

## Interplaying Folk Songs: giving first year bachelor students the floor

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### Abstract

*How can we as teachers support our students in preparing for different practices in and with music? In this text we aim to explore this question by presenting and discussing the project Interplaying Folk Songs, taking place on the first-year bachelor programme at the Norwegian Academy of Music in 2018. The project is a part of a larger course module, and as teachers we wanted to explore methods for teaching together, inviting the students to share performative practices, knowledge and reflections. With activities ranging from traditional lectures to offering the floor to the first-year students, we aimed to create a process-oriented project with emphasis on discussion and musical interplay amongst the students, letting the voices of all students be heard. In addition, we wished to put ourselves in a situation where we got first-time experience, similar to the situation the students were exposed to. Interplaying Folk Songs takes Luciano Berio's Folk Songs as a starting point. Through introductory lectures, group work, student presentations in plenary and discussions, we worked on songs from Berio's collection. In this text we give examples from three of the student groups to illuminate experiences of cooperation, learning and teaching. The project has a pedagogical core reflecting on our practices and experiences as teachers.*

## Introduction

- Could we borrow some lurs?
- What?
- We want to perform Black is the colour of my true love's hair on lurs – is that okay?

Just a few weeks earlier, The Norwegian Academy of Music (NMH) had received 12 of these rare Norwegian traditional instruments. The students had used them during the course in Norwegian folk music, and now they wanted to extend their repertoire. For us as teachers, the question about the lurs came as a surprise. When we created this project, based on Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs*, we tried to prepare for various questions and inputs, but using lurs was never on our minds. In this chapter we ask: perhaps giving room for surprises of this kind is exactly what we aim for?

Music students of today will enter various professional contexts. Our students will be working as performing musicians, teachers, producers, conductors and composers, just to mention some. They will combine different roles by organising concerts, writing applications and reports, and they will probably perform music within many genres. How can we as teachers support our students to prepare them for different practices in and with music?

This text takes Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs* as a starting point. However, the core of this text is not Berio's music, but cooperation, learning and teaching. Here, we will share some experiences from a project called *Interplaying Folk Songs*. This is a pedagogical project designed for first-year bachelor students at NMH. The project has a pedagogical core, it is not designed as a research project, and our reflections are based on our practices and experiences as teachers.

Still, we will venture to illuminate some overarching questions which might constitute a basis for further research: how can we as teachers explore methods for teaching together? How can we invite the students to 'take the floor' within the scope of a course mainly organised as traditional lectures? How can we facilitate a learning environment that supports projects across study programmes?

## Music comprehension and musical practice

*Interplaying Folk Songs* took place over four weeks during the spring 2018. The project was an integrated part of the course EXMUS10-Musikkforståelse I,<sup>1</sup> which covers music history, analysis and aesthetics as well as two introductory courses in Norwegian folk music and the music industry, required professional skills and identity. It is mandatory for all students on the first-year bachelor programme at NMH, and the student group, which consists of approximately 80 students, includes students within the fields of folk music, composition, conducting, jazz, improvisation, church music and classical music. The final assessment in the course is a written examination at the end of each semester. In *Interplaying Folk Songs* we had no specific assessment apart from the student presentations at the end of the project period – an aspect which we will return to.

At NMH the curriculum is divided into main and supportive subjects. This dichotomy defines performative fields such as principal instrument and chamber music as ‘main areas’, while courses on music theory, aural training and music history are defined as ‘supportive’. In contradistinction to most of the supportive courses at NMH, which are linked to the different study programmes, Musikkforståelse I is a common platform across the study programmes. In other words, the subject is meant to be a course that supports the student’s own performance practice, but exactly which performative practice might differ from student to student. While one dreams of being a soloist, another may want to be an ensemble musician, a teacher, a conductor, a creator of the music that is performed or perhaps a combination of the above. In Musikkforståelse I we seek to embrace different approaches to music that are relevant to the students.

