Performance Matters

The Participatory Creative Music Hub: Process Over Product

Louise Campbell and Terri Hron

Cite this article

Campbell, L. & Hron, T. (2023). The Participatory Creative Music Hub: Process Over Product. *Performance Matters*, *9*(1-2), 236–252. https://doi.org/10.7202/1102397ar

Article abstract

A community-based project, the Participatory Creative Music Hub (the Hub) was developed by the Canadian New Music Network (CNMN) to research, create, and distribute an online resource to inspire creativity in music and sound for all. In addition to inspiring people of many backgrounds to create their own music, the process of building and sharing the Hub has helped to develop a sense of community among diverse creative practitioners across Canada. In doing so, it has raised questions about both the aesthetic and social values of music. In recent years, on an organizational level, CNMN's focus and scope has transitioned from a primarily industry-focused network dedicated to building professional networks and opportunities to an outward-looking, knowledge- and resource-sharing network actively cultivating a more inclusive member base and connecting with other sectors. The Hub is one of the CNMN's recent initiatives that is working to redefine the place of music in Canadian society and shift ideas around who can and does make New Music across Canada, and where, how and why people make music. In this article, we propose that the Hub also performs socially engaged practice-based research that models an expanded imaginary for creative music and sound in contemporary Canadian society.

The Participatory Creative Music Hub: Process Over Product

Louise Campbell and Terri Hron

A community-based project, the Participatory Creative Music Hub (the Hub) was developed by the Canadian New Music Network (CNMN) to research, create, and distribute an online resource to inspire creativity in music and sound for all. In addition to inspiring people of many backgrounds to create their own music, the process of building and sharing the Hub helps develop a sense of community among diverse creative practitioners across Canada. In doing so, it has raised questions about both the aesthetic and social values of music. For us, it also questions the utility of the Eurocentric term *new music*, the standard nomenclature for contemporary art music (currently embedded in our organization's name). The Hub represents an expanded and inclusive conception of creative music and sound that encompasses diverse professional and nonprofessional practitioners. In this article, we propose that the Hub also performs socially engaged practice-based research (PBR) that models an expanded imaginary for creative music and sound in contemporary Canadian society.

Nomenclature is a thorny problem in music. Of course, all music is arguably "creative" and not all "new" music is "art" music. Furthermore, there has been "new" music in every era, as in the "ars nova" of fourteenth-century Europe (Nádas and Cuthbert 2009). By adopting the term *creative music and sound* we seek to capture a diverse range of practices and aesthetics by people who often (but not always) consider themselves to be artists, while avoiding the historical baggage of *new music*. The term *creative music* has previously been employed to denote both composed and improvised music that, among other things, "grapples with the unresolved musical issues of our time: polyphonic and poly-temporal rhythm, the movement of sound in space, the social context of performance, redefining or attacking the traditional parameters of music (form, melody, harmony, etc.) from moment to moment, the identity of musical instruments and so on" (DeLaurenti 2001). *Creative music and sound*, in our conception, is even more expansive, both because it recognizes the full breadth of sonic arts (including, for example, noise music, sound installations, and radio art) and because it privileges participation over innovation.

As an arts service organization, CNMN is considered a part of the Canadian arts sector, and more specifically the performing arts sector. In recent years, CNMN's focus and scope have transitioned from being a primarily industry-focused network dedicated to building professional opportunities toward being a knowledge- and resource-sharing network actively cultivating a more diverse member base and connecting with other sectors. The Hub is one of the CNMN's recent initiatives that aims to redefine the place of creative music and sound in Canadian society. By reaching out to people and organizations making creative music and sound in healthcare, social services, prisons, education, and community,[1] the Hub is actively working to shift ideas around who can and does participate and benefit from this practice across Canada, and where, how, and why this happens.

Louise Campbell's professional hats range from conductor to cultural mediator, community arts facilitator to musicians' health therapist. She is the project lead for the Canadian New Music Network's Participatory Creative Music Hub. **Terri Hron** is a musician, a performer, and a multimedia artist. Her work explores historical performance practice, field recording, invented ceramic instruments, and videoscores. She is executive director of the Canadian New Music Network.

Showcasing process over product, the central approach of the Hub, is one of the drivers of this work. Indeed, the Hub's primary mandate is to collect, archive, and share documentation of existing participatory creative music processes. We argue that fulfilling this mandate constitutes a form of PBR, only one outcome of which is a wide-ranging, searchable database grounded in the adaptable, thriving community of music and sound-makers across Canada. Our discussion details how this process, and its presentation to the CNMN board, members, and stakeholders has also sparked debates around terminology, aesthetics, and accepted practices, challenging individuals and organizations to examine how they think, how they operate, and who they serve. We begin by outlining the development of the CNMN and the "problem" of new music. After defining and contextualizing participatory creative music, we describe some of the key elements of the Hub and provide several resonant examples. Through a deeper discussion of one project—the Piece of Mind Collective—we demonstrate ways in which the Hub performs PBR. We conclude by returning to the ongoing impacts on CNMN.

Context

Founded in 2005, CNMN was initially focused on creating more visibility and opportunities for artists creating and performing new music—that is, contemporary classical concert music, a niche genre within Western art music. Unlike the visual and theatre arts, where Eurocentric ideals and values began to be challenged decades ago, Western art music has been slower to reflect on its own exclusivity and uniformity. Despite the growth of jazz, popular, and non-Western music traditions in the academy, Western art music is still the dominant type of music taught in music conservatories and university music programs in North America, and this has defined a narrow range of music *as* art. Perhaps this is in part because much of what defines music, and art music in particular, is specific to a tradition, including the instruments used, the kinds of venues where it is performed, the roles that have been set up for those who perform it or compose it, and the rituals of performance.

