

# **We Insist! Social Inclusion Through Creative Music**

**Report on the meeting held at La Dynamo de Banlieues Bleues, Pantin, 11-12 April 2018**

## **Introduction**

This spring, Europe Jazz Network invited members to participate in a meeting about the place of social inclusion in music making. It was organised in partnership with Banlieues Bleues, to coincide with the climax of the 35<sup>th</sup> annual festival of jazz in Seine Saint-Denis. Among those taking part were several organisations developing social inclusion projects in EJNI's 'We Insist!' programme. This note is intended to give members a sense of the rich discussions that took place in Pantin, and encourage further reflection on the issues in relation to jazz. It is written by François Matarasso, who was asked to speak to the group because of his experience in participatory art and cultural inclusion.

Social inclusion is an important concern in European policy for several reasons. They include obvious ones, such as the increasing diversity of the European population following migration and, more recently, the refugee crisis. But diversity is not new: Europeans have always had different cultures, religions and identities. Part of the difference is that, as we have become more democratic, open and – at our best – tolerant, we recognise better the rights of groups (such as disabled people) who have been kept on the margins. The economic and social exclusion of some citizens has become sharper, and more evident, as the effects of the 2008 financial crisis continue to be felt. The results are plain to see in cities across Europe.

This concerns jazz (and culture generally) in at least two ways. The first is the uncomfortable possibility that music may, even unintentionally, contribute to the mechanisms of social exclusion. It would be difficult to deny that the price, location, social codes and, yes, even programming of some venues presents barriers to citizens. It is more than a matter of taste: many people interpret parts of cultural life as being 'not for me'. At the very least, that should be an informed choice. So at one level, there is always the need to ask how things look to those who don't belong to our club. and what can be done to remove barriers to inclusion. Bigger, more diverse audiences are good for everyone.

More actively, there are also opportunities to reach out and involve people directly in music making – and diversity is one of jazz's strengths. People already enjoy many of its forms. Both approaches bring challenges, but huge benefits as well, for the people involved, for society as a whole and for music itself, as its creative resources are renewed by embracing new and different imaginations. Social inclusion is a matter of rights but it is also a matter of

self-interest, as shown by the experiences shared during the Pantin meeting. More than anything, it could be heard in the joyous music created by Banlieues Bleues' inclusive projects.

## EJN

The participants gathered after lunch at the College Louise Michel, in Clichy-sous-Bois. They were welcomed by Giambattista Tofoni for Europe Jazz Network and Xavier Lemettre for Banlieues Bleues. Giambattista spoke briefly about EJN's commitment to social inclusion as demonstrated by the [Yolda project](#), which marked 50 years of migration in Ghent and followed the original train and road route between Turkey and Belgium to highlight the hybridity of music that does not recognise borders. This meeting was the first gathering of members interested in EJN's new programme, 'We Insist!', and an opportunity to begin sharing experiences.

## Banlieues Bleues

Xavier Lemettre introduced the visitors to Seine Saint Denis, an area that is close to Paris, and yet distant because of its poor transport collections, unemployment and poverty. It is the youngest district in France – half the population of Clichy is under 25 – with a hugely diverse population. There are few concert halls, but there are strong music schools and a commitment from many local authorities. For more than 20 years, Banlieues Bleues has created projects to involve young people in jazz, alongside its annual festival. This has involved close partnership with colleges and schools, but funding can be hard to find. There are limits to what these projects can do, but a workshop or a gig is a social moment – it can be a means of social inclusion alongside other initiatives. Banlieues Bleues aims to create meaningful moments in art, for, by and with young people.

Stéphanie Touré, who leads on Banlieues Bleues 'Actions Culturelles' spoke about some of the past projects, including a [long engagement with pupils](#) during the construction of College Louise Michel; work by Sylvain Riflet in Bobigny to explore Moondog; and 'Watch Me', an older project with Ernest Dawkins. She explained that Banlieues Bleues aims to connect great musicians with young people, but always following the artist's lead. Nothing is proposed unless they want to do something, and then the idea develops from their response to the place and the people they meet. The project with Roy Nathanson, Napoleon Maddox and Papanosh had come out of previous collaborations and community work with Banlieues Bleues. It would be presented that evening, with the participation of several different groups of young people from Clichy-sous-Bois.