The learning objective of Musikkforståelse I is for the students at the end of the course to be able to demonstrate insight into music in a historical, analytical, philosophical, cultural and social perspective and to reflect on their own role as musicians in a cultural and social context. Musikkforståelse I generates a total of 10 credits (ECTS), and the lessons are mainly organised as lectures in our auditorium every Wednesday throughout the academic year. This gives an opportunity to work across study programmes.

We consider learning and teaching as knowledge we can approach and elaborate together – through verbal discussions with peers and teachers and reflection through musical practice. As teachers we discuss the teaching and learning activities in relation

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1 The term ‘musikkforståelse’ can be translated to ‘music comprehension’.

to the intended learning outcomes. What kind of knowledge and skills does a music student actually need? For instance, do different musical genres and areas require different kinds of competences?

Our experience from the traditional lectures in Musikkforståelse I is that a handful of the students are often very proactive – asking questions and giving comments – which often means a dialogue between the teacher and some of the students. But still, most of the students are silent. Considering the aims and learning objectives and the course as a supportive course, we wanted to investigate how we could create space for more voices to be heard within the framework of Musikkforståelse I. Not just because every voice is important, but also because we believe that verbal reflection might be a fruitful way to develop critical thoughts on music as an art form, as music history and in relation to social contexts. We also think it is important to facilitate more performing activities for the students within Musikkforståelse I – which will in turn hopefully inspire them to incorporate the knowledge gained in this subject into their principal instrument performance and musical creativity.

The project described in this text is just a small part of Musikkforståelse I. As two of many teachers involved in the course, we wanted to explore methods for teaching together, inviting the students to share performative practices, knowledge and reflection – and we wanted to hear the voices of all the students. We decided to create a project with just one musical work as a core and chose Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs* from 1964.

## Why Berio's Folk Songs?

*Folk Songs* became the scope of this project, first and foremost because we find this work to be a fruitful starting point for dialogues on certain historic, aesthetic and ethical perspectives as well as the students' own artistic practices. The format with short songs is suitable for first-year bachelor students, and of course we love the music.

In future projects Berio's piece could be replaced with other kinds of music, such as one of JS Bach's cantatas, music by Duke Ellington or a tune from the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle repertoire, just to mention some ideas. Nevertheless, Berio's music became *our* starting point many years ago – and that is perhaps why we looked to Berio for our first comprehensive cooperation as teachers.

We met as master students of music performance at NMH. Gjertrud studied contemporary music for clarinet and Unni traditional singing from Western Norway. As part of our master studies, we decided to do Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs*, a work that we had heard on CD recordings and both wished to perform. Working with Berio's music led to several questions: what did we want to bring in from our different musical backgrounds? Which musicians did we want to invite into our collaboration? Did we need a conductor? Should we perform the music as written in the score?

Later on, as professional musicians, we have both performed Berio's *Folk Songs* in different settings, with established ensembles and more spontaneously with the instrumentation at hand. Looking back, we see that our common work on *Folk Songs* as students helped us to move boundaries as performers which in turn might have contributed to how we approach this music today.

There are many reasons for choosing Berio's *Folk Songs* as the core for a pedagogical project for first-year bachelor students. Perhaps the most obvious is that each song is quite short, approximately 1–3 minutes, which makes it suitable for this project. We wanted to divide the students into groups and let each group focus on one song. In sum, the project would illuminate different perspectives on Berio's *Folk Songs*.

Secondly, the work can easily be rescored. *Folk Songs* consists of 11 songs scored for voice and small chamber ensemble with seven instrumentalist. From our previous experiences as performers we knew that although the scoring from Berio's hand is detailed and concrete, it is quite easy to adapt the score to the instruments available.

Thirdly, studying *Folk Songs* enables an overriding discussion on collaborations between composers and performers. Luciano Berio was without doubt one of the most prominent composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the fact that the songs are dedicated to Cathy Berberian gives us the opportunity not just to shed light on Berio as a groundbreaking composer but also to focus on Berberian, who was a remarkable singer and also composed music. In addition, the collaboration between Berio and Berberian, on *Folk Songs* and other pieces, as well as Berberian's own collaboration with other composers such as John Cage, give us the opportunity to illuminate different kinds of cooperation between composers and performers – a topic that is often neglected in the traditional narratives of music history, which is dominated by the narratives of the composer and his work, overlooking the performer's perspective and the perspectives of collaboration, which so often play a leading part in the processes of developing new musical works.

