

# Chapter 10

## Interculturalism in Early Childhood Music Education and the Training of Educators: An Anthropological Framework from the Mediterranean



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### Introduction

Interculturalism in early childhood music education is a relatively new and pioneering perspective of conceptualisation, topic of research and way of teaching young children and preparing educators. My first piece of extensive research into Greek Cypriot children's musical identities in the Republic of Cyprus (2015)—and the follow-on second piece of comparative research among children, music educators, musicians, early childhood educators and families in Cyprus, Spain, Greece, and Italy during the Project funded by the European Union, *Early Childhood Music Education in the Mediterranean* (2014–2017) (Pieridou Skoutella with colleagues, 2017)—revealed the need for such an anthropological framework. The European project was designed and developed by drawing on the conclusions of my first piece of research. This research into Cypriot musical childhoods provided the motivation and foundation of this project to further promote similar investigations around the Euro-Mediterranean region in relation to the conceptualisation and teaching/learning methodologies of early childhood music education, in order to contribute to these fields.

The strategic importance of identities framed and infused by the past and present of the Mediterranean region's diversification, syncretism and heterogeneity—together with global circumstances—provided the foundation for the development of this framework. Later in this chapter I will discuss intercultural principles and positive emotions as fundamental ingredients of this person-centred intercultural framework. Such starting points supported the implementation of certain strategies of *mimesis* regarding (a) musical representation and creation and (b) children's play,

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especially pretend play. These processes have been significant in the formation of musical and cultural identities among both children and adult social groups—and in the formation of creative expressions around the Mediterranean rim, in postcolonial and culturally diverse contexts for centuries; representing, transforming and recombining diverse forms of discourse (Minks, 2013; Pieridou Skoutella, 2015). Such concepts and processes facilitate the blending of musical and linguistic culture-specific, age-specific, ethnic and other competences, thus allowing intercultural competences to emerge and be learnt. Therefore syncretic cosmopolitan musical identities are formulated that are workable and meaningful for each person, in each context for a particular purpose each time.<sup>1</sup> I propose that these strategies are useful because they provide both educators and children in the music classroom with opportunities to adopt different roles and, thus, explore the cultural and symbolic tools available within the wider world. Such participation improves children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and others around them.

## **From Greek Cypriot Children's Musical Worlds to the Mediterranean**

My investigation into Greek Cypriot children's musical identities proposed how different cultural oppositions—that is, forms of power and struggles, ideologies, symbolic consumption or resistance, and expressions of nationalism—were formulated until recently. Their musical identities accentuated fluid, contextual and often contradictory qualities, and pointed to the unequal differentiation among social classes in children's musical enculturation. Greek Cypriot children's musical and cultural identities might be viewed along a continuum with strong articulations of Cypriot local identity at one end and globalised identity at the other end. They are formulated between the dichotomies of West and East, traditional and modern, urban and rural, and local (Greek and Cypriot) and global and framed by intense social definition. These dualisms are imbued with Greek Cypriot nationalism and the country's political problems. Eurocentric ideology in relation to the symbolic manipulation of rural versus urban contexts of the country—and the 'low' versus 'high' ideological meanings—dominate Greek Cypriot children's musical enculturation and the formation of their musical identities. As a result a child can be more Cypriot in contexts that promote local resistance and celebration of local culture while in another context she might even reject the Cypriot tradition for the sake of constructing a modern identity or Europeanised identity. Often during play children construct events that synthesise multiple identities and signify different even contrasting values and ideologies (Pieridou Skoutella, 2015). Musical identity in contemporary childhood is temporal and contextual, shifting and relational, multiple and

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<sup>1</sup> Supportive pieces of research include work on Miskitu children's speech and songs on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua (Minks, 2013) and previous research into children's musical playground (Marsh, 2008).

overlapping, fluid and consistent, private or social, and dominant or subversive, as children learn how to master the skills for living, communicating and creating. Syncretic identities flourish in abundance. A child talking in Cypriot dialect mixing in a few English words (with a heavy Cypriot accent) and wearing fashionable clothes helps his father in the fields, while listening to his smartphone. His selections might include Greek globalised sounds and Greek *laikó* songs<sup>2</sup> and popular songs with strong Middle Eastern musical characteristics and hints of Spanish flamenco or American rap (Pieridou Skoutella, 2015). This same child performs standardised Cypriot and Greek traditional songs with the school choir and plays handclapping elimination games with his closest friends in a remote part of the neighbourhood park.

