

# EUROPE JAZZ NETWORK



Photo by Eric Garault from 'Home', Banlieues Bleues (FR) © 2018

## 'INCLUSION IS IMPROVISATION'

Seminar on music and social Inclusion,  
Barcelona, 25 March 2022

# 'INCLUSION IS IMPROVISATION' SEMINAR REPORT

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# 1 EJN SEMINARS ON SOCIAL INCLUSION

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## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Social inclusion has become increasingly important in European cultural policy, and music—so rich, so diverse, so accessible—is a natural territory for removing barriers to participation and human connection. Europe Jazz Network (EJN) has been exploring these questions for several years, especially by bringing together its members to share experience and ideas, and adapt for a changing world.

In 2022, EJN began a new programme supporting members to develop good practice and innovate in making their work more inclusive. It centres on three multi-disciplinary seminars led by thinkers, professionals and field experts and aiming to build the capacity of members by investigating methods to engage minorities, migrants, people with disabilities, inmates and other people who experience barriers to access in cultural projects. The planned outcome is a handbook with examples and recommendations for music professionals intending to integrate social inclusion projects in their work.



EJN Seminar, 25 March 2022, Taller de Música, Barcelona

## 1.2 THE BARCELONA SEMINAR

The first of these annual meetings was held in Barcelona on 25 March 2022, in the context of Jazz I Am and with the Taller de Música.

It was an opportunity to hear from people working in the field in Catalonia, including an ambitious community opera project with the people of Raval neighbourhood, and an organisation supporting the music creation of people with disabilities. These presentations were framed by more theoretical talks from people with Europe-wide experience of the work.

Inclusion is improvisation because it requires us to listen to each other, to adapt and respond, to be creative. The result is not in anyone's control but it is in everyone's gift. This session will explore how that openness can lead to exciting and rewarding musical encounters—for everyone.



EJN Seminar, 25 March 2022, Taller de Música, Barcelona

## 2 THE SEMINAR

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### 2.1 Introduction to the session

The seminar attracted almost 30 participants, in addition to the speakers and EJN staff. This was about the maximum that could be accommodated without breakout groups and the decision was taken to keep everyone together with the room laid out in a broad oval so that everyone could see each other. The participants were mostly producers, and mostly experienced in their field, though not necessarily in projects intended to diversify audiences and support social inclusion. They represented 25 organisations from 16 countries in Europe and its neighbourhood. The session began with introductions, which gave everyone the opportunity to see how much experience was in the room and areas of common experience or interest.

### 2.2 'Inclusion is Improvisation': *François Matarasso*

François Matarasso began by discussing the term 'social inclusion' and some issues it raises for cultural organisations, including jazz promoters and musicians. He asked what was meant by inclusion—was it a good intention, no more than a wish to involve all? Or perhaps it is just another euphemism for poverty? He spoke briefly about a theoretical basis of social exclusion, suggesting that it can be seen as the result of the social processes by which majority groups organise to meet their own interests, unaware and sometimes careless of the negative consequences for minority groups. He also argued that it is more useful to speak of social *exclusion*, since that can be identified and steps taken against taken to prevent it. Social inclusion, on the other hand, like social justice, is a less precise, and more aspirational term. It is not necessarily a helpful guide for action because we cannot identify a point at which social inclusion has been achieved.

In reality, degrees of social exclusion are unavoidable, since they are also the result of the formation of social groups and community, which is a common and widely desired outcome of cultural activity. These forms of exclusion, such as whether or not someone can be a member of the choir, are not in themselves problematic. They become so when they constrain people's right, under article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to participate in the cultural life of the community.

Social exclusion is also problematic when it limits peoples capabilities, what Martha Nussbaum has described as the answers to the question, 'What is this person able to do and to be?'. François went on to explain that capabilities are not only personal but dependent on the socio-economic, cultural and political environment in which people live. So the work of cultural organisations to reduce factors that exclude people from fulfilling the potential at

their capabilities is fundamental to the process of social inclusion. Here participatory art, in which people at risk of social exclusion are invited to participate not just as audiences but as co-creators, can play an especially important role. He proposed that the term 'non-professional artists' better describes the different creative, social and cultural resources they bring to enrich the creative experience.