## 'Participatory art and musical inclusion'

François Matarasso gave a general introduction to the idea of participatory art, illustrated by music projects from across Europe. It is rooted in his work over many years and research for a book '[A Restless Art](#)' to be published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation at the end of

2018. He began by defining participatory art as *'the creation of art by professional and non-professional artists'*. Professional and non-professional artists bring different but complementary resources to the act of co-creation, and create something neither could have done alone. This is not a matter of quality but participatory art, like any art, should be judged on the basis of its highest achievements. François spoke about the difference between democratisation of culture (removing barriers to the existing cultural offer) and cultural democracy (people's participation in the creation of the offer itself). Both are legitimate approaches but it is essential to understand the intentions of all the actors in a project (including oneself!).

He then suggested that participatory art is important because, in terms of individual change, it provides routes to socialisation, building competences and confidence, discoveries about culture and ultimately to improving a person's sense of self. Collective change occurs through group work and the development of shared ownership and responsibility, building community and taking part in public space, for instance by becoming a role model for others. Ultimately, it can lead to musical and social expression and change the image of a group or a neighbourhood.

For François the success of participatory art is rooted in its different expectations. It asks what young people know, like and can do, rather than setting them external goals. It plays to their strengths: the child who struggles in class may be a creative musician. Music, and art more generally, is non-judgmental, but it is also demanding. Working to master its skills can become a truly rewarding experience. He concluded by touching on a critical paradox in musical inclusion. People benefit most when they are trusted to find their own way through a project, but the discourse around social inclusion often requires artists to meet goals set by funders. Good results happen best in an atmosphere of creative freedom, where participants share control over and responsibility for the work in which they participate.

## **'We Insist!' Members' projects**

A key part of the meeting was the opportunity to get to know the projects that members were developing in response to the social inclusion agenda. They included the following activities, which correspond to the model of artistic democratisation and cultural democracy touched on in François Matarasso's talk.

### **Pompeo Benincasa – [Associazione Catania Jazz](#), Italy**

The project aims to develop a music school in Picanello, a district of 75,000 people in Catania with few facilities and many social problems. It will create a street band to revive some of the area's rich musical heritage. The work will include young people from the age of 12 and reach out to the substantial migrant community of the neighbourhood.

### **Audun Humberstet – [Vestnorsk Jazzsenter](#) Norway**

Vestnorsk Jazzsenter aims to launch an inclusive community music project that works with people who want to play music but may have no existing skills, using jazz's improvisatory

techniques to facilitate participation. The focus is on health and wellbeing, and the project will be a partnership between academic bodies, local government, education services and music organisations in Bergen and Stavanger.

### **Karolina Juzwa – [Fundacja Wytwórnia](#), Poland**

Fundacja Wytwórnia has a programme of music therapy workshops within the Summer Jazz Academy Festival, in association with the Regional Centre for Social Policy in Łódź. Participants include people with disabilities and children living in care. The work is led by professional musicians and is intended to introduce people to jazz and folk music, enable them to play instruments and sing and to take part in relaxation activities.

### **Martyna Markowska – [Katowice JazzArt Festival](#), Poland**

The JazzArt Festival sees music as an effective tool of social change, a commitment that is symbolised by an annual concert in the local women's prison, as part of its 'creative resocialisation' programme.

### **Valentina Protti – [Novara Jazz](#), Italy**

Novara Jazz has formed the Orchestra di Periferia as part of a commitment to working in Sant'Agabio a district of Novara where 40% of the population are migrants. The Orchestra meets weekly to rehearse with an Italian jazz music director and has already performed two well-attended concerts of music from all continents.

### **Lucie Buathier – [Paris Jazz Club](#), France**

As part of the Jazz Sur Seine Festival, discovery workshops have been held for children and young people in the context of the Ministry of Territorial Cohesion's 'Educational Success' programme. Sessions introduce participants to jazz, and some have gone on to join classes in local music schools.

### **Nicola Fazzini – [Nusica](#), Italy**

Nusica are at an early stage of planning a project in a deprived part of Mestre (Venice). Working with local schools, they hope to develop a concert series in the district, focused around pop-up and street activities with the direct participation of the young people and their parents.

## **Other presentations**

### **Jaime Salazar - Crea artistic training programme, Bogota, Colombia**

Crea is an ambitious neighbourhood arts education programme supported by the City of Bogota and managed by [Idartes](#). Launched in 2013, it provides young people with a path for arts training from school to professional standard through 20 local centres. It begins with a

school offer linked to the curriculum, with a total of 55,161 participants attending two classes a week. Its support for entrepreneurship, accessed by 6,675 young people, focuses equally on life goals and the potential to benefit economically from cultural work. A smaller laboratory strand, concerned with post-conflict, reconciliation, healing and forgiveness, has involved 590 adults and young people. Crea's work is distributed across the disciplines, but in five years it has become the largest employer of musicians in Colombia and vastly improved arts opportunities for young people in the capital.

