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# ***Stories and the life cabaret – Dwelling and becoming in music: Creation of a multi-art dance performance among people over 65***

## **ABSTRACT**

*The aim of the study was to describe and analyse what aspects of musical learning constitute the process of developing a collective artistic performance among twenty amateur dancers over 65 years old. In focus is how the musical learning proceeds throughout the project, where a series of workshops, consisting of training, choreography and improvisation, leads towards a common performance built on the participants' life stories. The study takes Heidegger's existential phenomenology as a starting point. Workshops, rehearsals and performances were observed, and video recorded regularly for one year. A sample of the participants was also interviewed. Generated material was analysed in a hermeneutic phenomenological manner. The results imply that the elderly people become themselves through*

## **KEYWORDS**

elderly  
dance  
music education  
life story  
narrative  
Heidegger

*movement in different musical situations. Crucial factors seem to be how they get to use themselves, each other, their bodies, their stories, their personal artistic forms of expressions and their imaginations, in interplay with music.*

## INTRODUCTION

Söderman and Westvall (2017) emphasize the current Swedish society's focus and preference for elderly generations to be active in order to experience benefits from physical, intellectual and emotional activities. This article concerns how participating in contemporary dance as an aesthetic form of expression can offer elderly people musical learning. Musical learning is here viewed as consisting of acoustic, structural, tensional, bodily, emotional and existential dimensions (Nielsen 1987). Hence, both essential or content-focused learning and existential, or 'being and becoming' focused learning, are at play in intended music-related activities among elderly people. Musical learning among elderly has mainly been studied within the area of adult education or community music (Camic et al. 2014). Tullikki Laes' (2015) investigation among elderly women in a rock band shows an example of how essential, as well as existential, musical learning develops in community togetherness. It becomes obvious that musical agency is based on previous experiences, re-constructed through participating in the community music activities, and gives the elderly power to change their futures. That dance can function as a path into musical activities and learning is shown in a study of elderly participants of a Finnish association in Sweden, which at the same time contributes to social benefits and higher quality of life (Söderman and Westvall 2017). Well-being is a strong area of interest in community (Hallam et al. 2013, 2014, 2016) and dance community research (Camic et al. 2014), as well as creativity (Higgins 2007). In the community context, both participants and facilitators are parts of the creative process, where they give and take from each other (Barr 2013; Hartogh 2016), independent of skills or prerequisites (Green 2000). Findings show that individual thoughts, values and life experiences are shared and developed in relation to other people in the community and that own, as well as common, identities are formed (In-Sil et al. 2015; Lee et al. 2010; Pearce and Lillyman 2015; Phinney et al. 2014). Examining experiences from participants' perspectives seems warranted (Thornberg et al. 2012).

Besides well-being, the function of music and dance, as helpful factors when it comes to the treatment of and therapy for weaknesses among elderly, has been studied. Findings show that sleeping problems, depression or bodily impairment can be treated through music and dance activities (Merom 2016; Moon et al. 2011; Shum et al. 2014). Valliancourt (2012) states that music therapy can contribute to social justice, but medical problems can be overcome or eased by music therapy, such as dementia (Chan 2004; Skingley and Vella-Burrows 2010; Tuckett et al. 2015). The study presented in this article aims to cover a part of that gap. The current study places such medical effects in the background and instead focuses upon holistic musical learning among elderly.

UNESCO (2014) declares that one of its millennium goals is to further encourage practices and activities that make all human beings better equipped to 'actively participate and communicate with the world in a spirit of compassion and sharing' (2014: 27). Hence, it is possible to state that all citizens, including elderly people, should have the right to learn and use artistic forms

of expression and should be guaranteed cultural access. However, societal structures within UNESCO countries are not commonly honouring elderly people's right to express themselves in dance (Ferm Almqvist and Andersson 2020). Therefore, it seems important to focus on artistic dimensions of music and dance as forms of expression available for elderly people from an equality point of view, as well as to study further the role of the teacher, facilitator or choreographer in such settings.