This complex situation of *in-betweenness* is common in societies situated on the periphery of Europe in the Mediterranean region, and in its postcolonial societies. Cultural identities are contested between the spatial, cultural and ideological ‘east’ and ‘west’, traditional and modern, Christians and non-Christians, Orthodox and Catholic Christians, and immigrants and locals. Braudel’s work affirms that the Mediterranean is:

*a thousand things at once: a cross-road and a boiler of economic, political and cultural systems with four religious cosmo-visions, about 22 languages, around 17 specific forms of social organization, a complex interlaced with forces and tendencies grappling between tradition and modernity. (Braudel, 1977, quoted in Plastino, 2003, p. 75)*

This Mediterranean *in-betweenness* is magnified by the opposing processes of globalisation and localisation. The latter is comprised of cultural and personal identifications and the opposing phenomena of diversification and syncretism. Mediterranean *in-betweenness* is characterised by heterogeneous, polyglossic, multicultural modes and contexts of practice. Such contexts and modes of communicating, creating and being are characterised by musical and cultural inequalities. These inequalities are dominated by social hierarchies and strategies of social class differentiation, by the negotiation of ideological power and the contextual formulation of values. Therefore they engender stress, tension, discontinuity and contradictions for both groups and individuals, and their consequent actions in social and temporal contexts.

## The European Project

It was the first time that such a large scale project for early childhood music education funded by the European Union had taken place across the Euro-Mediterranean region, embracing the countries of Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain. As well as their

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<sup>2</sup> *Laikó* song appeared in the 1950s and 1960s as a gritty and tough style that expressed the values of the urban lower classes. The word *laikó* comes from the word ‘λαός’ which means the people. The term was used for urban Greek popular music. These songs were particularly popular due to the role of the recording industry and the fact that in breaking with their identification as ‘working class music’, they became fashionable.

individual histories, these four countries, share an interconnected and influential Mediterranean history. However due to many of the issues explained in the previous sections, scholars have yet to make comparative studies of musical cultures across the Mediterranean countries. We, as Mediterranean people, do not know each other well enough for intercultural understanding to take place. We are unaware of the rich diversity of our countries and our neighbouring countries' popular, folk and traditional musical traditions and the availability of rich cultural and musical values of being and creating. In addition there are gaps between the processes of musical enculturation and formal music education. As a result, there are also serious deficiencies in understanding young children's musical worlds and practices and in updating early childhood music education practices with international findings and methodologies, and with local characteristics.

This project developed effective learning and teaching methodologies, evaluation tools, curricula and teaching materials for children aged 3- to 6.5-years-old. It attempted to raise early childhood music education to the status of a professional specialised subject in early childhood education and care. The project suggested that Mediterranean cultural and musical events provide examples of the synthesis of different cultural values—and that localised practices (including music learning and teaching) are rooted in particular social and temporal contexts and carry deep meaning for the sociocultural identity of each spatial, temporal and social context (Magrini, 2003).<sup>3</sup> The project was designed and executed during a most critical period for the four countries, as the rich north of the Mediterranean basin with the glorious ancient past was becoming the poor and financially troublesome south of Europe. This 'humiliating' situation created confusion; the disintegration of living standards in these countries; a perceptible societal regression, and a rise in unemployment. Now, as these countries and their people become more 'new European' (Bohlan, 2011), they are simultaneously becoming more local, more ethnic, thus more syncretic and hybrid.

For the second piece of my research within the project, rich qualitative data was collected; at first during a week of 30 h intensive training for professional musicians, music educators and early childhood educators, and then during the implementation phase in these educators' practice in 18 different school locations in Greece, Cyprus, Italy and Spain. The implementation period involved more than 400 children and families from September 2015 to February 2016. Individual and group interviews, videotaped lessons, unobtrusive and participant observations of the training course, and observations of music lessons and children's play in school settings, and collections of the educators' diaries and essays ensured the reliability, credibility and generalisability of this study. The methodology of both pieces of research was influenced by interpretive anthropology. I adopted an interpretive and hermeneutic phenomenological stance and focused on the complex interactions and intersections between the subjective and the objective in culture, society, and school settings in which children, educators and families were placed.

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<sup>3</sup>For examples from Greek Cypriot children's musical worlds see Pieridou Skoutella (2015) p. 254–256.

During the pre-course interviews, the project trainees talked about musical tradition as an exotic discourse that oscillates ‘between the rhetorical opposition of “concealment” and “discovery”’ (Cassia, 2000, p. 289). They all lacked knowledge concerning the different traditions of their own countries. They seemed to have a strong sense of the distant past placing traditional elements at a time, long ago. During these discussions they were self-reflective and flexible in adopting a different, safer position in relation to traditional elements. They talked about traditions as something that belonged to the past or were found in contemporary tourist folklore; distant from their daily lives and thus in a safe position from their contemporary modernity. Other project trainees—very few of them—still considered it to be ‘their’ music. Their knowledge of their musical or cultural Mediterranean neighbours was limited to globalised stereotypes and generalised labels, revealing a lack of sufficient factual knowledge. Their identities appeared to be multicultural, being consumers of world musical styles such as blues, jazz, Celtic music, Irish music, Latin dances, Spanish flamenco, Anglo-American pop, and R&B. Nevertheless, a closer look reveals that such musical worlds are the result of globalisation, through media and music technologies.