He illustrated this by speaking about 'Home', a 2018 project by Banlieues Bleues which had been associated with a previous EJM seminar on social inclusion, to show the value of bringing together professional and non-professional artists could produce. Professional artists brought education, skill and expertise, knowledge, experience, context, informed judgement and talent to the project but the participants, who also acted as artists, brought other, equally valuable assets such as an open mind, new ideas, knowledge and life experience, something to say and a need to say it, as well, naturally, as talent.

He concluded by saying that serious efforts at social inclusion through music need to go much further than passive removal of barriers that some members of the audience may face, and invite people to participate in the creation of the music itself. In the end it is a matter of what kind of relationship artists want with their societies. Working with non-professionals demands precisely the skills of improvisation that jazz musicians depend on, because it involves responding respectfully to the interests, character, ideas, and creativity of people who are not currently included in music making.

### **2.3 'Inclusion and communities of place': Irene Calvis, El Gran Teatre del Liceu**

In the following presentation, Irene Calvis spoke about how the Liceu, Barcelona's 175 year old opera house, has made a commitment to just this kind of change, redefining through a co-creation process its relationship with Raval, the multicultural neighbourhood in which it stands. In Raval, 47,100 people live in just over 1 square kilometre, almost half of them born outside the EU. They speak many languages and have a very rich network of community and cultural groups, including four music schools and more than 12 choirs. The opera house set itself the huge ambition of creating a new opera by, about, and with the people of the neighbourhood, supported by a diverse team of artists, Liceu staff and technicians, participatory art specialists and community arts groups. The result would be presented as part of the normal season on the main stage of the 2,300 seat opera house.

The journey began in 2018 but has been delayed by the pandemic, which hit the neighbourhood especially hard because many residents are economically vulnerable and tourism, one of the area's principal activities virtually ceased. The opera will have its premiere on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022, on the main stage of the Liceu opera house with several hundred local people involved in performing and in many of the production tasks.

One of the first steps was to look at the opera house's own processes and identify organisations or community groups in the neighbourhood who might be interested in partnership. The Liceu found two social entities working with migrants on the creation of high quality

clothing, and they are now involved in the creation of costumes for the opera. Members of amateur choir have been invited to perform, while a local art college worked with disabled artists to create the poster for the production. The opera house staff have had to change many of their ways of working and expectations to make this project possible, but it has strong commitment from the leadership team. It is also supported as part of an international European research project called Traction, which provides specialist expertise.



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## 2.4 'Inclusion and communities of experience': Queralt Prats, [ARTransforma](#)

The next presentation offered a contrasting experience in the work of an independent arts organisation that specialises in co-creating performances with disabled people and others at risk of social exclusion. Queralt Prats, who founded the organisation after studying community music in England, spoke about the values that guide her work and shared two videos which demonstrated that in practice.

- [10 anys ARTransforma](#)
- [Música i Dansa a l'abast 2009-20](#)

## 2.5 'The social impact of music and inclusion': Lukas Pairen, [SIMM Platform](#)

*(Text provided by the presenter)*

Xenophobia, racism, and antisemitism are for sure realities we come across in most of our societies, but so does a growing understanding that a diversified composition of society can guarantee its richness and strength. Participatory social music projects represent a field of social practice which is rapidly developing in many countries, and which often adopts this perspective by welcoming and embracing a diversity of participants, coming from very different economic, social, and cultural backgrounds.

I founded the international research platform [SIMM](#) (on Social Impacts of Music-Making) which since 2017 helps to develop research on social music programmes to better understand what the role of music-making can be in social work. I am myself especially active in Gaza (Palestine) and in Kinshasa (DR Congo).

We can learn a lot – maybe most – from peers (other facilitators of music projects aimed at helping certain people to become more part of certain communities). As music centres and music producers we can help organize such coming together of musicians and social and community workers active in this practice. With the Academic Chair and Centre for Social Action & Music Making (CESAMM) which we are setting up from 2022 on at the [Ghent University Association](#), this is also very much what we plan to do: Regularly organise meetings of facilitators of social and community music projects. We will do this in a close collaboration with music centres such as European Jazz Network member [Handelsbeurs](#).

Inclusion refers to how diversity is leveraged to create a fair, equitable, healthy and high-performing organization or community, in which as many individuals as possible are respected, feel engaged and motivated. Cultural competence in social work is a vital skill, and not something one acquires easily and quickly. It takes time and a lot of energy and focus to come in resonance – in tune – with people who live or lived very different realities in comparison to ours... vulnerability, oppression, living in poverty...