Fourthly, the 11 songs are inspired by folk songs and classical traditional music from different regions: France, Italy, Sardinia, Sicily, USA, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The work can be closely connected to different types of folk music as well as contemporary music and jazz.

And last but not least: Berio is often credited as the author of these songs, but strictly speaking he has just created two melodies which have both been published in an earlier composition.<sup>2</sup> The other nine songs are arrangements of folk melodies or melodies written by others. Taking this into consideration, *Folk Songs* can constitute a basis for discussions about the work concept, musical arrangements and ethics regarding intellectual property in general. These features make Luciano Berio's *Folk Songs* a good starting point for critical reflection, discussion and performances of the music by the students themselves.

## Interplaying Folk Songs

We divided the students into 11 groups based on the same groupings that we had created for the introductory course in Norwegian folk music a few weeks earlier. The basis for those groupings was to mix students from different study programmes. Our aim was to create opportunities for the students to collaborate across genres, with a strong emphasis on social relations. By using the same groups, we knew that the students were able to work in a constructive way. But unlike the previous project where each group was led by a teacher, *Interplaying Folk Songs* went a step further: now the students had to work on their own, with some guidance from us. The groups worked in separate rooms, and the students were responsible for the backline and bringing in their instruments.

We had developed exercises tailored to each group in advance with a short written introduction and a two-part exercise: giving an oral presentation and a musical performance. In addition, we had collected material that we considered relevant to each task such as audio recordings, excerpts from the score, links to websites, tips on relevant books or recordings etc. The material was uploaded on Canvas<sup>3</sup> before the project started so it was available to the students from the start as a point of departure for their work. Even though the specific Canvas pages were suited to each group, all

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<sup>2</sup> La donna ideale and Ballo from *Quattro canzoni popolari* for voice and piano, written in 1946–47, first performed in 1952 by Cathy Berberian and Luciano Berio.

<sup>3</sup> Canvas is the educational software used at NMH.

groups had access to all the uploaded material. This way the Canvas pages constituted a shared collection of material which was relevant to us all.

The project took place over four weeks and included approximately 50 students. Due to the size of the student group, we found it most suitable to concentrate the project around the regular timetable of Musikkforståelse I. Of the four weeks allocated to the project, we spent the first two giving short introductory lectures both on the aims and framing of the project as well as historical and artistic contexts that we found relevant in connection with Berio's *Folk Songs* and letting the students work in groups. Our role as teachers was to follow each group and give input. In between the working sessions we communicated with the groups via Canvas and email. At the end of the project period, in weeks three and four, the students presented their work in plenary in the auditorium at NMH followed by discussions on specific topics. Below we will give a few examples to show how the students and we worked.

### Three student groups

One of the groups that formed quickly was the 'lur group' referred to in the introduction. This group consisted of students from the fields of jazz/improvised, classical and folk music. They soon agreed on how to perform 'their' song, *Black is the colour of my true love's hair*. The Norwegian folk instrument lur is not the main instrument of any of our students, but this specific group was given the opportunity to perform Norwegian folk music on these instruments earlier the same spring. The members enjoyed playing lurs and established a kind of 'identity' during the Norwegian folk music project. In *Interplaying Folk Songs* they chose to continue with this instrumentation, except one student who played fiddle with fuzz. Their choice of instrumentation very much defined how they would approach their task. One of the students chose to prepare the verbal presentation.

A second group worked with *Malorous qu'o un fenno*, a traditional song from Auvergne in France. The text in this song describes life with or without a spouse – a text that can be interpreted in a humorous way. This group consisted of mainly classically trained students, involving wind instruments and piano. Four of the six students focused on the musical part of the assignment, and the two others worked with the verbal part.