## **The Strategic Importance of Identities in Intercultural Communication**

A Cypriot couple with their two young children were standing in the line for the check-in counter in a Spanish airport. They were on their way with an Italian airline to continue their holidays in Italy. Their 5-year-old daughter attended a private kindergarten in Nicosia, in which the classroom educator had applied the Mediterranean project’s intercultural methodology and sound materials during the previous school year. An old lady who was standing in front of them made repetitive, unsuccessful efforts to communicate with the child. The mother explained to the child that the lady was Italian and encouraged her to sing the Italian song *La bella lavanderina* she had learnt at school. As soon as the lady heard the title, she immediately began singing the song while the child joined in, performing the body movements. Gradually, the entire row began singing and performing the song (mother’s report to the kindergarten educator, September 2017).

Identity is an individual’s or a social group’s source of meaning and human communication (Castells, 2010). As this example demonstrates, understanding of ‘self’ and ‘other’ helps people to define themselves, provides a strong sense of cultural belongingness and equips them with the confidence to communicate with the other. A sense of belonging to a particular culture allows for a dialectical relationship with the different ‘other’. Huntington (1993) writes that ‘identity at any level ... can only be defined in relation to an “other”, a different person, tribe, race or civilization’ (p. 129), with reference to ‘kinship, occupational, cultural, institutional, territorial, educational, partisan, ideological and others’ (ibid., p. 128). Identity formation

requires differences that define the content and processes of a culture and the boundaries at which a different culture begins and another ends (Hall, 1996). Such boundaries, as discussed earlier, can be also fluid, often contextually formulated as a result of multiple cultural consciousnesses (Pieridou Skoutella, 2015, p. 255) and tensions between tradition and modernity, and social class differentiation. During a school excursion to a rural restaurant, a girl of upper-middle-class status with dominant contemporary identity was seen dancing a Greek-oriental dance on a table. On the one hand this kind of musical behaviour points to a different cultural identity connected with ideologies of lower social class, while on the other hand it demonstrates musical competence and enjoyment. Multiple cultural ‘consciousnesses’ allow musical hybridisations, syncretism and interculturality to evolve. They can lead to a broadening of children’s and adults’ musical and cultural experiences, thus promoting dialogues between the diversity of their musical and cultural worlds, and taking account of different needs.

Identity is of great importance for human self-esteem, self-knowledge, self-presentation and efficient human communication, as the episode at the beginning of this section demonstrated. My use of the term ‘identity’ is in alignment with the exercise of human agency (Bandura, 2006), the whole person’s ‘being-in-the-world’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and the human need to express oneself in order to (a) realise one’s potential to the fullest and (b) place oneself socially, locally, ethnically, historically and culturally, exercising this agency in shaping one’s life path. Identity formation includes the two mutually constituted processes of negotiated differentiation and integration, where elements from the global and the local stand in a dialectical relationship that negotiates, constructs, reconstructs, formulates and articulates a musical identity in a particular context, time, and place. Such relationships allow the local to be dislocated, relocated or modified while serving as an active ingredient and determining factor in its existence and transformation. As the example with the Italians and the child revealed, deep factual knowledge promotes cross-cultural and intercultural communication. Eventually, by singing the Italian song, the Cypriot child did not ‘lose’ her Cypriot identity. Rather she reinforced it by reaching out to joyfully perform a song that belonged to the cultural identity of the ‘other’, the Italian woman at the airport check-in line. At the same time, being Italian was not reaffirmed in a rigid way, but in a sharing manner of positive emotions initiated by the Italian lady and supported by the young child’s intercultural skills and knowledge of the ‘other’.

Young children shift with ease from one musical identity to another. They also creatively break the generic distinctions between composers, listeners, and performers in fluid, interchangeable and combined ways. They do so according to the musical, contextual, social and structural meanings of each particular sound and musical performance which are then combined with their personal choice, potential, preference—and with their envisioned musical self and relationships with peers and significant adults. Such observations suggest, with some certainty, that the gap between educators’ and educational policy makers’ pre-determined music lessons and fixed educational ‘recipes’ and young children and their contextual forms of music learning is even bigger and deeper—and the need to take action is more demanding—

than generally assumed. In addition, my research showed that adult-educators' professional and musical identity and young children's musical learning and communication are interrelated and interconnected, since they are the two most important participants during the music lesson. Therefore, the proposed framework includes a shared theoretical and methodological framework for both children's learning and educators' training.

## **An Anthropological Perspective and Principles of Interculturalism**

This anthropological, intercultural framework goes beyond the narrow definitions of interculturality based on ethnic and national divisions, geographical boundaries, discontinuities and ideological dichotomies and rigid conceptions of imagined purity and authenticity. It goes deeper in order to connect the self to heterogeneity and creativity; recontextualisation and repositioning; continuities and transformations. This intercultural proposal is about the process of historical human struggles between authenticity and mixing—and of continuously testing and exploring the self and 'other', identity and difference, and personal and collective local musical identities. Interculturalism in this chapter refers to interethnic, interreligious and intergenerational/cross-age relations, inter-lingual relations, and time-space relations. An important principle of interculturalism is that of difference, including differences between people and generations, between children and adults, between each person's personal, idiosyncratic, social, cultural and unique biography, their environment and history (Burnard, Mackinlay, & Powell, 2016; Dietz, 2009).