Furthermore, Eurocentric art music has, since the nineteenth century, been focused on the creation of singular, innovative musical works composed by individual composers. This commodification and ownership of musical ideas is encapsulated in our systems of copyright and creative capital (Goehr 1992). As CNMN makes efforts toward decoloniality, however, it has put many aspects of "new music" under scrutiny; the category itself is highly problematic indeed. In 2017, CNMN thus embarked on a mission to change the community's definition of new music, and in 2023 is undergoing a complete revision of our mandate and name. This turn has been influenced in no small part by a greater focus on *practices* of music and sound creation rather than musical *works*. As such, the organization has put greater effort in creating knowledge-sharing and community-building activities around the practices of its members, and in researching practices outside of contemporary classical concert music. Likewise, because we are committed to decoloniality and diversity, redefining the services CNMN offers seems appropriate and has led to greater investment in getting to know, and creating resources that address underserved and historically marginalized creative music and sound practitioners. Managed by project lead Louise Campbell and executive director Terri Hron, the Participatory Creative Music Hub is one of CNMN's multi-year projects that works toward redefining the organization and the field.

The Participatory Creative Music Hub

Funded by the Canada Council for the Arts from 2019 to the time of writing, the Hub is an online resource that aims to celebrate creativity in music and sound by and for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Hub aims to share resources and build connectivity among facilitators, participants, and newcomers to music making from a variety of backgrounds and fields. Projects come from diverse areas including education, healthcare, social services, prisons, and other community groups.

Users, including project facilitators and participants, can submit projects via an online form that is designed to accommodate a wide range of documentation, including text, images, audio and video files, and links. Users categorize their own projects to optimize find-ability through the Hub's search engine. Media release forms from the facilitator and participants are required for publication. To date, the majority of the published projects have been solicited by Campbell during community consultations and through two juried Open Calls in 2021 and 2022 where chosen projects were given a small amount of funding.

The Hub represents CNMN's long-standing interest in researching aspects of creative music and sound practice. For example, previous research projects included a survey about what material, educational, and practical circumstances bring people toward a career in creative music and sound. The Hub itself performs PBR in two important ways: (1) it showcases research into diverse participatory creative music and sound practices and their affects; and (2) by doing so, it raises fundamental questions about the status and value of creative music and sound in Canada.

Participatory Creative Music

Who is involved? How is it done? Where does it take place? What approaches or processes are used? What does it sound like? The answers to these questions are as variable as the projects taking place. As CNMN's Public Engagement committee puts it, Participatory Creative Music (PCM) is a "multitude of approaches to creating music in which everyone involved, regardless of their prior experience in making music, has active input in the creative process. Authorship and decision-making are shared to greater or lesser degrees, depending on context" (Canadian New Music Network 2020a).

PCM projects often have a facilitator and one to many participants. The extent to which participants contribute to the creative process varies from project to project. In some cases, the participants take full responsibility for the creative process and decision-making, with little to no differentiation between their role and the facilitator's role. In other cases, facilitators may lay out and direct the process, asking for specific contributions when appropriate from participants. Participants contribute to the extent that they wish and according to their abilities. The key features in PCM are participation and an expanded conception of who is perceived as an artist. As François Matarasso (2019) states, in PCM, "everyone involved in the artistic act is an artist" (49). If active participation in the creative process is key to PCM, how this participation occurs is equally important. According to Diane Conrad and Anita Sinner (2015): "The notion of process is at the heart of many of the practices represented; the stirring, mixing, evolving, and emergent nature of process is seen as central to the arts practices. Oftentimes, processes of creating together involve listening, seeing, attunement, and attentiveness, mindful attendance, or 'with-ness.' In these ways an ethics of relationship is at the heart of this arts research" (xvii-xviii).

PCM is a subset of Community Music, or music making by, for, and with a group of people or individuals, often with a focus on relationship building for the purposes of fostering community cohesion (Matarasso 2019, 88). Community choirs, orchestras, and bands rehearsing and performing preexisting music are examples of community music (e.g., a community choir singing arrangements of pop songs). These groups create community through music, some with members coming from a variety of backgrounds and others serving specific communities. Many are open to members with varying levels of experience or training in music. In the case of Community Music, the music being made may or may not be co-created by participants themselves. Where these groups follow a creative process in which the participants contribute to the creation of a work, event, or experience, this is considered Participatory Creative Music (e.g., a community choir creating their own mash-up of pop songs).

Process Over Product

An approach that values process over product emphasizes the creative process over outcomes. Whereas research and value in creative music and sound has often been associated with final works—products—by "professional" musicians, PCM focuses on process and the participants as the heart of the practice. Many processes are designed for and by participants. In general, the process is facilitated by an individual who may or may not consider themselves to be a professional artist. In contrast to the hierarchical relationships often found in Eurocentric traditions of music-making (e.g., a conductor who wields absolute authority and decision-making over an ensemble), roles in PCM are deliberately more egalitarian. If a facilitator identifies as a professional artist, this person's stance sets the tone for the group, project, and process. In their edited collection *Creating Together,* Conrad and Sinner (2015) state, "Participatory practice may be described as a disposition that is rooted in humility, conviction, trust and vulnerability on the part of the artist-collaborators and researchers. In these ways an ethics of relationship is at the heart of this arts research collected here—honouring relationships with others, with the land, with stories, and with the past" (xvii-xviii). This "ethics of relationship" is the cornerstone for building respect and trust with participants, regardless of whether the facilitator identifies as a professional artist or not. Participants are generally not expected to have training in music or the arts (although some can be quite experienced), and reactions to embarking on a creative process can be quite varied, sometimes bringing out strong emotions such as joy, pleasure, uncertainty, and even fear. Importantly, participants' engagement is not bound by professional artistic expectations. For example, timeframes can be much shorter or longer than professional rehearsal schedules, and the level of commitment from participants can be far greater or less than that of professionals, depending on context.

Taking note of these issues, a skilled facilitator takes care to foster a group dynamic in which mutual respect is paramount so that participants are willing and excited about contributing to the creative process. A process generally emerges out of, and responds to, participants' interactions and contributions and can radically shift throughout a project as a result. Ideas from participants can be surprising and frequently lead projects in unexpected directions. PCM welcomes participants' ideas and values the creative process that emerges in response to these ideas. Whether or not a final product is created is dependent on the facilitator and participants; it is generally considered an extension of the process and relationships built rather than the ultimate goal.