A third group consisted of students on the jazz/improvised and classical music study programmes. Their song was *La donna ideale*, originally composed by Berio in the middle of 1940s and later included in *Folk Songs*. At their first meeting they played through their song, just trying it out together. Then they talked about the music and

invited us into the discussion. They asked the following question: should they establish a common voice, adjusting to each other as they had done in their first version, or should they strengthen the distinctive qualities of each musical voice? They discussed and tried out different musical solutions before making their decision. In the end they chose to create space for different voices and to mix their musical expressions. This group worked together on both assignments.

By observing these three groups, we found that they formed in different ways. In some situations one or two of the students presented a concrete idea that the others agreed to. In other situations several students suggested different ideas, and the members discussed these. We found that the allotted time and the final performance constituted a common framework that structured the work of the groups. Taking a closer look at each group, we saw that they developed differently regarding group dynamics, working processes and their choice and use of material.

### Three approaches

The members of the 'lur group' presented the idea of bringing in these instruments as a common agreement on the first project day. Most of the members play brass instruments. Lurs are related instrument and offer an opportunity to experience and cultivate overtone playing. By using lurs this group also established a sonorous platform which differed radically from the better known versions of *Black is the colour*, sung by the originator John Jacob Niles in his tune created early in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Nina Simone in her version developed in the late 1950s and from then on included in her standard repertoire, and Berio's version in *Folk Songs*, first performed by Cathy Berberian in the mid-1960s. By using lurs, this group of students established a contrast to these different musical traditions – and by using instruments rooted in the Norwegian tradition, they contributed to a broader interpretation of what we might call 'folk music'.

All members of this first group contributed with musical ideas, and one of the students organised the ideas in a score. Their music became partly written, partly improvised and partly learned by ear. They showed a playful and generous attitude to each other. In the final performance the fiddle player created their own variation on the melody, and the lur players were positioned in the gallery, at the sides and on the stage in the auditorium, creating a surrounding accompaniment.

In the second group the members were concerned with their own interpretation of Berio's score in relation to the text. In their musical performance the students used the



English translation of the text, which we had uploaded on Canvas, and built a musical performance mirroring how they experienced the lyrics. They chose to perform a purely instrumental version with piano, flute, French horn and trombone. They used the original score of Berio, but unlike Berio's version, which has the same tempo in both verses, this group created a version that started quite slowly, then accelerated, aiming to end in a chaos. In the verbal part the students presented Berio's life and compositional works. Two students developed a manuscript and presented it together.

The groups worked in different rooms. By visiting them, we could observe just small parts of the group processes. For example, when we met group two they had already chosen to distribute the tasks between them, worked on one part each. We asked the students about which alternatives they had considered. The students explained that for them this was an effective use of time but also that this way of working gave them the opportunity to focus on what they were inspired to do. Some of them really wanted to play or sing, and some wanted to read, write and reflect in words.

With the third group we were more involved in the discussions, listening to musical suggestions and reflecting together with the students. In the beginning the members discussed how they could adjust to each other's musical expressions. We asked them to put into words what musical decisions they had made and if there were other possibilities. They explored different musical approaches together and started to focus on form early on in the process. In the end, they decided on a version of *La donna ideale* with a musical performance in three parts, first with a classical approach, letting the classically trained students lead a version based on Berio's score. Then they moved on to a more jazz-influenced version where they developed new chords and made an improvisation based on the tune. Finally, they combined these two approaches, letting the classical approach and the jazz/improvised approach melt together.

The three groups mentioned here made different decisions on how to build their musical cooperation: group one with their choice of instruments, group two with their own interpretation of the musical score and lyrics, and group three with their choice of mixing the different voices and experimenting with form. It was interesting to observe how decisions like these, made early in the process, came to shape how the process developed.