We call the research and training centre which we are now creating in Ghent a centre for 'social action' and music-making, because we believe that working in this field means that we also need to adopt a social justice mission as part of our social work. That does of course not mean we can do that much about the many things which go wrong, but we want to be able to stay away from only offering stopgap solutions.

Specific of a lot of music-making is that it also takes a lot of time and energy and focus to master an instrument and a repertoire. To master playing music together with others - make sound, sound with others – can take a lot of time. Time which allows you to come bit by bit in tune with who these other persons are and what makes them resonate. This by itself is helping to allow diversity and equity to come a little bit into existence, and this may have side effects in other aspects of a person's life. As it takes time to make things work in music, one becomes a member of a group trying this, so one can have a sense of belonging, connection, and community during this work. It may give someone the feeling he or she is an essential - or at least very interesting - part of the community, irrespective of differences.

To claim that community music facilitators can be social change agents is most probably exaggerated, but the participatory character of social and community music projects may be of help in allowing certain people to navigate towards more constructive positions in society. But there is another element in music-making which may be of help: It is related to the type of organisation we experience in making music in small groups, especially where improvisation is an important element: Instead of a strictly hierarchical organisation, we mostly come across what we call 'heterarchical' forms of organisation, in which the

structure is not top-down but in which those who take a lead may differ from moment to moment, depending on who knows best certain parts of the music playing. This also implies that everyone constantly listens very carefully what is going on, where to take a lead, or where to follow the lead of someone else. Here you can see a clear and important link between 'inclusion' and 'improvisation': Improvisation in jazz or jazz related music requires a lot of attention and responsibilities of all participants. It requires them to have ownership over the music project. To have a say in how to develop it, which music to play, how to play it, how to organise the project, the group meetings, etcetera.

Let me finish with this: The book I wrote after the research I did on social music projects in Kinshasa is called '[Music Saved Them, They Say](#)'. That they were 'saved' or needed to be 'saved', is not what I personally thought, but what the young Congolese musicians said themselves. It was their enthusiastic way of expressing how important it had been for them to become musicians and discover the pleasure and passion of making music.

## 2.6 Concluding Discussion

Following the presentations, there was time for some discussion, including reflections on what had been said, and some sharing of experiences from different parts of Europe. It was clear from this that the participants had found the session informative and engaging. It opened new perspectives on practice, for example on the question of how to make inclusion a matter of mainstream activity rather than of separate projects.

After this, the suggestion of continuing the conversation through an EJN working group was accepted, and several people were enthusiastic about participating in this. The first meeting of the group will be organised online and will have three broad tasks:

- To share good ideas and advice about projects aiming to promote social inclusion
- To encourage the development of joint projects on the theme between EJN members
- To develop guidance on good practice as part of the EJN project.

## 3 APPENDIX

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### 3.1 SPEAKERS

#### *Irene Calvis*

Born in Barcelona (1973) Irene Calvis has a Degree in History of Art University of Barcelona, and a Masters in Tourism and Leisure Management from Esade. She has worked as a guide to museums and exhibitions for Ciutat's Gestió Cultural and a theatre producer at Annexa,

Before joining el Gran Teatre del Liceu in 2002 as Deputy for Public Relations and Protocol, then in the patronage and operating service. Since 2014, she has been responsible for the social programme LiceuApropa and leading on the major community opera 'La Gata Perduda', which will have its première in the Liceu on 5 October 2022.

- [Reflections about the phenomenon of community art](#) (Traction project)
- [Apropa Cultura](#), Liceu Theatre (in Catalan)

#### *Queralt Prats Bruguera - ARTransforma - [www.artransforma.org](http://www.artransforma.org)*

Queralt Prats Bruguera gained her BMus (Hons) at the Birmingham Conservatoire (UCE), where she studied viola, baroque viola and completed a project 'Music as a manifestation of creativity and human experiences', which began her career in the cultural-educational-social field, working with a range of groups and contexts, but always with an inclusive and creative sight. She has been part of many musical groups (in the UK and in Catalonia) and has taught viola at several music schools in Barcelona. She created and directed a music school for 10 years and was part of the Abiabaï Company—Concerts for Babies, until the pandemic. She has created and led different projects, including workshops with young people and adults with disabilities organized by the "la Caixa" Foundation at the various CaixaForums in Spain. She has designed, promoted and directed the social project of the ONCA Foundation, has worked at Apropa Cultura, and gives training, conferences, talks and workshops for schools (ordinary, special education, music...), universities and art professionals, in the field of social inclusion and educations.