Development

Developing and building the Hub has itself been an evolving process. It was designed in response to extensive research into existing resources as well as community consultations with PCM facilitators.

Our research focused on understanding and evaluating online tools in Canada and internationally, with a focus on those that are free and open source, excluding those that are solely meant to sell products or services (see Appendix). The offerings across Canada in participatory arts and related areas are exciting and inspiring, particularly those available in the fields of community arts, such as ArtBridges, and visual arts, such as the Montreal Musée des Beaux Arts' Éducart. Some elements of participatory music are embedded within the projects on these sites. As of 2019, there were no online resources dedicated to PCM that featured and cross-referenced projects occurring across the arts and other sectors. Our research into existing resources defined what role the Hub could play and the needs that it could address, which then influenced the choices in design and functionality.

Beginning in summer 2019, Campbell conducted community consultations in the form of phone calls, Zoom calls and in-person meetings to help focus our knowledge of current practices and the needs of various sectors. We identified challenges such as access to appropriate resources and lack of visibility and recognition of PCM by stakeholders and the public. Many facilitators practise in isolation and respondents expressed a desire for inspiration and a place to connect with like-minded people. In addition, many expressed their reluctance to use an online resource that is too wide in scope, unsearchable, or not applicable to their needs. Such responses shaped our goals to create an inspiring, accessible, and searchable resource. Consultants in the health and education sectors requested specific functionality to address searchability: music therapists requested tagging by population (e.g., the elderly, those with memory issues, etc.), and schoolteachers requested tagging by grade and age.

Inevitably, the global coronavirus pandemic, declared in February 2020, affected our progress. Adjustments were made to accommodate changed realities, including postponement of consultation projects requiring in-person documentation, seeking projects with appropriate physical distancing, adopting flexible timelines, and collecting online "At-home activities for music creativity."

At almost the same time as the pandemic was declared, worldwide outrage erupted over systemic injustice and racism. This prompted a re-evaluation of how the Hub can support equity and anti-racism. Ongoing actions include assessment of Hub projects and activities for equity, diversity, and inclusion using Quebec's English Language Arts Network's (2019) Inclusion Plan as a guide and gathering online resources on equity and anti-racism for musicians in leadership and education for distribution on CNMN social media.

Following its launch on October 29, 2020, Campbell presented the Hub at a variety of conferences. Feedback was positive, and several changes suggested by attendees were subsequently implemented. For example, attendees at an online presentation at the Canadian Association of Music Therapists Conference in 2021 were enthusiastic about accessing content on, and submitting to, the Hub. They clearly stated that a tool such as the Hub has been needed in music therapy circles for quite some time. An attendee at this same conference requested search criteria for online facilitation. As a result, we added the search criterion "appropriate for online facilitation" to the search engine (Campbell 2021b). Discussions with partner organizations in music therapy, music care, education and arts organizations have also generated interest and enthusiasm in the Hub, resulting in interviews and guest blog posts (Campbell 2021a, 2021b, 2022).

Consultations with music therapists revealed that public-facing documentation is challenging in this field due to professional ethics concerning privacy of the therapist-client relationship. To encourage appropriate documentation that respects professional protocols, we chose a focus on health for the

second PCM Hub Open Call in 2021. Resulting projects made the Hub a more useful resource for facilitators working in the healthcare sector and provided examples of how future users can frame projects so that they respect professional ethics and privacy concerns while sharing successful processes and strategies.

Community consultations also made it clear that PCM activities occur very differently in the different sectors we wish to serve and reach. As a result, Sector Focus Resources are being created by relevant practitioners in response to issues and questions of practising PCM within those sectors. Creative Music in Education is the first of the resources to be completed. Co-directed by Campbell and schoolteacher Doug Friesen, the education resource profiles five Canadian music programs directed by schoolteachers, including Keshini Sananayake, Katherine Fraser and Nathan Gage, choir director Edmee Nataprawira, and private fiddle teacher Keitha Clark. The resource features video demonstrations of games, activities, lessons, and units as well as reflections by teachers and students. The focus questions for resources in healthcare, community groups, and prisons will likewise be designed and responded to by practitioners working in these sectors. The goal is that facilitators can use these resources to quickly orient themselves both to critical issues in their sector and to the Hub as a whole.

Processes

The Hub is designed to showcase process, and in this section, we describe a number of resonant examples. Consultants (project facilitators or organizers) have responded to this mandate in a variety of ways, depending on the forms of their projects and the needs of their participants. Some consultants have tended toward "how-to" instructional videos or text scores, in which games and activities are presented with precise instructions and a lot of room for play. For example, composer and percussionist Germaine Liu's Task-Based Games uses video and text to demonstrate sound games with various household objects. These games evolve over time according to verbal and physical cues given by players. The combination of instructional video and text score makes the rules of the game clear, while providing an audio-visual example of the game as it is being played by Liu and her participants.

Some consultants provided examples of multiple iterations of the same process with different participants and/or different results. In Preserving Language Through Music & Film, Julia Weder and Jiixa (Gladys Vandal) created multiple music videos following roughly the same process. Weder and Jiixa are "Siijuu Jaadas *Cool Ladies*, consisting of Haida Elder, weaver, and language teacher Jiixa (age 84), along with settler Julia (age 25)" (Weder and Jiixa 2022). Each video addresses a different topic, naturally bringing up vocabulary in the Haida language related to that topic. In Moi_Espace Public, musician Thais Montanari followed an identical process with several different women on the theme of their experiences of public space. This highly personal starting point led to very different creations based on the women's particular experiences of a variety of spaces such as a public park in a large urban centre, or a rural open-air market.

Other consultants emphasized a structural approach to setting up conditions for music-making in a certain sector. For example, rather than focusing on a music-making process, Building Meaningful Programming in Correctional Institutions features instructional videos with musician Hugh Chris Brown explaining how to gain access to prisons, and, once inside, create sustainable music programs for prisoners. Similarly, Opéra de Montréal's Prends garde à toi, After Bizet's Opera Carmen created "how-to" video guides for arts organizations on collaborating with community organizations. Using

their project with Espace Transition (CHU Saint-Justine) and La Gang à Rambrou as an example, the videos communicate the importance of long-term relationship-building and show how meaningful the project was for all involved: the participants with different intellectual abilities sharing their experiences through re-writing and performing *Carmen*, the opera singers with whom they shared the stage, and the audience members who attended the production.