Based on earlier studies of participation in dance workshops for elderly people, we found that organized aesthetic communication offered participants possibilities to develop physically, emotionally and existentially (Ferm Almqvist and Andersson 2018; Andersson and Ferm Almqvist 2020; Ferm Almqvist and Andersson forthcoming 2020). These results showed, in part, how the choreographer influenced possibilities for participation in terms of: how workshops were *designed* and what *inputs* were given in the process, what *atmosphere* that was created, how participants should use their *bodies* and how *dance as an artistic form of expression* was offered. Another part of the study, based on field notes and video recordings, showed that internalizing dance among elderly people accentuated four inter-related levels of activity viewed from an Arendtian (1958) perspective, namely: (1) a functional body with impetus to move, (2) to embody dance as a form of expression, (3) to use dance in aesthetic communication and (4) reflections over life, body and dance.

The study presented in this article takes the processual nature of Heidegger's (1976) philosophy as a starting point to develop an understanding for the processes of (musical) thinking, acting and learning that took place throughout one year in a project where twenty amateur dancers developed an artistic performance based on their life stories – *Stories*, led by a professional choreographer. The interest was the developing process of a common artistic life story among the elderly dancers and how holistic musical learning took place during that process. Hence, acoustic, structural, tensional, bodily, emotional as well as existential dimensions of musical knowledge were of interest.



Figure 1: *Snake pit.*

## ***Aim and research questions***

The aim of the study is to describe how musical learning among elderly proceeds throughout a contemporary dance project, where a series of workshops, consisting of training, choreography and improvisation, leads towards a performance built on the participants' life stories. The following research questions were formulated:

1. How are life stories and imagination used and expressed in the process of aesthetic communication?
2. How are bodily movements used and developed in organized musical situations?
3. How does the choreographer offer and demand development regarding emotional, existential and physical dimensions of dance in the musical room?

## **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL STARTING POINTS**

This project continued the development of the earlier dance workshops mentioned above, which were arts-based researches by a choreographer, a professional photographer and two researchers working together (Andersson and Ferm Almqvist 2020; Ferm Almqvist and Andersson 2019). One of the researchers, me, as well as the photographer, followed the development towards the performance *Stories*, which made it possible to continue the collaborative work with the photographer. Consequently, interviews as well as observations were designed, conducted and discussed between researcher and artist, which in turn offered access to the phenomenon in a multi-faceted way (Barone and Eisner 2012). To come close to the lifeworlds of the participants (Merleau-Ponty 1999; Bengtsson 1998), sixteen women and four men, aged between 65 and 85 participated, were observed and filmed during contemporary dance workshops (including rehearsals and performances). The data collection took place between May 2017 and May 2018. Fifteen hours of the workshops and rehearsals were recorded, partly by the photographer and partly by me, in May 2017, November 2017 and May 2018. In addition, I took field notes to complete the recordings. Seven participants were interviewed by the photographer, with whom I had discussed and formulated relevant questions, based on earlier common studies (Andersson and Ferm Almqvist forthcoming 2020; Ferm Almqvist and Andersson 2019). The areas covered in the interview guide were: reasons to participate, experiences of participating, being and becoming in the dance activities and physical and emotional reactions connected to age.

To be able to describe and analyse the complex phenomenon *musical learning among elderly in contemporary dance situations*, the generated material was analysed in a hermeneutic phenomenological manner (van Manen 1997). In the first phase of analysis of the transcribed material, different aspects of the creative process became visible: togetherness, inclusion, responsiveness, professional, potentials and artistic. This first phase resulted in excerpts that in the second phase were sorted in relation to the aspect headings and further, in the third phase, varied and condensed in a phenomenological manner. The analysis resulted in a description of the constitution of the developing process where musical learning takes place. Crucial parts of the constitution showed to be: *room, bodies, stories, forms of expressions, images, continual dialogue* and

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*atmosphere*. The themes were then further developed and analysed based on narrative commonplaces as sociality, temporality and place (Clandinin et al. 2007). It became clear that content in one of the participant's (David's) interview material represented the themes and could be used to create a representative narrative. Such a narrative strives to communicate the results in a sensitive situated way (de Beauvoir 1948), which in turn aims to offer the reader a possibility to understand the dancers' experiences from 'within' (Ferm Almquist 2019). The excerpts from the interview were adjusted to fit the narrative format, where sociality, temporality and place were taken into consideration and translated from Swedish into English. In the process of creating the narrative, I was open to establish contact with the material and the lived experiences of the dancers and by that contact create new insights regarding musical learning in the multi-art dance process (van Manen 2002). It should be underlined that the intention was to offer interpretative availability, acknowledging that no interpretation is ever complete and no explanation is ever final. Phenomenological text should never be read merely for its surface message. The attempt is that the reader should start to think and that the experiences of the analysed experiences of the dancers, in the narrative shape can contribute to that with the help of David's voice (van Manen, 2002).