In both my research studies children demonstrated great flexibility and adaptability that facilitated their emergence as multicultural and intercultural musical individuals. Each individual embodies different, overlapping, conflicting or dislocated musical discourses, and negotiates, produces, reproduces and articulates them according to collective and personal decisions. Children's capacities to 'indigenise' 'the other' assisted them in selecting the musical sounds and identities that their present musical enculturation, larger social structures and historical moments suggest. They articulated them in unique and idiosyncratic ways in various contexts according to personal musical narratives and the ideal self that they wanted to formulate. Children in Galicia Spain, having learnt the handclapping game *Simario* which I located in certain regions of Cyprus and Greece (Pieridou Skoutella, 2015), modified its movements and added new ones.<sup>4</sup> At the same time they tried to refine their rhythmic execution. Their repeated performances led to higher levels of musical competence and to a distinguished sense of personal and collective achievement.

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<sup>4</sup>This game, which Greek Cypriot children call 'Simario' is the Cypriot version of the ring and handclapping elimination game Marsh (2008) named 'Sar Macka Dora'. This game resembles those which Marsh recorded in Springfield Primary School, and which Minks (2013) found on the east coast of Nicaragua. See Pieridou Skoutella (2015) p. 232–233 for more information.

Cypriot children would often share their singing of Italian or Spanish songs with their parents in order to provoke feelings of appreciation and pride, thus raising their social status among their families and peers. Different ideologies and values are foundational for the construction of different musical worlds. Ideologies of modernity, preservation of tradition, religion and nationalism affect children's choices for their musical behaviours and the context-bound formation of their identities. Thus, interculturalism in early childhood music education should offer possibilities to untangle and successfully deal with the 'micropolitics of emplaced, embodied and voiced identity in particular life worlds' (Feld, Fox, Porcello, & Samuels, 2004, p. 340). What I propose also points to the intercultural principles of fluidity, hybridity, syncretism, repositioning and recontextualising, with particular emphasis on the equality of all factors, parameters, actions and choices in intercultural musical experience. Emotions and positive relationships are foundational for this kind of work. Musical products and learning processes gain value from such emotions, which then provide motivation for using them and the 'conviction that one is learning effective steps towards a tangible future and is developing into a defined self within a social reality' (Erikson, 1950/1995, p. 212).

The intercultural framework explored and developed in this project, is genuinely anthropological because it embraces the plurality of 'life worlds' (Schütz, 1967) on a continuum where the past (heritage, tradition, history, belief), the present (knowledge in action and in context) and the future (the sought after ideal self) exist in the temporal landscape of each individual, group, community, region and state, in each present moment of their lives. As intercultural communication and mimetic processes suggest (the latter are explained later in this chapter), all participants seek to 'translate' between human existentials (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), and develop 'reflexive dialogues' with the self and with the 'other's' horizon of comprehension (Dietz, 2009) of the 'infinite immensity of the moment' (Cixous, 1994). Thus, the concept of lived musical experience (Geertz, 1973; Pieridou Skoutella, 2019), which embraces this immensity in each lived moment and points to the principle of difference in the same performance and same musical material in different times and contexts, should also be acknowledged. The lived experience of the music lesson and children's musical enculturation refers to a particular place, time and situation, and includes actions, materials, words, intentions, beliefs and values, tradition and modernity, past and future, the self and other. These are relayed, recontextualised and reconstructed by all the people in embodied actions, expressed words, musical practices, use of space, creation and performance, along with the complex web of contextual details that are organically linked with musical meaning and learning goals.

## **The Importance of Reflexivity**

Throughout the entire process of the project's training and implementation phase, the trainees found themselves in unfamiliar territory, as they worked among different cultural elements that were sometimes familiar and at other times unfamiliar and



strange. Unfamiliarity is often accompanied by a degree of fear; of guilt at doing the wrong thing and being blamed and rejected. Such fear is not necessarily a bad thing, although it might be a reason for withdrawal and negativity. However these emotions encourage and require thoughtfulness, reflexivity and evoke profound cultural learning experiences.

During the 1st days of the course, each trainee remained within their comfort zone and with fixed positioning(s) of their ethnicity, language, and adult/professional identity. Such fixed positionings would often elicit boundaries and verbal disputes, which were dissolved as soon as intercultural, osmotic musical activities began. However, discord leads to intercultural collaboration and is a source of learning. Since intercultural collaboration produces tension, efforts to handle it will elicit learning (Karlsen, Westernlund, & Meittinen, 2016). Deep reflection—including identity deconstruction and reconstruction—and close mentorship helped the trainees to increase their awareness of ‘what was going on’, and to accept and deal with ‘identity shakiness’ (Wulf, 1996 cited in Dietz, 2009) and fluidity. Indeed, if the modern ‘problem of identity’ was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the postmodern ‘problem of identity’ is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open (Bauman, 1996, p.18).