### Versatile processes

Many students have versatile musical interests and work within several musical expressions. This project allowed for many different approaches. One example is the

lur group, where everybody except one played lurs. Another example is a group that decided to form a small wind orchestra, which implied that most of the members brought their secondary instruments. The group with *La donna ideale* is another example where the students kept their main instruments but looked into different musical styles and expressions. In other groups the students tried out other instruments or musical expressions which differed from their main specialisation at NMH, such as a classical brass student who chose to play the piano in a jazz style.

When we designed the project we aimed to shed light on different approaches, such as presenting as many of the songs as possible, comparing different recordings of the same song, discussing relevant connections to contemporary music, performers and composers, and last but not least to ask and discuss what folk music is and might be.

We found that the working model for this project gave us access to communication between the students and insight into their group processes. As an example, the students asked us questions such as: what kind of music can we build together? Should I adjust to the others in search for a common expression? Should we choose to nurture the features of each specific voice? For some students this was a first meeting with these types of questions; for others they were more familiar.

In addition to the dialogues with the students, we carried out our own reflections before, during and after the project was completed. These reflections were carried out as dialogues between ourselves and recorded. Here we discussed specific situations such as the processes of concrete groups and students, and we agreed on certain adjustments such as adding a lecture when needed.

We also discussed how we were taken by surprise in our encounters with the students. For instance, we faced our own prejudices when we realised that we took for granted that music students of today, especially within the field of jazz or improvised music, have extensive experiences of a variety of different types of collaborations, while in fact some students revealed that this project was the first time that they had worked across genres. Experiences like these were a reminder for us to really see the individual student.

Some months after the completion of *Interplaying Folk Songs* we had the opportunity to give a presentation at the AEC and CEMPE conference *Becoming musicians – student involvement and teacher collaboration in higher music education*. In preparation, we listened to our recorded dialogues from the execution of the project. This re-hearing of our

conversations reminded us of things that we had forgotten, such as the kind of 'learning chaos' a first-year bachelor student might experience with different courses and teachers. What is it like to be a first-year student? Are we capable of imagining the student's situation? *Interplaying Folk Songs* was a new experience for both the students and us, and during the re-hearings of our dialogues we discussed how *Interplaying Folk Songs* meant putting ourselves in a similar situation to the first-year bachelor students in many ways.

## Facilitating performances and discussions

In *A Framework for Mentoring* (2009) Peter Renshaw presents different roles, attitudes and practices that are relevant to consider as teachers in higher music education. He defines ten approaches: buddying, shadowing, counselling, advising, tutoring, instructing, facilitating, coaching, mentoring and co-mentoring (Renshaw, 2009, pp. 2–3). The different approaches might be suitable for different situations, and the preferable approach might vary depending on the type of relation, duration of the relation, concrete goals and so forth. For instance, Renshaw presents *instructing* as an approach that includes 'little scope for dialogue', while the very concept of dialogue is at the heart of *counselling*.

Renshaw writes under the umbrella Lifelong Learning, and reflective and reflexive practices constitute the core of his thinking. If we follow his list, we pick *facilitating* as our overall approach for *Interplaying Folk Songs*. His definition of *facilitating* can also act as a main concern for our attitudes: 'Facilitating is a dynamic, non-directive way of generating a conversation aimed at enabling or empowering a person(s) to take responsibility for their own learning and practice' (Renshaw, 2009 p. 3).

The fact that we both knew the music thoroughly was crucial to how we could conduct and approach the project and the plenary sessions. We had discussed in advance our approaches and the kind of roles we would play in the different meetings with the students. Along the way we frequently discussed the types of input that would be fruitful for each group (or each student) at certain stages. During the first two weeks we asked the groups what kind of feedback they wanted from us. Sometimes we were both present in the meetings; other times we met the groups alone. We discussed, coordinated and tailored our feedback to each group and tried to adapt our approaches to the concrete situations: in some situations we asked open-ended questions; in others we presented concrete suggestions.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Gjertrud Pedersen has earlier published reflections on coaching in connection to *NAIP-Innovation in Higher Music Education* (Smilde et al., 2016) (see <http://www.musicmaster.eu/coaching>, accessed 1/12/18).