Hence, the results are first presented through the story of one participant, as one path through the creative process, to give general access to the individual-group development of holistic musical knowledge in the dance activities, together with one excerpt from the video material showing how David's drumming was used as a starting point for common improvisation. In the end, that result is summarized and the themes more thoroughly presented. The concepts of *dwelling* and *thinking* have been central in further understanding of the narrative about *Stories*. Dwelling can best be characterized as 'improvisation', including the definition of fabricating, what is conveniently at hand, as well as to cultivate, to discover and express at the same time. Dwelling 'transforms the space in which one dwells' (Benson 2003: 32). In musical situations, that are seen as dwelling, performers, choreographer and audience work together with 'the given' to create something new. The process of training, rehearsals and performance is seen as a space (the dance studio and the scene) for dwelling and aesthetic communication as an expression of thinking. The location, the music and the activities create a space where dwelling is possible, where choreographer, assistant, dancers (that also act as musicians, painters, poets and photographers), audience (and may be photographers and researcher) think together. Dwelling implies a process of time (in this case spread out over one year) and a process of thinking. In these terms, all included enact a *weltanschauung*. Heidegger (1976) provides a horizon of thought that overcomes the concept of representation towards the act of doing and the idea of process and being. When the act of doing progresses, the act of cognitive thinking, as in aesthetic communication, the ontology of the dancer, her concealment, her being and becoming are accentuated.

Un-concealment is in this setting viewed as an expansion of time and space beyond human beings' metrological and chronological perception. Hence, such a situation is possible to define as a surplus of being, an expansion of the ability to be, which makes human beings get away from daily utilitarian understanding of reality. 'It gives a rise to a surge in perception that opens up for senses and mind to a different listening to what occurs on the stage, and from there, within and between the gathered community of actors and spectators' (Vittori 2013: 6). Such ontic surplus is therefore defined as an

event of communal dwelling: an ethical occasion to *inter-esse*, instead of an occasion to detect what is 'inter-esting' in the plot (Heidegger 1976). Such ontic un-concealment occurs when an event is able to 'gather' in its occurrence 'the right things' and when its actors 'indicate' towards 'the most thought provoking' to use Heidegger's terminology.

The twenty dancers met, as I mentioned, in May 2017 and were encouraged to bring a story from their lives, which engaged them in one way or another. Seventeen of them had been participating in the mentioned workshop series ten months earlier. The workshops – consisting of warming up, choreography and improvisation – included lots of play and games based for example on poetry and roleplay in relation to different kinds of music, where the music and not least the stories of the participants played crucial roles. The choreographer had in mind to create a performance, in burlesque spirit, to celebrate a Swedish artist that recently passed away, Richard Wolf.

As an example of how the participants' individual artistic expressions and life stories were used in the construction of the performance *Stories* where musical experiences were offered, we will take part of a session where David tells the story from his life, which he chose to work with in the process. David had slight experience of liberation dance from before, he was new in the group and participated in the project together with his wife. David's artistic expression was the drum, which he was encouraged to use in his story. Below a transcription is shared, which presents one of the attempts to perform his story. The dancers were expected to perform his story with their bodies, in relation to the drumming. Together the drumming and dancing express David's story about why he stopped playing the drums when he was a little boy. After that the narrative based on David's interview material follows.

## PERFORMING DAVID'S STORY REHEARSAL

*The participants are spread out on the floor in the dance studio, and David sits on a chair with his drum, see Figure 2. The dancers improvise with circle movements and follow or make contrasts to David's drumming and telling of a story from his life. In other words, the dancers are in the process of performing David's story, regarding how he lost his interest of drumming. Charlotta isn't really satisfied with the dancers' ways of using their bodies in relation to the drumming and stops the session.*

*C: We try it one more time.*

*David starts again and drums loosely on his drum. He starts to turn the drum side to side, to let the material within the drum hit the skin from inside. After a while he began to tell his story in English.*

*D: Östersund, 1957, a small town in the North of Sweden. Fifty thousand inhabitants, I am eight years old and I drum on everything. I love to drum, and I tap on everything, that I can get my hands on.*

*He starts to drum again. The participants follow his rhythms and improvise movements, some pretends that they are drumming, other improvise more freely with their bodies.*

*D: My parents are going crazy with my drumming. I drum on books, I drum on window shelves. I drum on everything. [tap the drum slightly]. Finally, I am going to have my first drum lesson, I am totally alone in a large hall, with a drum set in front of me. The teacher hasn't arrived, the moment has come when I will learn to play the drums. I pick the sticks, I try to hit the drums a few times. He plays hesitantly at his drum. The participants follow.*



Figure 2: David's drumming and storytelling.