Several projects combined multiple approaches. For example, Songs That Connect Us provides a downloadable instructional guide that addresses intercultural music-making, and a video that features testimonials and demonstrations of an online song-sharing and storytelling process. Facilitators from education frequently demonstrated process using a lesson plan format with accompanying handouts and video demonstrations. MariEve Lauzon and Michel Frigon also address assessment in their project Matter At Your Fingertips, in which elementary school students co-create graphic scores out of playdough and perform them by treating their chairs as joyful percussion instruments.

As mentioned, facilitators working in healthcare expressed concerns around client privacy. To protect the therapist-client relationship, some consultants provided written materials detailing process and examples of themselves demonstrating. Music therapist Ruth Eliason took this approach in The Beat of the Heart, a project in which she creates legacy recordings with palliative patients and their families by capturing and recording the patient's heartbeat and pairing it with their preferred song. In the event that documentation features clients, Hub projects are required to demonstrate proof of consent from all participants in the form of a media release form provided to CNMN. In addition to providing signed documentation confirming informed consent, music therapists are explicit about asking and receiving consent within the documentation they provide for viewing online. Music therapist Laura Gillis provides an example of this with Vintage Voices, a project in which residents of a long-term care centre, some of whom are experiencing varying stages of cognitive decline, DJ a publicly aired radio show.

Facilitators in prisons also expressed privacy issues in addition to concern for the safety of inmates and their families. The videos in Building Meaningful Programming in Correctional Institutions are narrated by musician-facilitator Brown, and do not feature inmates. The Pros & Cons Program featured in this project produces albums of music by inmates and guest professional musicians in which individual artists remain anonymous. Anonymity protects inmates' identity while providing a way for them to give back to society (proceeds of the albums are donated to the charitable organization of the inmates' choosing) and have their voices and stories heard beyond the walls of the prison.

Having described numerous projects that have a final product such as a performance or recording, it is important to state that most of the current Hub projects do not. Many are games and activities guiding an artistic process meant to be shared by the participants. Whether these processes are shaped into a final product is the choice of the facilitators and participants. But regardless of the format, feedback suggests that facilitating and participating in the PCM Hub is an impactful experience.

Effects on Participants and Facilitators

Participants and facilitators in PCM are wide-ranging in experience and background, from people who are making music for the first time to people for whom music-making is a daily activity. Of working in prisons, Brown notes that "when you go in there and you start playing music, you start to

meet other musicians. You also start to meet people who've always wanted to play music, or maybe people who are poets, writers. And all it takes is that first step of going in and engaging. You don't really have to worry much beyond there" (Brown 2020). Piece of Mind (which we discuss in more depth below) brought together people living with Parkinson's Disease (PD) or dementia, neuroscientists, and artists. At times, participants drew on their experience to occupy multiple roles. Lili Saint Laurent, a participant with PD, is an accomplished author whose poem *Sur le fil* formed the basis of her group's creative process. As Lili said:

> Ce poème revenait toujours dans ma tête et car il illustrait le propos. Du coup j'ai demandé à la fin d'une séance : "est-ce que je peux vous lire quelque chose?." Pour moi c'était plutôt un cadeau, quoi. . . Cela les a beaucoup touché et c'est revenu dans la discussion, puis il est devenu un fil conducteur et. . . il est resté. (Piece of Mind 2021d)

> (This poem kept coming up in my head because it illustrated the point. So, I asked at the end of a session, "Can I read you something?" For me it was more of a gift, you know. . . It really touched them, and it came back in the discussion, and then it became a through-line and. . . it stayed. [DeepL translation])

Several artists in Piece of Mind also have family members diagnosed with neurodegenerative diseases. For example, Louise Campbell drew on her grandmother's cognitive decline, during which she rehearsed her children's names repetitively. The science-art work *…sounds like static…* featured caregivers in Piece of Mind naming the people who are important to them and their loved ones, a concept that is touching and disturbing to many people in the project (Piece of Mind 2021a).

Indeed, many participants were deeply affected by these musical projects. As one person living with PD said of the experience of collaborating with a musician, "She started playing the violin, and at first I had a lot of tremors, but her music calmed me. . . . I managed to control my body." Of the discussion with the neuroscientist and an artist in their group, this person added, "You just described me as though you've known me for a long time" (Piece of Mind 2021b). Similarly, participants in Let's Reimagine, Challenging the Stigma of Dementia Through Collaborative Song-Writing expressed the importance of music in their lives. As one participant said, "I use music to chase away the brain fog on those days where I can't really think straight. . . . I do a lot of reimagining, especially on rough days, and it was great and a wonderful opportunity to do this" (Dupuis and Kontos 2022).

Community-based projects also tend to bring people together from a wide range of backgrounds, including Songs That Connect Us by RECAA (Ressources Ethnoculturelles Contre l'Abus envers les Aîné(e)s; Respecting Elders Communities against Abuse). With a mandate for inclusion, RECAA is "an organization of elders from Montreal's cultural communities who work across age, gender and ethnic lines to promote a culture of respect for elders from all our communities" (RECAA, n.d.). Through PCM, facilitator and choral director Dina Cindric led RECAA's community choir in a song-sharing process that led to intercultural and linguistic exchange. One participant responded during the sharing process, "I want to cry! It's so powerful!" Another said, "I feel like in my heart, I am rich. Because I know you and I know a lot of beautiful people, you know, and that really warms up my heart when I hear that song" (RECAA 2021). These types of sentiments are woven through much of the Hub project documentation, indicating the special place the arts and PCM have in many people's lives.