The last two Wednesdays were dedicated to student presentations in the auditorium. By using the same location and the same timeframe that is used for traditional lectures in *Musikkforståelse I*, we wanted to create a slightly different situation with the students positioned both on the podium and in the audience. It was striking to see how attentive the students were to these presentations. Perhaps it is more exciting to learn from 'one's own'?

Besides being an arena for learning from peers, we soon realised that the student presentations were a crucial and necessary goal for the project. On a project like *Interplaying Folk Songs* one can work towards two slightly different kinds of goals: the process and the presentation/performance. If on the one hand we focus on the process, we can try out and reflect on different artistic possibilities, which can lead to valuable experiences – yet we might run the risk of not having enough rehearsal time for the final presentation. On the other hand, if we focus on the performance, we might jump too early to certain decisions, not leaving enough room for creative try-outs and dialogues along the way. In *Interplaying Folk Songs* we tried to do the groundwork for a balance between process and performance. By letting the project culminate in closed presentations within the student group rather than a public concert, for instance, we wanted to make room for process-driven working methods. This way the project can be a taster for future projects which might lead to public performances.

Our role during the final presentations was to facilitate, listen and learn. We invited questions and comments from the others and we challenged the groups to give reasons for their choices. For instance, the lur group was asked to explain and give reasons for their decision to use Norwegian folk instruments in a performance of an American tune, and the group with *La donna ideale* was asked to elaborate on their reflections on musical expression and stylistic choices. This way the students had the opportunity to reflect and explain the decisions behind their verbal and musical presentations. This led to further discussions on what kind of artistic expressions and artistic decisions performing musicians can make.<sup>5</sup>

## Evaluate and remodel

When we encounter new knowledge, situations or people we evaluate, adjust and hopefully grow. In a learning and teaching situation evaluation can have different

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<sup>5</sup> Inspired by practices discussed in Helena Gaunt and Heidi Westerlund's *Collaborative Learning in Higher Music Education* (Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013).

formats and purposes and be used in many ways. On this project we evaluated through observation, reflection, dialogues and surveys in order to become aware of our own views, learn more about the students' perspectives, make adjustments and finally to constitute a basis for further development of the project.

During the dialogues with the students, we learned that many of them were not used to this kind of collaboration. Some had questions connected to the group processes, while others had questions about the concrete exercises. Through these dialogues we noted some striking differences in perspectives between the students and us: while some students seem to focus on the final exam, which is evaluated with marks, we as teachers often tend to put emphasis on the learning processes. Dealing with questions like 'in which ways is this project relevant to our exam?' helped us not just to sharpen our pedagogical tools and make adjustments to the project plan when necessary, but also to pay special attention to the relationships between learning activities and assessment tasks, particularly on this project but also in *Musikkforståelse I* as a whole.

Participating in *Interplaying Folk Songs* was not mandatory for the students, and we found that some students chose not to attend. The student presentations at the end of the project period were not evaluated with marks, but we included questions from *Interplaying Folk Songs* in the final exam in the course later the same semester. In retrospect, we have been discussing whether projects like this should be non-compulsory and lead to presentations without marks, as was the case with *Interplaying Folk Songs*, or whether they should be mandatory and/or evaluated with some kind of assessment.

Achieving distinct connections between learning objectives, content and final assessment is challenging on a versatile course like this one. In *Teaching for Quality Learning at University* John Biggs and Catherine Tang underline the importance of what they call 'constructive alignment': the accordance between the learning objectives of a course, the teaching/learning activities involved and the concrete assessment tasks (Biggs & Tang, 2011). From our point of view, learning objectives within *Musikkforståelse I* can be brought to life through reflection and dialogue. *Interplaying Folk Songs* tries to adhere to this perspective by carrying out group collaborations, student presentations and discussions in plenary. Nevertheless, the perspective of constructive alignment might be difficult to achieve when it comes to creative practices in higher music education. Sometimes obstacles, dead ends or just focusing on processes instead of a final assessment are necessary experiences for development. As teachers we can face a dilemma between, on the one hand, contributing to the student's preparation for a final exam, and, on the other hand, trying to help a student to focus on certain processes along the way.