The challenge of reflexivity, according to Bourdieu (1990) focuses on principles of difference and equality, as sources of creativity and deeper forms of understanding. The risky border work that we advocate in the contact zones where human subjects collide does not elide differences, nor does it reify them. It does not seek to flatten out or homogenise our specificities. Rather, through reflexivity and careful listening, and through a willingness to suspend meaning, it opens up possibilities for deep engagement across difference and for transformation into the future. This is pedagogy of ethnical uncertainty entailing mutual responsibilities and unpredictability within pedagogical relationships (Sommerville, Davies, Power, Gannon, & de Carteret, 2011).

The educators’ concluding comments point clearly to how they personalised the process along with the essence of negotiating relationships:

*B: It was difficult but also interesting—the fact that I was acting as an adult musician while thinking what to do in the classroom, how to connect with the children. Then all the things I had to do with the other people, and I don’t know who they are, what they are thinking. In the first part of the week I was checking what to do in relation to the other people. The most difficult part, the most interesting thing for me. I had to mature because of all these and stop only comparing ‘I am Italian and you are Greek or Spanish’.*

*A: And how did you deal with it?*

*B: So...first I was seeing. I was observing the relationships, the way to do the activities. Then, there was a playful atmosphere, so I thought, ‘Okay, I can...I can speak with them’. I know something more and I have to share with the others. Then I thought what’s my way of thinking, my way of doing things in music.. That I...that we were not so different at all (laughter), so I felt comfortable after 2 days’ time (laughter).*

*C: I focused on how you and I find a common way of working together, so I found that we were not so different. You give me something new and you get something new and let’s meet..... with singing, dancing, I was more comfortable with the other, and without speaking a word (laughter), I was in communication. And in music I make social relationships and with others in the educational way.*

*D: I don't feel different; it is not about being Italian anymore or about being older, but different in terms of personality, of a different way that is mine. There were different ways of thinking, ways of teaching music, ways of interacting; differences.  
(The interview took place in Italian language with the help of a translator. Occasionally the interviewees would use English language instead.)*

Such personalised interculturalism involves multiple belongings and issues that are not only choice, since we are all connected in one way or another and our identity acquires meaning by being accountable to the 'other' meaning.<sup>5</sup> Musical learning is about becoming a kind of person musically. All the participants/learners act and react, adding personal meanings and new skills, by simultaneously attending to feedback. During such processes there is a 'vitalising sense of actuality from the awareness that his (sic) individual way of mastering experience (his ego synthesis) is a successful variant of a group identity and is in accord with its space-time and life span' (Erikson, 1950/1995, p. 212).

'In-between' cultural selves do not constitute ahistorical social actors, who float above those who are socially and historically located; rather, they are formed in the context of customs, traditions, memories, prejudices and perceptions. Singing a Basque or Cypriot lullaby or carols for different seasons of the year, the distinctiveness of cultural tradition is documented in the labelling of the lullaby or the carol, its language and its culture of origin. Commonality is acknowledged by the joint enterprise of sharing lullaby or carol singing and their performance.<sup>6</sup> Sounds, rhythms and dance movements have been traveling around the Mediterranean region for centuries. There is the Italian song *Alla fiera del' Est* sung by the Italian singer Brandouardi in 1976 which was translated into Greek and performed in Greek by the male singer Lavrenti Macheritsa a few years ago. The song is based on the cumulative Hebrew **Passover** song *Chad Gadya*, also found in an Israeli movie back in 1947. The song is based on a German melody from the sixteenth century. Eventually, educator-trainees realised how easy it is to challenge notions of 'your' versus 'my' music and 'authentic' versus 'syncretic', because music travels around the Mediterranean and beyond, taking different musical meanings and performances.

## **Aristotelian Mimesis and Children's Pretend Play**

Mediterranean in-betweenness unfolds in its people's hierarchies of values, beliefs and expressive practices. Young children embrace this fluidity, difference and multiplicity of identities and recontextualisation with confidence, excitement, artistic

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<sup>5</sup> Although a rich and complex interanimation of voices and identities was documented, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to go into further detail and discussion.

<sup>6</sup> See Marsh and Dieckmann's (2016) discussion on creating a shared intercultural space and intercultural identity through lullaby sharing.

interpretation, and skilful action, leading the way, in their classrooms and beyond, on a ‘musical journey between and among identities’ (Bohlman, 2011, p. 14). The application of mimesis—integral to the relationships between art and nature and art and humans, and to the interrelations between signs within works of art—was deemed most successful in dealing with these complexities and allowing other imaginative, mindful and embodied realities to flourish.

*The instinct of imitation is implanted in men from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated.* (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1448 5–10)

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, considered music to be the most mimetic and most expressive form of art, as it expresses *emotion* in the most authentic way (Leontsini, 2009, p. 146). ‘That which we call today creative imagination, embodies the formulation of a truly imaginative act which requires knowledgeable actor(s) and skilful imitator(s)’ (*Poetics*, 1455, p.38). European art music provides an example of a musical culture of diverse hybridity and syncretism, whose composers mastered multicultural and intercultural compositional/improvisational strategies in representing and articulating subtle human emotions, intimate thoughts and high ideals in a constant dialogue between the local, the national, the distant, the past and the present. Beethoven’s work, which is emotionally intense, utilises such multiple consciousnesses in ways that show how to embrace them and master them in order to represent and articulate central European consciousness.