Facilitators' conviction and passion for the work is implicit in the ways in which they formulate and write about their projects. However, to date, documentation provided to the Hub has placed the focus on participants' experiences and feelings rather than those of the facilitators. Music Takes You Higher: Collaborative Song-Writing with People with Dementia is one of the few projects that addresses PCM from the facilitator's perspective. Public health researchers Pia Kontos, Sherry Dupuis and Christine Jonas-Simpson asked facilitators what collaborative music-making meant to them. One facilitator who identifies as a professional artist indicated a clear shift away from a Eurocentric "art-for-arts-sake" approach. In her words, "I quickly realized that that was the point, in a way, it was just to bring people together. I would arrive as myself where I was at as an empathetic human being and all of the members would meet me there with their individual life experiences and how they were feeling on the day. And we would engage with each other and the art that we would bring to the space." (Kontos, Dupuis, and Jonas-Simpson 2022). Further documentation and research into the experience of PCM facilitators is needed and would be a welcome addition to the Hub.

PCM as Creative Music

As the Hub homepage states, "The Hub showcases people from all walks of life creating music together. Whatever you call it—participatory creative music, community music, jamming, co-composition, improvisation, music exploration, listening games or having fun with sound—The Hub celebrates music creativity for everyone" (Canadian New Music Network 2020b). But what does this sound like? Leading the PCM Hub has pushed Campbell's definition of what constitutes creative music, making wider than it was before. Sometimes PCM may sound like it fits into prescribed genres such as pop music, musique actuelle, or soundscape, and it may follow familiar ways of making music through improvisation and composition. Other times, the music being made completely blows apart any ideas of genre and may use a process new to everyone in the room.

After years of researching and leading PCM, Campbell still has conversations with practitioners who claim that what they do is not "new music" (that is, contemporary classical art music), at times implying what they do is not "good enough," harkening back to Eurocentric notions of creativity, authorship, and virtuosity. For Campbell, the important thing is not so much what music is made as it is how it is made, what it means to the people making it, and the relationships that evolve between people throughout the process. The music comes out of that, and sounds as unique, personal, and interesting as each person involved.

One of the projects that challenged Campbell's conception of PCM is Vintage Voices, a project led by music therapist Laura Gillis in which residents of her long-term care facility host a radio show featuring their favourite music. If this project was evaluated according to the standard definition of creative music in which participants create all the musical material, Vintage Voices would not meet that criterion. In this case, the radio host curates music and hosts the radio show, frequently telling stories about the music they have chosen to feature, and the meaning it holds for them. Given that the radio hosts are experiencing varying levels of cognitive decline, a creative process that requires short- and long-term memory is not appropriate, or possible, for many participants. Hosting a radio show based on music of their own choosing provides an elegant way for people experiencing cognitive decline to participate in music creativity, within the constraints of their condition, and that brings them great joy. The creative element of this project is in the radio hosts' choices and the ways in which they present that music.

In Laura Gillis's words,

> As a Psychotherapist/Music Therapist working in the Long Term Care sector, I believe that creativity does not necessarily have to be generative, but can also be about the process of consuming and responding to art; this is critical to enabling individuals with complex health issues, such as those I work with in Long Term Care, to be able to contribute to the world of art and creativity. In my work in Long Term Care, I witness the negative effects of our society's ageism and ableism: Individuals living in Long Term Care, families, and healthcare providers often struggle to have a voice, to be noticed, valued, and to receive the support and recognition that is needed. The tone of Vintage Voices is light and fun, however it serves to amplify seldom-heard voices and to put a face (or rather a voice!) to individuals living in these settings, allowing them to show the value of life at every stage. (2022)

The question of what music is made is therefore tied up in who is making the music, why, how, and what it means to the people making it. A focus on participation and process, rather than genre, style, skill, creativity, originality, and so forth, might be construed as simply "community service": it is worthy but is it art? We contend that it is precisely in this moment of doubt that the Hub most effectively performs PBR because it turns our previous conceptions and constructs, aesthetics and attitudes on their ears and opens out new possibilities. To further underline this point, we turn now to a deeper engagement with a single project.

Performing PBR through the PCM Hub

PCM as PBR is exemplified by Piece of Mind, a collective that mobilizes the performing arts to synthesize and translate knowledge about neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease (PD) and dementia. Piece of Mind uses the performing arts to synthesize and translate knowledge about these conditions. The project frequently uses a round robin technique for creation, in which a person with PD or dementia speaks about a specific aspect of their experience which an artist then interprets, after which a neuroscientist provides scientific context. In the work documented here, multiple round-robin sessions were held on Zoom, providing ample video documentation that demonstrates the range of creativity that emerged from these sessions, and the connections that were formed among the participants.

The project was initiated by neuroscientist Naila Kuhlmann during her doctoral studies, when she realized that she had little to no contact with people living with the disease she was studying. Of her experience as a researcher prior to founding Piece of Mind, Kuhlmann states,

> J'avais beaucoup de connaissances au niveau moléculaire, mais pas de contexte de ce que c'est de vivre avec cette maladie. Je sentais que je n'étais pas seule là-dedans, qu'il y a beaucoup de chercheurs qui n'ont pas vraiment de contacts avec la communauté de parkinson et que ça empêche l'échange de connaissances. Non seulement ça empêche que les chercheurs partagent leur travail, mais ça empêche aussi qu'on ait des retours de la communauté et qu'on apprenne quelles sont les priorités des personnes vivant avec la maladie et quelles sont les connaissances de tous les jours que l'on pourrait utiliser dans notre recherche. (Ouatik 2021)

(I had a lot of knowledge at the molecular level, but no context of what it's like to live with this disease. I felt that I was not alone in this, there are a lot of researchers who don't really have contact with the Parkinson's community and this prevents knowledge sharing. Not only does it prevent researchers from sharing their work, but it also prevents us from getting feedback from the community and learning what the priorities of people living with the disease are and what everyday knowledge we could use in our research. [DeepL Translation])

Kuhlmann set out to address the source of the problem, which is not uncommon in her field: lack of contact, understanding and, at times, empathy between researchers and people living with the diseases they are researching. Kuhlmann outlines the project as follows:

Our participatory research-creation project brings together artists (circus performers, dancers, musicians, visual artists), researchers, individuals living with PD or dementia, and caregivers to co-create artistic works based on scientific research and lived experience. The overall goals are to:

1) facilitate knowledge creation and exchange between the seemingly disparate communities participating in the creative process and

2) create performances that can engage a wide audience on both an emotional and intellectual level, and spark meaningful conversations around PD and dementia.