She is Director of ARTransforma, which she founded in 2009, and from where she leads creative and inclusive participatory projects, working in a network of agents from the educational, cultural and social sectors. ARTransforma is a non-profit organization that aims to promote equal opportunities and universal access to art and culture. Responding to the right to education, participation and artistic professionalism with and for all people, it promotes art and culture as tools for empowerment, transformation, inclusion and social cohesion through creative projects.

**Lukas Paireon - SIMM**

Lukas Paireon founded the international research platform SIMM (on Social Impacts of Music-Making) which focusses on helping the development of research on social music programmes to better understand what the role of music-making can be in social work. Together with a team of the University and the University College of Ghent he is currently preparing to create an academic chair in the field of music in social and community work, which is expected to start its research and training activities from 2022 on. He is himself especially active in Gaza (Palestine) and in Kinshasa (DR Congo) with the philanthropic organisation Music Fund. In 2020 Routledge New York published his book ‘Music Saved Them, They Say’ on his research findings on social music in Kinshasa, DR Congo.

**François Matarasso – [www.parliamentofdreams.com](http://www.parliamentofdreams.com)**

François Matarasso has worked in community arts since 1981, as an artist, researcher, teacher, policy-maker and writer. His 1997 report, ‘Use or Ornament?’, established influential concepts in cultural policy. Between 2011 and 2015 he produced a series of books on undervalued areas of cultural life under the collective title “Regular Marvels”. His latest book “A Restless Art – How participation won and why it matters”, was published in 2019. He has worked in about 40 countries and held honorary professorships in the UK and Australia. He is a partner in Traction (2020-22) which is researching how technology can support social inclusion through opera co-creation.

**3.2 SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS**

1.	Cagil Özdemir	Bozcaada Jazz Festival	Turkey
2.	Anne Sophie Parsons	DSI Swinging Europe	Denmark
3.	Rainer Kern	Enjoy Jazz	Germany
4.	Inês Lobo	Festa Do Jazz	Portugal
5.	Ségolène Alex	Festival Jazzèbre	France
6.	Annamaija Saarela	G Livelab Tampere	Finland
7.	Cleo Janse	Handelsbeurs Music House	Belgium
8.	Wim Wabbes	Handelsbeurs Music House	Belgium
9.	Mark van Schaick	inJazz	Netherlands
10.	Maryline Bailly	Jazz à Juan	France
11.	Antonia Haseneder	Jazzclub Unterfahrt	Germany
12.	Mik Torfs	JazzLab	Belgium
13.	Martyna van Nieuwland	Katowice Miasto Ogrodów	Poland
14.	Mateusz Zegan	Katowice Miasto Ogrodów	Poland
15.	Steve Mead	Manchester Jazz Festival	UK
16.	Anežk Nováková	Mladí Ladí Jazz	Czech Republic
17.	Øyvind Larsen	Oslo Jazzfestival	Norway

18.	Javier Estrella Ruiz	PJE Plataforma Jazz España	Spain
19.	Marina Fernández	PJE Plataforma Jazz España	Spain
20.	Lucy Scott	Sage Gateshead	UK
21.	Milly Price	Serious Events / EFG London Jazz Festival	UK
22.	Daniel Ryciak	Silesian Jazz Club Music Association	Poland
23.	Marieke Meischke	So What's Next?	Netherlands
24.	Sunna Gunnlaugs	Solfinna	Iceland
25.	Cinzia Venier	Taller de Músics / JAZZ I AM	Spain
26.	Rosa Galbany	Taller de Músics / JAZZ I AM	Spain
27.	Ernst Wiggo Sandbakk	Trondheim Jazzfestival	Norway
28.	Gaurav Narula	Womex/Piranha Arts	Germany
29.	Hadas Vanunu	Yellow Submarine/Israel Music Showcase Festival	Israel
30.	Irene Calvis	Speaker	Spain
31.	Lukas Pairon	Speaker	Belgium
32.	Queralt Prats Bruguera	Speaker	Spain
33.	François Matarasso	Speaker/Moderator/Reporter	UK/France
34.	Francesca Cerretani	EJN	Italy
35.	Giambattista Tofoni	EJN	Italy
36.	Stefano Zucchiatti	EJN	Italy