### **Daive Grosso, [International Music Council](#)**

The International Music Council was created by UNESCO in 1949 with branches in the different world regions. The European Music Council is the umbrella organisation for musical life in the continent, and the network is estimated to reach 200 million people through its members. Its focus is on promoting the five music rights through lobbying and representation at international forums, capacity building and raising the visibility of musicians and their contribution. Davide spoke in more detail about the [MARS](#) (Music And Resilience Support) pilot training. This offered specialized and certified training in psycho-social music intervention in under-resourced, deprived and marginalised communities. In the pilot, 15 people committed 320 hours over a year to formal and informal formal learning, becoming a research group that is still working on these issues. The website also includes many useful resources that are accessible to the public.

## **Banlieues Bleues projects**

Alongside these existing and planned projects, the group was able to experience two of Banlieue Bleues social inclusion projects at first hand. They attended a rehearsal of the Festival's closing concert, by Ethiopian musicians which included a song performed with Girma Bèyèné by a choir from a school in Bobigny. The performance of 'Home' by Papanosh with Roy Nathanson and Napoleon Maddox provided a rich artistic experience and a fruitful discussion. It took place at Espace 93 in Clichy-sous-Bois, one of the most deprived towns in the department, and involved a large group of children from the college, rappers, women from a refugee support centre and a choir from the music school. The professional musicians had worked with them over the previous months to develop a programme around the idea of home, and showed a generously inclusive approach to the concert, which began with a theatre performance devised by the children, and continued with dancing, rap and singing. The whole evening was a joyous celebration of creativity in diversity, that was genuinely inclusive and sometimes very moving. It was also – of course – a great jazz concert.

The next day, the group had an opportunity for a valuable discussion with Roy Nathanson and Sébastien Palis from Papanosh. They explained the origins of the idea and the gradual building of relationships with the various people involved. Sometimes, the form of the artistic work reflected those conditions, for instance in the recordings of voices of women from the refugee support centre. For Sébastien, the experience has been very profound, because he worked with people in ways that he would not normally encounter as a musician. The music became less technical, less precise to accommodate the input of the children and adults with

whom he worked and that created a new feel and way of performing. Roy had worked with similar young people before, especially through the Subway Moon project, and was confident about the process. He wanted to use the project to get deeper into the idea of music and language being one thing, and to make a performance with political resonance. It was fascinating – and difficult – to work across languages because ‘home’ has particular meanings in English that change in French.

Xavier Lemettre summed up Banlieue Bleues approach in this project by stressing that the performance was important but only because it was culmination of a process of relationship-building between the musicians and the community. ‘Home’ was a big, ambitious project, and it is not possible to do many on that scale each year, but whether they are big or small, they are all able to help change lives in a positive way.

## **Next steps**

The meeting in Pantin was the beginning of a longer-term engagement to social inclusion on the part of Europe Jazz Network. As the discussions showed, there is much to be learned from the experiences of members and the new projects they are developing. In particular, the network has a role in defining and sharing good practice in the field of jazz, to support organisations who want to extend their work.

François Matarasso  
7 June 2018

## Participants

- Associazione Catania Jazz, Italy (Pompeo Benincasa & Vittorio Benincara)
- Association Jazz Croisé France Antoine Bos
- Association Paris Jazz Club, France (Lucie Buathier)
- Banlieues Bleues, France (Xavier Lemettre, Stéphanie Touré)
- Akbank Jazz Festival/Düçler Akademisi, Turkey (Ercan Tural)
- Europe Jazz Network (Francesca Cerretani, Giambattista Tofoni, Stefano Zucchiatti)
- Fondation BNP Paribas, France (Mathilde Favre)
- Associazione Culturale Nusica, Italy (Nicola Fazzini)
- International Music Council, (Davide Grosso, Silja Fischer)
- Vestnorsk Jazzsenter Norway (Audun Humberst)
- Fundacja Wytwornia, Poland (Karolina Juzwa)
- Katowice JazzArt Festival, Poland (Martyna Markowska)
- Australian Music Centre, UK (Martel Ollerenshaw)
- Novara Jazz, Italy (Valentina Protti)
- François Matarasso
- Roy Nathason
- Sebastien Palis
- Jaime Salazar