We use an emergent and iterative process to identify the key themes and messages to communicate in our performances, and to ensure that multiple perspectives are incorporated along the way. Our research process has included numerous virtual workshops, facilitated discussions, and movement/music sessions to build relationships and explore both scientific and lived experience knowledge through creativity and embodiment. (Piece of Mind 2021d)

The resulting postdoctoral research-creation project involved two focus groups on the subjects of PD and dementia. Extensive collaborations between members of these focus groups resulted in seven art-science videos, eleven making-of vignettes, and two full-length shows distributed online and in-person (totaling over 3,500 views on YouTube as of this writing).

Kuhlmann writes,

Piece of Mind highlighted how a participatory, interdisciplinary approach can support the co-production of knowledge between diverse stakeholders, particularly in the unexpected ways that research and practice inform one another. Neuroscientific findings served as the initial source material for artistic exploration; in turn, the resulting art-science videos enabled an openness to interpretation that prompted not only further ideas for creation, but also thoughtful reflections on scientific research. Participatory arts created common ground between participants with different knowledge bases and experiences, allowing for the lived experience of

illness to be approached from an angle not typically employed in health research. Indeed, several participants with PD noted that the performers posed questions that doctors had never thought to ask them, despite the resulting information being equally pertinent in a clinical context. (Kuhlmann, personal communication with Campbell, March 9, 2023)

One of the PD subgroups comprising Anne McIsaac, a woman diagnosed with PD, neuroscientists Anusha Kamesh and Claire Honda, and musician Louise Campbell, discussed the influences and intersections of lived experience, scientific knowledge, and art extensively, and the impact the research-creation project had on each of them and their practices, whether scientific or artistic. Their process was centred around how Parkinson's disease shapes one's perception of time, and how this perception is shaped and controlled by medication. McIsaac began by describing an aspect of her sense of time. Campbell invited McIsaac to communicate her experience of time through conducting improvised music played by herself, Kamesh, and Honda, who are accomplished musicians in addition to being neuroscientists. After the conducted improvisation, Kamesh and Honda provided feedback on McIssac's own reflections on the experience based on their scientific knowledge of PD and the effects of medication on perception of time (Piece of Mind 2021c). McIsaac's response to the experience was instantaneous. In her words, "It was incredible—it was as though my brain was singing. It was really, really beautiful" (Piece of Mind 2021c). This process was repeated in five one-hour sessions over the course of five weeks, each based on an element of McIsaac's experience of time.

From the point of view of a researcher, neuroscientist Anusha Kamesh attributes participating in this project, and particularly improvising music while being conducted by McIsaac as key to deepening her understanding of PD. Kamesh states:

> Je cherche maintenant des occasions d'intégrer le côté humain des choses à ma recherche et ça a changé ma façon de communiquer la science. La motivation derrière mon projet de recherche est aussi devenue plus forte. Je veux rester en contact avec Anne, car elle m'inspire et j'ai tant appris d'elle. Je me sentirais un peu vide si je n'avais plus de liens avec la communauté de cette façon. (Ouatik 2021)

> (I now look for opportunities to incorporate the human side of things into my research and it has changed the way I communicate science. The motivation behind my research project has also become stronger. I want to stay in touch with Anne because she inspires me and I have learned so much from her. I would feel a bit empty if I didn't have a connection to the community in this way. [DeepL Translation])

Grounding the musical process in McIsaac's lived experience as a person with PD and Kamesh's and Honda's scientific knowledge directly influenced the music being made. As Campbell states, "The music that came out as a result was absolutely informed by [Anne's] experience. It would never have existed otherwise" (Piece of Mind 2021c).

In turn, McIsaac hopes that the collaborative process and the resulting art-science videos, vignettes, and performances will continue to have an impact on the scientific community and the way that research into PD is conducted. As she notes:

Je l'ai faite dans l'espoir que les gens regardent ce film-là et à la fin se disent "ah, je comprends un peu mieux comment les gens avec le Parkinson, comment ils se sentent, parce que ça s'explique pas en mots comment on sent dans nos corps. Je pense qu'on a réussi avec le mouvement, avec ce qu'on a fait avec la musique, avec le 'conducting." Anusha, Claire, puis Louise, quand elles l'ont fait, elles on eu comme une illumination. Surtout Anusha, c'était intéressant parce que Anusha fait de la recherche sur le Parkinson dans la boîte noire. Elle avait dit qu'elle avez augmenté sa compréhension d'une coche importante de ce que ça pouvait être, le Parkinson. Je me dis, ça. . . ça va peut-être mener à des nouvelles avenues de recherche. Si on s'en allait par là, et la compréhension dit "woah," c'est peut-être quelque chose d'autre dont on a jamais pensé. (Piece of Mind 2021c)

(I did this in the hope that people would watch this film and at the end of it say "ah, I understand how people with Parkinson's, how they feel, a little bit better" because how we feel in our bodies can't be explained in words. I think we succeeded with movement, with what we did with the music, with the conducting. Anusha, Claire, and Louise, when they [followed my conducting], they had an insight. Especially Anusha, it was interesting because Anusha is doing research on Parkinson's in the black box [of the laboratory]. She said that her understanding of what Parkinson's might be increased by a significant amount. I'm thinking, this. . . this may lead to new avenues of research. If we move in that direction, and the understanding says "wow," maybe it's something else we never thought of. [DeepL translation])

McIsaac's hopes were echoed by other project participants living with PD. The experience also opened up new possibilities for the other researchers and participants in the project. This small example demonstrates how PCM as PBR can potentially challenge and change standard methods of research in scientific fields as well as the art that comes out of following such a process by encouraging a better understanding and communication of people's lived experiences. PCM projects like Piece of Mind have, in turn, encouraged CNMN to broaden its mandate and membership.

