easy for me. I just feel the beat and play. It takes a few moments to get the rhythm, and then you can do anything in that rhythm. I like rapid light beats. When playing the drums, I forget all the negative day experiences and just focus on the beat. Isn't that marvelous?"

(Leri's Autobiography **add date**).

Leri connected at a deep emotional level with the music in which he was engaged. He found that music was a powerful medium through which to express feeling and elicit emotion. He had discovered this power, and he also acknowledged it.

Being the leader of a group

Leri liked to act as a leader in musical settings and he was responsible for sharing his knowledge and providing musical guidance to the other members of the group. As a leader, he was able to teach his friends and persuade others to follow his musical decisions. This is consistent with findings of Campbell's (1995) ethnographic study on garage bands in which one of the members was viewed by others as the musical leader (the teaching figure of the group).

During the drum observation, Leri's leadership was revealed through multiple means. The way he behaved and acted made it clear that he controlled the activities and was the "driver." He came to the drum session with a plan in mind, carrying a text handout and a CD and knowing the objectives he wanted to accomplish with his friends. The other two children followed his steps and his suggestions. He corrected their mistakes and guided them to make the musical 'product' better according to his musical tastes. **[Interesting that he didn't like it when the piano teacher corrected him, yet he copied that approach when he had the opportunity to teach. I wonder if that is significant?]**

His involvement as a leader was also evident during the group work in the school music class setting. For example, when the teacher gave instruments to each group of

students and asked them to create simple instrumentation, Leri was the first who explored all of the instruments and chose what he wanted to perform. Then he assigned musical roles to the rest of the children and demonstrated ideas for their performance. **[Again interesting that he didn't provide opportunity for others to contribute. Something he didn't like when the other teachers did that to him.]**

Leri used multiple techniques to teach his peers. For example, he used his body to conduct and show the meter, or he used syllables. Students commented in the Student Focus Group Interview **[add date]**.

Anthony: He is showing me the rhythm of my ostinati by shaking his head or with his eyes...Sometimes he is whispering the chords and the changes.

Cathy: He also showed me an easier one to learn my part in the glockenspiel once different way. He told me some silly syllables to remember when playing my ostinati;

I don't remember them now! (Student Focus Group Interview **add date**)

His friends and classmates recognized and appreciated his leadership and how he helped them accomplish various musical tasks. For example, a boy who attended the school choir and performed the xylophone said, "I feel safe when Leri plays the keyboard, and I am next to him playing the xylophone. He is helping me. He is showing the rhythm of my ostinato by shaking his head or with his eyes...Sometimes he is whispering the chord changes as well." And a girl said, "He helps give us the feeling, the mood of each piece. Just watch Leri's expression while he performs, and you can get the idea" (Student Focus Group Interview). One of his friends explained, "He could be an excellent music teacher as well! He has the necessary characteristics to become a good teacher, and a good way to transmit music to others" (Student Focus Group Interview **add date**).

In dance class, the other children watched Leri's feet to help them remember the dance choreography. His dance teacher explained that Leri took a leadership role in helping

the other students with their choreography. He said, "Leri is my assistant. He is always the chief of the boys' group..." (Dance Teacher Interview **add date**). He later also stated that the rest of the children depended on Leri when performing. Leri seemed to enjoy leading the group and appreciated the respect his friends showed him. He had the talent to transmit musical knowledge in a sophisticated way, as his classmates discussed, without alienating his peers. His being a leader seemed to be a factor in his enjoyment of the music-making venue.

Discussion

Leri was experiencing the expanded definition of music education (Cox, 2002) encompassing both formal and informal settings. His accomplishments were consistent with and confirmed research by Finnegan (1989), Campbell (1995), Green (2002), Waldron (2006), Louth (2006), and Jaffurs (2006). Leri enjoyed music-making because it gave him opportunity to express and share his musical ideas. In contrast to the didactic model of learning, a more child-centered, democratic model that privileges collaborative learning and teamwork, interpersonal skills, and self-expression created a more positive, powerful learning environment that challenged and motivated Leri to achieve. The concept of teacher as guide, partner, and facilitator supports Allsup's (2003) findings relative to the benefits of a democratic classroom. Leri found music class to be less boring and engaging when he was active and not a silent observer.

Byrne and Sheridan (2000) discuss teaching models where students develop a sense of ownership and control in their music-making and that they experienced "flow," which occurred only when there was an appropriate match between skill and challenge [**cite Csikszentmihályi (2008) here and add to the reference list.**] Green's (2002) also found that the values accompanying informal practices emphasize developing a passion for music, a broad knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of various kinds of music, and

commitment to gaining enjoyment and satisfaction from playing music. This was especially evident when watching Leri compose and improvise on the drums.

Music-making for Leri was a means of self-expression. He had a deep, abiding love for making music to the extent that music was at the very center of his life. He said, "I like to participate in as many musical activities as I can. I need my life to be full of music" (Leri's Interview **add date**). Music was how he expressed his feelings and thoughts; music relaxed him and provided him security and stability. The approval of his friends and family and his teachers has helped him along his musical journey. As a result, he worked towards a music career.

[One reviewer suggested that you include a "Conclusions" section and an "Implications for Music Education" section, as well as smooth transitions linking these sections to the "Discussion" section. I agree.]

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