For Aristotle, mimesis is not only related to the representation or re-creation of objects but also to the possibility of changing them in order to beautify them, and to improve and universalise individual qualities. Regarding mimesis in dance Aristotle wrote that the imitations of dancers imitate through rhythm itself without harmony, for they, too, through their figured rhythms, imitate both characters, and emotions and actions as well<sup>7</sup> (*Poetics*, 1447a 26–28). According to Davis (1999):

*At first glance, mimesis seems to be a stylizing of reality in which the ordinary features of our world are brought into focus by a certain exaggeration, .... Imitation always involves selecting something from the continuum of experience, thus giving boundaries to what has really no beginning or end. The more ‘real’ the imitation the more fraudulent it becomes.*

I have elsewhere written about the relationship between identity, Aristotelian mimesis and pretend play, analysing Greek Cypriot school children’s pretend play (2015).<sup>8</sup> I discussed how the temporal character and imaginative features of mimesis creatively break the generic distinctions between composers, listeners, and performers, learners and teachers, offering multiple overlapping, contextual, shifting and workable identities. Mimesis facilitates emerging ‘authenticities’ by accessing

<sup>7</sup> ‘In dancing rhythm alone is used without ‘harmony’; for even dancing imitates character, emotion and action by rhythmical movement’ (*Poetics*, 1447a 26–28, direct translation)

<sup>8</sup> Also see Minks (2013) for mimesis and intertextuality in speech and songs in Miskitu children’s expressive practices in Nicaragua.

the ‘feeling-full’ part of people. Young children are capable not only of recognising similarities (reception) but also of producing similarities (spontaneity):

*In a classroom with 2.5 to 3-year-old children the educator wanted to teach the binary form of the Italian song Alla fiera del’ Est. She asked them to form a circle and move for the first phrase to the left and the second phrase to the right. The children were stepping on each other, gazing in space without concentration, motivation and understanding of the activity. I saw a couple of children moving their hands like waves. I invited the children to sit on their chairs, which were placed in a circle. I asked them to imagine that they are in the sea (the previous lesson was about the sea and being in a boat) and that they could use their arms to show how they feel with the music and the sea. Several children started to move their arms like waves. Gradually, all the children entered into the activity, while their arm movements clearly reflected the song’s dynamics, phrasing and melodic contour. One boy sat still throughout the activity with his arms above his head, as if covering his head in an arch shape. When the activity was over, we asked him how he felt and what he was representing. His answer was that he was the rock which the sea waves hit on and he had to stay still all the time, just like the rock (Pieridou Skoutella, field notes).*

They can also draw from different voices that reflect the history of the Mediterranean region. In Corfu, during free play in their classroom, 5-year-old children sang the Cypriot song *Ntili Ntili* in Cypriot dialect. Boys danced to its Greek variant with their arms upon each other’s shoulders and kicked their feet inside the circle; a movement which recalls a type of Serbian male dance, demonstrating their awareness of a sound signifier of masculinity. Their movement improvisations of the Italian song *Alla fiera del’ Est* signified an Italian Renaissance dance (due to Italian colonial history of the island) with similarities to the *Kerkiraikos* (Corfu) folk dance.

Mimesis in the arts implies a deep knowledge of particular experiences, thereby allowing a new representation of nature, values, ideas, artworks, forms and knowledge. As Socrates points out, it is a prerequisite for someone ‘to have knowledge and skills’ [technikon]’ (425d4–426b1). Children’s pretend play and mimesis in music show how they can master such intercultural artistic musical behaviours along with deep, imaginative skills, while at the same time revealing a need to acquire musical skills in order to engage in more highly imaginative activities. For children, crossing and mixing musical languages and elements, dance movements and linguistic codes was not a problem. This is the result of living in an environment of such diverse, heteroglossic societies in postcolonial settings on the margins of Europe; observing, playing and pretend-playing and then repeating and reflecting as they acquire the skills for living with those contradictions (Minks, 2013, p. 135).

Observation of each class (in both pieces of research) in which class members select roles, workable identities, and socio-musical relations with each other, while embarking on a musical journey, is imperative for a deep understanding of mimetic processes. Children’s collaborations are highly self-regulatory, incorporating interpersonal strategies of relating and expressing, leading and following, and in the process, selecting and rejecting musical ideas. Thus, the physical space of the classroom is transformed into a multiple articulated context with numerous possibilities.

Mimesis is an activity in the present (Aristotle: *Poetics*), just like music, and its embodiment and representation in a continuous present incorporate direct experience of existing musical identities, identity-in-process and a final transformed identity. Mimesis allows people to 'place themselves in imaginative cultural narratives' (Frith, 1996, p.122), a process that appears natural to young children because for them the creation and performance happen simultaneously. Participants in mimetic processes improve their knowledge insofar as they become a part of the object/event/action; namely, they experience a real mimesis of the particular object/event/action.