Making Change

In gathering and presenting a wide range of participatory creative music projects and inviting practitioners to submit their community collaborations, the PCM Hub is effectively redefining the boundaries of the practice and the range of people involved. To be sure, CNMN spent some time developing its definition of participatory creative music to explain the practice and invite facilitators and practitioners to identify their work as such, and to differentiate the Hub from adjacent tools and resources. In our view, however, the projects that make up the Hub collectively perform PBR, first, by yielding powerful insights about the diverse themes explored in the projects and, second, by upsetting the entrenched attitudes and aesthetics traditionally constituted by "new music."

As an increasing number of projects are catalogued, we also begin to see how many people are effectively creating music across a wide range of experience. For CNMN, the focal point of participatory creative music is that participants share in the creation, regardless of their prior abilities or knowledge. This works to decentre the value historically placed on individual creators in many Western art music. It also pushes up against notions of professionalism in the production of art that is deemed valuable. Highlighting the wealth and scope of participatory creative practices challenges

and expands definitions of what creative music and sound is and can be and who we can call an artist. This questioning of basic categories used in determining value and merit is part of a larger social reckoning of historically Eurocentric definitions in the present moment as we move toward decoloniality, pluralism and greater equity. The Hub provides exciting models for collaborative, co-creative and inclusive interventions in both art and the social that are instructive for the broader aims of the arts sector in Canada. It is also radically affecting our own organizational mandate and structure.

In parallel to the sector-wide questioning of the legacy of colonialism, CNMN continues its mission to represent as wide an interest group as possible within creative music and sound. Recent efforts to increase pluralism in our contributors, presenters, and membership have shown that language is not enough. We understand pluralism as a positive attitude toward diversity, where different cultural and social backgrounds are considered and encouraged to be in positive engagement and respectful relationship, as encouraged by the Pluralism and Organizational Change Through Inclusive Equity Education in the Arts training that CNMN followed, given by the Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario (CPAMO). In its Reopening Retreat in May 2022, CNMN's board of directors decided to embark on a questioning, with the help of its membership, of the suitability of "New Music" in the organization's name. This speaks to an acknowledgement that new music is often considered a genre within Western art music, which has been historically coded as white and Eurocentric. Consensus among the board was that the term no longer represents the goals and aspirations of the organization in its recent efforts with regard to pluralism and greater access. Hron has addressed some of these concerns in a recent article (2021). The PCM Hub also represents CNMN's commitment to creating resources for knowledge sharing where it might not yet exist and to establishing networks among nodes that are as yet unconnected. At the time of writing, both CNMN and the Hub continue to evolve, so that our PBR into arts and structural change is very much a work in progress.

Conclusion

The PCM Hub project offered CNMN a chance to expand its reach outside of performative and presentation-based music- and sound-making into communities of practice that had previously not been represented in its membership and service. This opportunity allowed CNMN to work toward redefining what services it provides the creative music and sound community in its role as an arts service organization. Furthermore, in performing this research around current participatory practices, CNMN expanded the communities that it serves. The design and goals of the Hub emerged from research with the facilitators practising participatory creative music and sound that demonstrated the need for a searchable resource that can cross-reference the activities and focus of practitioners. In that sense, CNMN is engaged in both building a network of existing networks by sector as well as connecting practitioners within and across these sectors that may not yet know of each other's work. And while CNMN, and in particular project lead Campbell, has been helping practitioners provide documentation and resources that can usefully be tagged for searchability, the PCM Hub is not creating new content. Rather, it is a tool for showcasing the wealth of activity that is already happening throughout Canadian society, offering enormous benefits to healing, community-building and connection, improving the lives of many in very direct ways. This is part of a larger ethos of valuing creative practice not only as an aesthetic and inspiring pursuit for professionals, but also as a functional, world-building activity in which everyone can participate and potentially reap benefit. This showcasing and appreciation of facilitators underlines CNMN's

increasing commitment to supporting relational and collective art-making, and to making concrete gestures toward decoloniality.

Until now, submissions to the Hub have largely been based on solicitation through personal invitation and remunerated calls for projects. An important piece of the puzzle for the continued sustainability and impact of this resource is figuring out how to either make the PCM Hub visible and useful enough to facilitators so that they spontaneously submit their work or to secure funding to continue the supported archiving work that we have been doing. At present, we are pursuing both possibilities. The latter option requires convincing funding bodies that facilitators involved in participatory creative music and sound do not have adequate resources to participate in archival work unsupported, but that there are nevertheless great benefits in creating those resources and that it is our role as an arts service organization to provide such support. In funding structures where art practices are often evaluated on audience numbers or some degree of commercial success, practices that are not meant for public consumption other than that of the participants themselves, and that do not result in any product other than the increased well-being of those involved, do not necessarily score highly. The PCM Hub and the enthusiasm of those who have been consulted about its usefulness and benefit is therefore a useful example for advocacy toward changing policies about what constitutes valuable art making and who should be supported in its creation.

Appendix: Resources for Participatory Creative Music

A number of music organizations have learning modules that include participatory elements:
- Music Alive, National Arts Centre
- Educational Kits, Société de la musique contemporaine du Québec (SMCQ)
- Soundmakers, Soundstreams
- The Music Room, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra
- Pedagogical Guides, Orchestre symphonique de Montréal

Some organizations have developed sections for online resource sharing and/or mapping projects aimed at connecting interested parties:
- Canada's Map of Arts And Learning, Canadian Network of Arts and Learning
- Mapping Arts & Health Across Canada, Arts Health Network

Other organizations have developed sections for online resource sharing and professional development:
- MusicCare, Room 217
- Resources, Culture pour tous
- Ressources, Observatoire des médiations culturelle

Unusually, the Opéra de Montréal has developed resources *for* cultural mediators:
- Guides pour artistes-médiateurs

The Alliance for Canadian New Music Project site provides a listing of existing compositions for young musicians:
- Syllabus, Alliance for Canadian New Music Project (ACNMP)

A number of university research projects are dedicated to specific participatory music practices such as:

- [Improvisation Tool Kit](#), Improvisation, Community and Social Practice (ICASP)
- [Pedagogical Material](#), Music Engagement In and Out of School Contexts (Université Laval)

A number of individual practitioners publish blogs on PCM, including:

- [Creative Music Ed](#), Doug Friesen
- [Making Music with Anyone](#), Louise Campbell

Internationally, [Pass the Sound](#) features multilingual instructional videos with subtitles by facilitators from across Europe. Britain has an extensive history in and institutional support for Community Music, resulting in quite impressive resources. Among other organizations based in Britain, Culture Days' [Get Creative](#) is very active and engaging in terms of online content, with a focus on participant storytelling. Contemporary Music for All, [CoMa](#), features an online score listing for all abilities of through-composed scores as well as some process-based pieces. Huddersfield's [Go Compose](#) features works by amateur musicians.