We faced challenges and problems. For instance, some groups were striving to find suitable musical solutions. Some students also found it demanding to be spontaneous and creative with fellow students. To us such situations represented possibilities for working with different ways of problem-solving: what was difficult and how could we solve it together? In some cases we altered the compositions of the student groups. We tried to meet the students in constructive ways, trying to be positive, encouraging, challenging and adjust our feedback to each situation.<sup>6</sup>

This brings us back to our introductory question: how can we as teachers support our students in preparing for different musical practices? Looking at other performative art fields, we see that many emphasise 'being on the floor' with collaborative processes and long-term trial periods, while within the field of music, and especially the field of classical music, there is a strong tradition of long-term individual practice and relatively limited time scheduled for joint rehearsals. In *Interplaying Folk Songs* the students had to share group processes. The experience of being in the middle of a creative chaos can sometimes feel unfamiliar or distressing, yet still lead to valuable results. Early on in the project some of the students asked for more concrete information about what they were meant to learn. We tried to meet these questions with conversations, adding a lecture and presenting more information on Canvas. After the final presentations the same students communicated that the questions they had in the early stages of the process, had been answered during the process and the final presentations, and that they now understood more of the learning processes and learning outcomes of the project. This corresponds with our observations as teachers: it was with the student presentations that the different parts were connected into a meaningful whole. By adding 'their' song, each group contributed with unique perspectives to our common platform. The territory expanded from each group's single song to multiple approaches to several songs.

## Ideas for further development

Our students have different aims for their studies, learning processes and musical life – which invites us to rethink learning and teaching within established subjects. *Interplaying Folk Songs* is one way to confront it. What do our current students need

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<sup>6</sup> We have both worked with and draw inspiration from Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process. In this project we brought in elements from this method.

to do to prepare for a future career as musicians, teachers, composers or conductors? How can we as teachers contribute to connect 'supportive' courses to the students' performance practices? Perhaps we teachers should be even more arm's length in projects like this? Perhaps we can give the students even more space on the floor?

For us, creating and experiencing *Interplaying Folk Songs* has been highly valuable. It was inspiring and fun to collaborate as teachers and to challenge ourselves to teach in different ways and learn from each other and the students. It was good to have a partner in situations where we had to make quick decisions, such when we reduced the number of groups. We have different styles in our teaching, which we find to complement each other when working with the students. Still, we are aware that we only got a glimpse of insight into the students' work, processes and discussions. It will be interesting to do the project again with a new group of first-year students. By meeting new student groups, we continue to develop the project, listen and rethink. In our further development of the project we ask the following questions: instead of tailoring specific tasks to each group, perhaps next time we should create just one common task? And perhaps we should let the students themselves upload new material on Canvas in addition to what we have prepared?

Berio's *Folk Songs* was our source this time, but the project is not limited to one specific musical work. Perhaps next time we should create a project with another piece as a core? The selected piece of music must have some qualities that can be suitable starting points for discussion, but they do not need to be connected to one musical tradition or genre. We are playing around with the idea of creating a project on *La Folia*, a tune that has travelled across Europe for several hundred years. We imagine a new project, *Interplaying La Folia*, where the students and we can follow the tune (and dance) from its Portuguese and Spanish origins in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, via Archangelo Corelli's version in his *Violin sonata in D minor ('La folia')*, and then to Franz Liszt's version in his *Rhapsodie Espagnole* and Sergei Rachmaninov's *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*. From there we might turn our eyes and ears to certain Scandinavian traditions, with the jazz-pianist Jan Johansson's *Sinclairvisan*, inspired by Swedish folk tunes, and perhaps end our journey in Hornindal, a district in Western Norway where the tune bears the name *Eg gjekk meg ein gong over store myr* (I once crossed the marshes). If so, *Interplaying La Folia* will explore one single tune in different musical framings.

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