*D: The sound echoes, out in the huge hall. And I feel more alone than ever. We just arrived in Sweden, and I am already so lost and lonely, I don't speak the language. He starts to drum more intensively. The dancers follow and improvise more intense. They try to illustrate the feelings of David. After a while he plays more slowly, and weakly, and finally he puts his drumstick carefully on the floor. The dancers stop dancing and stay in their positions.*

*D: I panic, and get out, and never come back.*

*David starts to play with his hands on the drum and dance improvisation follow.*

What the film transcription shows is how the choreographer takes care of David's story and his drum and lets the other participants into dwelling. They perform the story with their bodies, and listen, they discover and express themselves in relation to the music, at the same time as the music is created in relation to their movements and performing of the story. In the following text, I share David's own story, the narrative, about taking part in the developing process towards the multi-artistic performance *Stories*.

## DAVID'S STORY ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN THE DEVELOPING OF *STORIES* – THE NARRATIVE

I wanted to be a part of the project, as it seemed to be so totally new-thinking and creative, the whole concept, to work with elderly in this way, and give older human beings' bodies a space to move in and to take it seriously and work with that in the form of dance.

It really is a large and strong experience. In a short time. To grow together with a group of people that you didn't know before, that you don't know anything about actually. But to whom that I have got a very strong togetherness, friendship, and even love, when we share this experience.

For me as an only child, it has taken time. I experienced being 'excluded' in the beginning, but now I have a strong feeling of togetherness. I have gone into it open-ended. My greatest barriers have been my shyness and body-awareness, I have worked through that, with a great support from Charlotta, the choreographer. I went in with high expectations, and they have become fulfilled.

I have felt included, participating. I have felt togetherness. The natural barriers between people have broken down. I feel strengthened, both physically and psychologically. To function in a group, that has been important, for an only child like me. It's a great privilege to have the possibility to be part of a professional process, towards a professional performance which this really is, with amateurs, which we really are, and with a professional choreographer. It should develop towards a performance, which I have never experienced earlier. It is incredible, as Charlotta goes into it with the same energy and the same approach as when she works with professional dancers, I do not doubt that. You see that. You feel that. It is incredible to experience.

She sees us. It is a worn-out expression, but she takes us seriously and she uses all participants potential at a maximal level, and she is generous with praise, and she never criticizes, but she knows what she wants, even if what she wants change. Rather often. She is led by her intuition, and she has an unfailing artistic feeling, I think. She often says that she wants more wilderness, and she wants more!!! She is fantastic as a director and she is fun. And very human. There is nothing like 'von oben', nothing like that, we are in this all together, and that is so fun and stimulating.

The warm atmosphere has grown, and everyone has become persons, and I mean even I am a senior, and see all age cracks, but now I see human beings, and I don't know, you see totally different sides among each other. I think it becomes like that as it is a rather physical form of theatre we work with. We dare to get dedicated and be in the moment. When you have these physical interactions, when we come together and it looks like we make a snake pit, when we are to be responsive to every ones movements, in the group, and to one's own, and it should look natural, at the same time as it is a part of a plan in a way. When that succeeds it is euphoric, because then you are a cog in the fantastic artistic machinery. And just create. It is wonderful.

To take part of the dance has been a path towards a great sense of freedom, and knowledge about myself, both about my physical and psychological form of the day, and about my level of dedication. I get awareness about where I have tension and pain, what I am able to do existentially, it happens that I get in contact with feelings and I get able to solve problems, which I don't do through thinking, but it is the body that solve them if you know what I mean, for me in a way. They find a way of reconciling in some kind of way, such things that are going on in the body or may be more in the soul, and then it gives a pure physical kick of endorphins, and a very nice feeling afterwards. Like from training or therapy, but this is also an artistic dimension, aesthetic or existential dimension.