For Aristotle and children, mimesis is related not only to the representation or re-creation of objects but also to the possibility of changing them in order to beautify them and improve and universalise their unique qualities. Representation refers to the process and outcome of something (i.e. object, person, event, action, ideological voice, etc.) that is intended to signify something else and, as such, is recognised by the actors and the audience. Imitation and representation coexist; in fact, imitation is a subcategory of presentation.

Teaching plans and videotaped lessons from the project offered syntheses of different cultural values, elements and processes from the Mediterranean; from near and far, from history, mythology, modernity and tradition. Young children represented actions, feelings and characters through bodily gestures, incorporating and performing musical elements as well as movements that were rhythmical, melodically expressive, formally defined, and idiosyncratically improved. Children adopted roles through play, which Schwartzman (1982) terms 'identity metaphors' according to their perceived ability to successfully match this role. They chose who was going to be the butterfly and the swallow that travel across the Mediterranean to find the moon and ask the sun for marriage. Different songs and melodic patterns reflected these characters that were performed by the children who 'feel' that they have the potential and then envision these sought-after identities. They chose who was suited to dance the Cypriot traditional song *Dili Dili*, or perform the actions of the Italian song *La bella lavanderina* and who would be the train driver who invites the passengers with a specific rhythmic pattern to come on board from a Spanish children's song. Prerequisites for this 'metaphoric fit' (Schwartzman, 1982) in this dramatic art included socio-ideological understanding of adults and of structures, and what they mean to children, their taste, potential and imagined social relationships, and identities. They chose which musical games to play in order to demonstrate their rhythmic, movement and linguistic competence. Spanish and Italian children were repeatedly executing the hand-clapping game *Simario*, while the Italian game *La Bella lavanderina* and the Spanish song *Corre en trencito* became popular in Greece and Cyprus.

Bateson (1973) notes that play requires the meta-communicative exchange of signals between those taking part that carry the message 'this is play', rather than 'this is real'. The signal is provided by a 'frame', a meaningful action through which one player organises the perception of another to 'attend to what is within [the play] and ... not attend to what is outside' (p.160). Socrates' discussion of *technē* (189)

proposed that going through the playful way is legitimised, since even ‘the Gods love play’ (406b10–13). Playfulness is authorised by the belief in ‘love of play’ as a distinguishing characteristic of the Gods. Young children’s actions and musical behaviours are in complete alignment with Socrates’ proposition, since playfulness is also their characteristic. Mimesis is a strategy in their musical play performances, since they incorporate, adopt, reproduce and recreate those elements from the wider cultural and musical worlds that are possible within their personal and collective limitations. Children’s pretend play—such as staging and restaging the Eurovision Song Contest within the physical space of the afternoon club in Nicosia (Pieridou Skoutella, 2015, pp. 204–211)—shows how they use and reuse cultural voices as a way to fit their taste, needs, potential, and understanding of success and pleasure. Their representation is both similar to and different from the original, professional performances, thereby showing the essence of their musical worlds, in the sense of what is commonly believed to be the ideal (οἷα αὐ γένοιτο = exactly as it could have been) (Aristotle, *Poetics* 9). No one performance is the same—social, cultural and musical roles each evolve, develop, interchange and reach higher standards of musical performance, creativity, and artistic representation, while pretend play allows time for open-ended plots (Schwartzman, 1982, p. 237).

With mimesis, children and educators embark on improvisational drama. The object of the drama is staged and communicates certain, clear messages to its audience (including an imaginative audience). Mimesis requires and offers complete totality of experience, reconnecting with past events, rearranging them into something new and different, and also manipulating symbols originating in varying cultural conventions and situations so as to acquire new, often sophisticated meanings. Pretend play, in particular, requires exaggerated staging of this recontextualisation. The representation of powerful images communicates the musical narrative. It creates an imaginary world, representations of the symbolic space, and a final metaphor. Such images certainly have a material, corporeal existence, often incorporating scenes of parody of daily, embedded social interactions (Minks, 2013) in which, eventually, a complex, fluid and overlapping assemblage of identities emerges. Children were well able to use past events, orchestrating them into something new, different and better by applying illusion, fiction and deception. With their imaginative work, they were able to deal with negative emotions of tension, fear and anxiety, to release them and transform them into positive emotions. Their pretend-play themes in the teaching units shared these characteristics:

1. Courage to meet something *familiar* (music education practices) *in an unfamiliar form*, or vice versa, through a kind of adventurous journey for a common cause in the Mediterranean;
2. Independence and assertiveness to make the decision to take this journey and to find the solution collaboratively, arranging and rearranging musical identities, the tools and resources in order to succeed;
3. Compassionate love, solidarity and friendship. In one teaching unit, departing from the Italian song *Il mio capelo*, in which an elf loses his hat, children were

- searching for it, employing serious, imaginative work which incorporated cultural, physical and musical elements from the classroom and the Mediterranean;
4. The presence of a facilitative agent—a magical or supernatural figure—such as a mermaid, a boat or a train with magical and musical qualities, or a magician/witch who assisted the children in their endeavours.