Note

1. By *community*, we mean both community organizations and groups of people who self-identify as belonging to each other, for whatever reason. The term is vague, in large part because the structures that support community are often trickier to find and access than those involved in healthcare, social services, prisons, and education.

References

Brown, Hugh Chris. 2020. "Building Meaningful Programming in Correctional Institutions." Canadian New Music Network. Accessed July 20, 2022. https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/projects/pros-and-cons-building-meaningful-programming-in-correctional-institutions/.

Campbell, Louise. 2021a. "Look, Ma, No Gear! Strategies For Music Creativity That Fit On A Cart." *LEARN* (blog). December 1, 2021. https://blogs.learnquebec.ca/2021/12/look-ma-no-gear-strategies-for-music-creativity-that-fit-on-a-cart/.

———. 2021b. "The Participatory Creative Music Hub: An Online Resource for Inspiration and Visibility." Poster presented at the Canadian Association of Music Therapists Online Conference, May 29, 2021.

———. 2022. "Episode 29." Interview by Barbara Pritchard and Norman Adams on *New Musings on New Music*, April 1, 2022, audio.

Canadian New Music Network. 2020a. "Keyword Definitions." Canadian New Music Network Accessed April 26, 2021. https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/pcm-hub/tips-tools/keyword-definitions/.

———. 2020b. "PCM Hub." Canadian New Music Network. Accessed July 20, 2022. https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/pcm-hub/.

Conrad, Diane, and Anita Sinner. 2015. "Introduction." In *Creating Together: Participatory, Community-Based, and Collaborative Arts Practices and Scholarship across Canada*, edited by Diane Conrad and Anita Sinner, xiii-xxiv. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

DeLaurenti, Christopher. 2001. "What Is Creative Music?" In *The Transbay Creative Music Calendar*, April 2001. http://www.transbaycalendar.org/archive/TB_2001_04.pdf.

Dupuis, Sophie, and Pia Kontos. 2022. "Let's Reimagine Challenging the Stigma of Demntia through Collaborative Song Writing." Canadian New Music Network. Accessed July 20, 2022. https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/projects/lets-reimagine-challenging-the-stigma-of-dementia-through-collaborative-song-writing/.

English Language Arts Network. 2019. "ELAN Inclusion Plan May 2019." English Language Arts Network. Accessed July 2, 2022. https://www.quebec-elan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ELAN-Inclusion-Plan-May-2019.pdf.

Gillis, Laura. 2022. "Vintage Voices." Canadian New Music Network. Accessed July 20, 2022. https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/projects/vintage-voices/.

Goehr, Lydia. 1992. *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hron, Terri. 2021. "Questionner ces 'musiques nouvelles': Compte rendu de deux projets vers la décolonialité." *Circuit: Musiques contemporaines* 31 (3): 101–105. https://doi.org/10.7202/1085817ar.

Kontos, Pia, Sherry Dupuis, and Christine Jonas-Simpson. 2022. "Music Takes You Higher: Collaborative Song-Writing with People Living with Dementia." Canadian New Music Network. Accessed July 20, 2022. https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/projects/music-takes-you-higher-collaborative-song-writing-with-people-living-with-dementia/.

Matarasso, François. 2019. *A Restless Art: How Participation Won and Why It Matters*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. https://arestlessart.com/.

Nádas, John Louis, and Michael Scott Cuthbert. 2009. *Ars Nova: French and Italian Music in the Fourteenth Century*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.

Ouatik, Bouchra. 2021. "Les arts de la scène pour mieux comprendre les maladies neuro-dégénératives." Radio-Canada. Accessed August 19, 2022. https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1825092/arts-scene-maladies-neurodegeneratives-parkinson-alzheimer-spectacle-piece-of-mind.

Piece of Mind Collective. 2021a. "Art-Sci Collab—Dementia—'...sounds like static....'" Uploaded February 18, 2021. YouTube video, 3:54. https://youtu.be/RjeyjCESlug.

———. 2021b. "Connecting Scientific Research and Lived Experience through Music." Canadian New Music Network. Accessed July 20, 2022. https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/projects/piece-of-mind-connecting-scientific-research-and-lived-experience-through-music/.

———. 2021c. "Piece of Mind Vignettes: Parkinson—Musical Diaries." Uploaded October 6, 2021. YouTube video, 7:45. https://youtu.be/XF6kyoA4BCM.

———. 2021d. "Understanding and Communicating Parkinsons Disease through Music and Poetry." Canadian New Music Network. Accessed August 19, 2022. https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/projects/piece-of-mind-understanding-and-communicating-parkinsons-disease-through-music-and-poetry/.

RECAA. 2021. "Songs That Connect Us." Uploaded March 16, 2021. YouTube video, 7:08. https://youtu.be/bdvDPe5MviA.

———. n.d. "About Us." Accessed August 19, 2022. https://recaa.ca/about-us/.

Room 217. 2021. "Supporting Voices: Strategies for Encouraging Singing and Self-Expression." *Music Care* (blog). May 19, 2021. https://www.musiccare.org/music-care-blog/1146-supporting-voices-strategies-encouraging-singing-self-expression.

Weder, Julia and Jiixa (Gladys Vandal). 2022. "Preserving Language through Music and Film." Canadian New Music Network. Accessed August 19, 2022. https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/projects/preserving-language-through-music-and-film/.