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We got to choose a story to bring into production, which the whole performance is built upon, which is also very sympatric, that it takes us participants as its starting-point. Charlotta shows concretely that she really takes us seriously and uses the tremendously rich material that is available. In my case, I have always liked drumming, rhythms, and I looked back for the painful beginning of that. I wondered, why didn't I become a musician? I chose that scene, a kind of a painful moment, which also made it possible to use the drum in the performance. Which I think is fun.

To take part in the dance activities is rather demanding, both physically and psychologically. It is rather demanding to be on top, for four hours in a row. You must be focused, and you have to withstand. We have warming up activities, and we have breaks, and Charlotta is very keen on that we shall be healthy, but anyway, it is demanding to learn, to remember instructions, choreography, and what we have agreed upon, and it is important to be in the moment.

But it gradually has become easier. Or more and more important to keep that presence, the closer the serious moment comes, the premiere. I try to think about what we have agreed upon, and be dedicated to that expression that is to be performed. There is a great amount of freedom in what we are to perform, and that makes it so providing, that we can improvise, because then there is space for the personal, and we are able to inject that, and we get space for that.

What characterizes all repetitions, and that makes you withstand, is the humour, and the warmth, and happiness. I think Charlotta adopts the artistic expression as a real artist. It is real, she wants to deliver the real. It stands for itself in a way, and it stands on the stage. And then you feel the happiness also, as you are based in yourself. And if your experience is embedded in the meaning of the piece, and in the group thinking of the ensemble, in the same moment, then you are at home, in a way.

### **Comment**

Looking back at David's story, it is possible to state that he defines the group as 'Older human bodies who get serious space for themselves and their stories'. He takes himself as an only child, full of shyness and body awareness as a starting point, and accentuates the spirit of togetherness, the collective, representing how the participants have grown together and how natural barriers have been broken down during the process and been replaced by fun and inspiration. He tells about his experiences of inclusion and participation, how he has been strengthened and got to know himself and got in contact with feelings, in dedicated moments, characterized by (personal) responsiveness, aesthetics and existentialism. He underlines how his potential has been used maximally in the artistic and professional process where he has felt like a cog in an artistic machinery, which in turn has led to a performance of the real.

### **OVERARCHING RESULT**

The analysis of the gathered material, presented through David's narrative, has made clear the building blocks that constitute the process of development, where elderly amateur dancers dwell in the dance studio and learn to use

dance and music as thinking in aesthetic communication. It becomes possible to say something about how their life stories are used and developed through improvising, choreography and training, led by a professional choreographer. Their stories, their bodies, their imaginations, their artistic expressions, the room and the atmosphere are intertwined and developed in continual dialogue. Holistic musical learning among elderly people takes place in the multi-artistic process, towards and within a dance performance.

As seen in Figure 3, crucial parts that constitute the phenomenon of *musical learning among elderly in contemporary multi-artistic dance processes* are addressed as: *room, bodies, stories, forms of expressions, images, continual dialogue* and *atmosphere*. In the following, the parts of the phenomenon are explored, based on the analysis of the gathered material.

The room used in the process is mainly a dance studio at *Dansens hus* (The House of Dance) in Stockholm, the biggest stage for dance in Sweden. The room is large and gives all participants plenty of space; it is equipped with mirrors on one side and indoor windows on the opposite. The dancers learn to use the floor, the space, each other, the mirrors, closeness and distance, all through the process. The room is equipped with loudspeakers, and the music is chosen by the choreographer and mediated through Spotify and her computer. The small stage in the building is used for repetitions closer to and through the actual performance. The elderly bodies must learn the new space, and lightening, which constitute important parts in the final development of the performance. It becomes obvious that the room in which the elderly and the choreographer dwell influence holistic learning of music.