Processes of bricolage existed in abundance and musical styles acquired a meaning that was far removed from its creation, incorporating elements of social and musical hierarchies. Interestingly, media and television heroes were not brought into play. According to Minks (2013), this kind of recombination creates *intertextuality*, which becomes a resource for intercultural practice (p. 108). Intertextuality refers to the recontextualisation or repositioning from one signifying system to another and is a communicative process of creating relationships between different forms of discourse (Minks, 2013, pp. 121–122).

There are different and overlapping kinds, and levels, of intertextuality and mimesis. The classroom work and children's play focused on the structural level of social structures, local and historical customs, and religious festivities. In Majorca, children drew connections with the celebrations of St. Anthony, creating connections between the Italian song *O che bel castelo* and St. Anthony's fight against the demons, invoking such discourses during play. The findings from the project also pointed to the level of musical culture and linguistic systems and their overlapping levels of discourse, transported from one system/culture to the other. The findings also point to the levels of musical genres, cultural symbols and signifiers and the more emergent and context-defined interactional switching and mixing of codes. Such techniques have been central to facilitating the crossing of musical culture-specific and ethnically cultural linguistic competences. Therefore these techniques allow the emergence of bi-musical and poly-musical competences. A class of children in Rome transformed the character of *Mastra Antre* from the Italian song *Alla fiera di Mastr' Antre* into a magician with Mediterranean magical spells. These spells corresponded to melodic and linguistic phrases or rhythmic ostinati such as *Marti Marti mou kale* (= March, March, my dear, which is a phrase from an ancient Greek carol). In the Madrid school the magician of friendship *Ela mazi mou* (= come with me) came alive. This melodic and linguistic phrase is found in the Greek Cypriot children's handclapping game *Sto Zappeio*. Children embraced the game and the emerging magician and recontextualised the game in their own handclapping way. Thus, children were able to access singing in Greek more easily. There were also linkages and extensions with contemporary situations. A class in Corfu, having learnt the Italian song *La bella lavanderina* (= the beautiful washerwoman), recontextualised it and created a songbook about Valentina, the Greek washerwoman who was washing the clothes of the poor immigrants in Greece.

This discussion suggests that children's intercultural music learning is not about sameness, but rather about *solidarity for a common cause*, negotiating and presenting multiple ways through truly being *with* the other. A Cypriot class designed a journey to help the Italian elf find its hat. They transformed the classroom into a Mediterranean context made up of synergies between musical and cultural actions

that were working towards a shared goal. In the teaching unit *Babá Elephante*, inspired by the Spanish children song *El Elephante* the elephant *Babá* is facing a problem. He has lost the treasure box and its ring, and he needs children's help to find his way home to Spain. A series of children's games from the four countries were employed leading to a final intercultural performance that signified *Babá's* success in reaching home. During the training course the trainees collaborated in producing one common song and an open air interactive performance with the children and parents from the town of Corfu in Greece. All the differences that they had encountered in their collaborative work brought disputes and disagreements, trials and errors but were at the same time sources of strength because a prerequisite for success was the combination of differences—and not similarities—that complement and strengthen each other. The focus on a higher purpose, on a shared need/problem, and the context of solidarity was greater than their individuality. Thus children and trainees became highly motivated on this journey. All of them narrated their own yet other story of travelling and empathising through and within Mediterranean music, culture and people in producing artistic results greater than the sum of each part.

## Conclusion

On the one hand, Mediterranean interculturalism is this in-betweenness which lays bare the possibility for power and privilege to be manipulated/used/represented so as to perpetuate and reproduce dominance, power inequality, and ideological high versus low distinctions of the self in relation to the 'other'. On the other hand, children and adults in this study showed the way in which musical preferences and music-making and learning are personalised and negotiated through context, and musical becoming. Their mimetic music-making and pretend play, words and actions demonstrated the skills for living, creating, communicating and relating, masterfully dealing with and within these circumstances and creating their own narratives with their own rules. Sameness and difference, dispute and coexistence, going beyond the borders of oneself (Cixous, 1994), and acting from one's own cultural position (Turino, 2000) represent both sides of the same coin, thus being key characteristics of interculturalism.

Interculturalism is driven by and cultivates positive emotions and feelings. The need to go to the source, which is the self (and its lived, embodied actions), the purpose and look for the 'why' and the motivation, for these are all important signs in evaluating whether, and to what extent, the focus is giving the self for the good of the 'other'. The implementation of an intercultural framework in early childhood and in educators' training, together with more research, will further illuminate this new perspective. It will provide the necessary knowledge to design effective learning/teaching practices for all those involved and to plant the seeds for efficacious, intercultural, cosmopolitan musical identities, behaviours and actions. This will



assist children (and adults) as they mature in resisting ideological dilemmas, increasing their awareness of their creativity and living more joyful musical lives. Then they might be able, each in his/her own particular special way, to positively contribute to social change, cultural production and transformation within the possibilities of the microcosm of their daily lives.

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