The elderly dancing bodies are used for expression, in continual interaction with physical training as well as training when it comes to learn how the

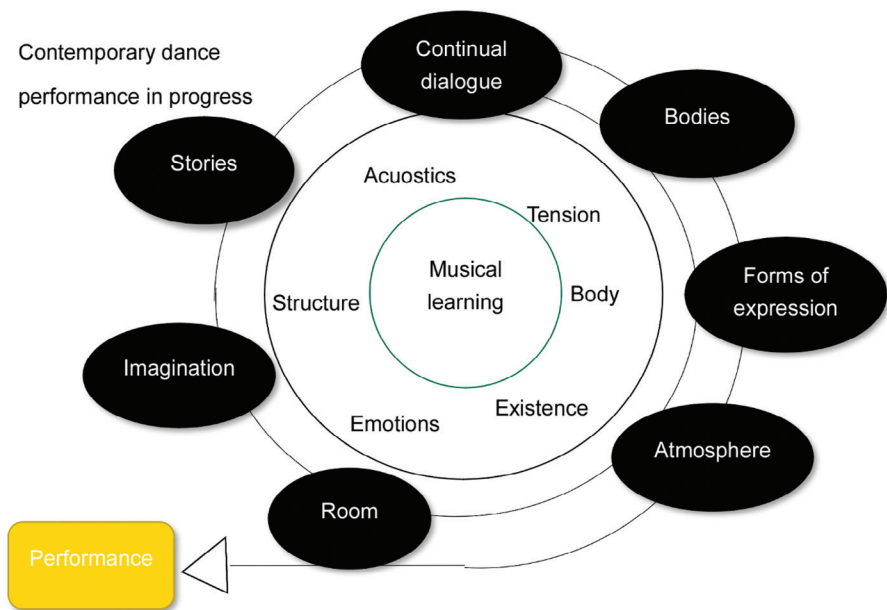


Figure 3: The process of musical learning in the multi-artistic dance movement.

body can be used for expression of ideas and stories in thinking and dwelling. The bodies are used individually, in pairs, in groups, in continual dialogue and communication, with and through music. The participants go into different roles and use their imagination and discover who they and the others are as living bodies. The music influences, for example, tempo, dynamics and the character of expression and thinking. Not least, it becomes clear how emotional, existential and bodily dimensions of musical learning take place.

The stories the elderly participants bring concern moments in their lives that have moved them in one way or another. They told their stories and guided by the choreographer; they interpreted and performed each other's stories. Themes that could be mentioned are death, loneliness, abuse, discovery of the unknown and parent relations. The stories came alive through the dancers' performances, which clearly contributed to that they learnt to know each other, and themselves. A number of stories were chosen to constitute parts of the performance. Transitions in between the parts, which consist of improvisation, choreography and the participants' embodied artistic expressions, were created and further developed. Also specifically composed electronic music was used as cues. Transitions in the creation of the performance as a whole helped the elderly participants to remember their tasks and the order of activities.

As mentioned, the participants were encouraged to bring forms of expressions they had used earlier in their lives, aiming to build a multi-artistic performance, and let the voices of the participants be heard and developed in togetherness. One woman brought her photographs, which were used in the background of her story. Another woman played the accordion, which was used as song accompaniment and as music to dance together to. One woman painted onstage, some of the participants sang, one played the guitar, and as mentioned, David used his drum. Other individual embodied dance styles that were brought in and included in the performance were step and tango. Finally, one story was told as poetry. All expressions were knitted together in the performance of *Stories*. All participants became heard, and listened to, in a broad sense.

The imaginations of the participants, concerning how a body could be used for expression (in relation to music), what a performance could look like, what would be possible for elderly people to do and express, of their own and in relation to each other's stories, were continually encouraged and shared. They were offered to use and develop their skill of fantasy throughout the project.

The dialogue, based on mutual curiosity and respect, was continually created and re-created. The participants underlined that they felt seen, heard and listened to, both when it came to ideas and what their bodies managed each day. They also expressed that they were taken seriously, not only when it came to what language was used in dialogue, but also regarding being amateur participants in a professional setting, process and performance. Furthermore, they used their bodies dialogically, in and with music, which they felt allowed them to view each other, the world and life in new ways.

In addition, the curious playful atmosphere seemed to constitute a crucial dimension of the process of musical learning. The atmosphere was defined as non-prestigious, but at the same time disciplinary. The material also showed clearly that the choreographer had a crucial role in the creation of such an atmosphere.



Figure 4: Scene from performance, movement to 'Ne quittez me pas'.

In sum, the results imply that the elderly people become themselves, or something else other than what is normally expected from an elderly body, through movement in the different musical rooms. Crucial factors seem to be how they get to use themselves, each other, their bodies, their stories (their personal artistic forms of expression) and their imagination, in interplay with music. The atmosphere of serious playfulness, which is set and re-created throughout the year, can be stated as important for meaningful musical dwelling and a prerequisite for becoming among the elderly participants. See an example in Figure 4.

## DISCUSSION: HOLISTIC MUSICAL LEARNING – DWELLING AND THINKING

The music is at the centre, between and at the same within and around the participating subjects, who learn music and create a multi-arts dance performance together in dwelling. The subjects are not outside the music, but inside, closely intertwined with each other and the music in the dance activities. They are not simply learning the structure and optimal performance of the music they create and relate to, but they also express that they feel that they exist, take part in the musical setting, and they seem to be touched by the music, artistic activities and the context. They also express that they get to know themselves and each other as human beings. The result shows that the space where they dwell, where they discover and express at the same time is transformed (Benson 2003). They work with the given to create something new, they think together during time and space. Such thinking overcomes the concept of representation, which was mentioned earlier, and lets the participants into being and becoming.

In the process of un-concealment, where time and space expand beyond human beings' metrological and chronological perception, holistic learning of

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music takes place. In the process of dwelling the ethical occasion to *inter-esse*, instead of an occasion to detect what is 'inter-esting', the participants develop musical knowledge in all its dimensions – acoustic, structural, tensional, bodily, emotional and existential – with their whole bodies (cf. Bowman 2006; Ferm Thorgersen 2013).

Depending on the dancers' directedness or focus of attention, in turn influenced by a variety of forces, some dimensions of music are foregrounded, at the same time as others are situated in the background. The musical world in which the dancers interact is inter-subjective. In the musical experiences, the dancers are intertwined with each other through perception and expression. Hence, the dancers, as bodily beings, get opportunities to make the world meaningful and manageable, at the same time as they discover themselves, each other, the dance and the music.

In relation to earlier studies regarding music and dance in relation to elderly people, the current results confirm what has been found in all three related research areas: treatment, therapy and well-being. In line with Vaillancourt (2012), this study shows that dance among elderly can contribute to social justice, as the participants testify that their voices were heard and that they could contribute on equal grounds. In addition to that, the project offers the participants singing as well as listening, in ways that involve the whole bodily human being, even if the connection to dementia is not investigated as in the studies conducted by Chan et al. (2011) and Skingley and Vella-Burrows (2010).

In line with for example Higgins (2007) and Green (2000), the participants got the possibility to express themselves and by that learnt to know themselves as well as others. The current study shows that the choreographer as well as the participants have dwelled together in the music-dance process, which was earlier confirmed by Barr (2013) and Hartogh (2016). The current results, though, further contribute with the participant's perspective, which shows how important musical learning among elderly people are, in relation to personal growth and a meaningful life.

As a complement to earlier studies that show the importance of making music and participate in dance activities in the process of ageing (Hallam et al. 2014, 2016; Söderman and Westvall 2017; Laes 2015), this study shows that participation in processes of artistic expression towards a performance among elderly can contribute to meaningful being and becoming. The results clearly function as a contribution to the gap within the research area when it comes to facilitating of arts activities among elderly people (cf. Hallam et al. 2013, 2014, 2016).

What is at hand is musical knowledge and capacity for imagination, which in turn are constituted by earlier (musical) experiences and apperception. In a given context or community, such as the dance process towards and in the performance, there are specific tools, possibilities and barriers for musical dwelling. In the specific context, the elderly participants constitute the world through interaction.

The question is what possible implications these results have for other music educational settings where physical, emotional and existential, in addition to acoustic, structural and tensional dimensions are to be developed – from individual competencies and imagination, towards a common artistic performance. The dance processes in the musical landscapes approach the holistic view of musical experience. The phenomenon of multi-dimensional musical experience becomes visible from a life-world perspective and indicates how music education could be organized. First and foremost, it seems to be

about taking care of what the elderly people already know and handle, when it comes to music, and design activities where they get the chance to develop these in holistic ways, where also meaningful life experiences are considered as a base for improvisation, creation and communication. In addition to that an approach regarding elderly people possibilities to be and become themselves must influence the design of activities. In other words, treatment, therapy and well-being must be put in the background, seen as by-products of the artistic performative practices and activities. That elderly people are able to work hard, use their bodies consciously in performing own and common ideas in musical landscapes is a result of the current study, which could guide creation of music learning activities for the specific target group.

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