

Music education practices in Maltese Band Clubs pre, during and post COVID-19

Jes Grixti, Western Sydney University

Abstract

This paper explores the narrative of two members of one of the Schools of Music affiliated to the same band club in Malta, focusing on the practice pre, during and post COVID-19 and the impact on its community impact. The paper also investigates the contributory factors of community and adult music-making as part of the social fabric. The UN Policy Brief (2020) states that the COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in human history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries. The challenge in Malta is to restore cultural interaction, fair access of digital equity, and the preservation of community tradition.

Sparkman (2017) highlights ideas of updating music education to close the social gap, making it accessible for all, and validating the contribution of music to community welfare and human well-being. A similar rationale advocated by Muezzinoglu and Gorgoretti (2019) suggests catering for student interests with new music teaching approaches that are inclusive and complementary with today's social expectations. Music education needs to strike a balance between the attention to developing technical and expressive facility – aesthetic encounter (Greene, 2001) and the social aspect of collective music-making - collectivism. In exploring the views of two members of one of the Schools of Music affiliated to the same band club in Malta, the interviewees' narratives shed light on the three categories of Practice, Participation and Social Activity.

The interviews with participants not only address the sustainability of community and adult music practice, but also a sense of belonging that is the Band Clubs as a community of learners. In doing so it is focused on the music education practice pre, during and post COVID-19 in the Band Clubs and its community impact. Data was analysed with content analysis and findings suggest this community institution has and does offer socially sound music education, but with a need for informed current and future practice.

Key words: Bands, community music, Malta.

Background

Community music has been defined as “music-making practices that strengthen a community and support its musicians” (Whiteoak & Scott-Maxwell, 2003, p. 158). This applies to the music-making in Malta however, these sentiments need to be appreciated in the local cultural context. Malta is a small country which, together with its sister island of Gozo, is situated between Africa and Europe, with its closest proximity being Sicily, south at 80 kilometres (58 miles). The Republic of Malta is a sovereign state and full member of the European Union (EU). Maltese and English

are interchangeably used as the island's official languages, the latter being a reminder of British colonial rule from 1800 to 1964, which substituted Italian as the language of the educated class (Montebello, 2021 pp. 12-18).

Malta's community music is diverse reflecting its history of a bi-partisan yet united and interchangeable diaspora resulting in homogeneity as a dualistic bi-product. It encompasses people from all walks of life, gender, age, level of education and occupation. Different music groups are formed and developed into social gatherings, that is, a community of practitioners, a phenomenon

referred to in this paper as communities within communities. This is a selective form of collectivism which is both formally institutionalised and non-formally institutionalised.

This paper explores the narrative of two members of one of the Band Clubs' School of Music, one of Malta's formally institutionalised music communities. It focuses on the music education practice pre, during and post COVID-19 in the Band Clubs and its community impact (the Practice). The paper also investigates the contributory factors of community (Participation) and adult music-making as part of the social fabric, (Social Activity).

Literature: the democratic community of learners

Several aspects of literature have an impact on the Band Clubs: the idea of a democratic community of learners (Greene, 1977; Freire, 2007; Illich, 1971); Lyotard's idea of socio-political legitimacy, 1984; and Csikszentmihalyi's (2008) idea of flow. A democratic community is in line with Maxine Greene's notion of wide-awakeness (1977) and Paulo Freire's conscientization (2007). Both researchers illuminate a critical pedagogy, an enlightenment supported by a democratic community of learners based on creative imaginings, pluralism, and hope, where consciousness, free choice and projected impact are advocated. Greene (2007) claims that new realities may result in the creation of new worlds (p. 1), while Freire (2007) states that liberation is fueled by dreaming (p. xi). Rautins and Ibrahim (2001) refer to Greene and Freire as two "strong poets," adding that:

By delving into the praxis of these two "strong poets," among others, a critical pedagogy of imagination, humanism, agency and becoming is organically discussed and considered to 'dialogue' with new spaces of teaching and learning ("outside the box"), thus moving students from a mechanized (oppressive) curriculum to a more humanized curriculum of wide-awakeness. (Rautins & Ibrahim, 2011, p. 24)

As Lyotard (1984) emphasises, the socio-political

legitimacy all revolves around people. He says:

This way of inquiring into socio-political legitimacy combines with the new scientific attitude: the name of the hero is the people, the sign of legitimacy is the people's consensus, and their mode of creating norms is deliberation. The notion of progress is a necessary outgrowth of this. It represents nothing other than the movement by which knowledge is presumed to accumulate - but this movement is extended to the new socio-political subject. The people debate among themselves about what is just or unjust in the same way that the scientific community debates about what is true or false; they accumulate civil laws just as scientists accumulate scientific laws; they perfect their rules of consensus just as the scientists produce new "paradigms" to revise their rules in light of what they have learned. (Lyotard, 1984, p. 30)

Here, the people are the heroes, legitimacy, and norms. The Band Clubs are the community of members, hence carrying the heroic, legitimacy and norms and they may recharge themselves as the communal principal source for generating, disseminating, and knowledge accumulation. Oneself does not amount to much, but no one is an island as each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before (Lyotard, 1984, p. 15). The Band Clubs represent a social fabric, bound by a dedicated and voluntary-based community, where the individual becomes part of a collective cultural practice.

The secret, for Csikszentmihalyi (2008), to participants staying in the moment is the balance created between difficulty and accessibility of musical challenge, what he calls flow. This thinking resonates with Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that:

everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. (Article 27)

The Article emphasises the inseparability between Cultural and Human rights. It defines it as an unhindered access and inclusive enjoyment, while including:

the right of individuals and communities to know, understand, visit, make use of, maintain,

Table 1: Two band clubs in Zejtun

Band Club: Beland Band Club	Band Club: Zejtun Band Club
<p>This building is home to the Beland Band Club since 1861. It originally belonged to the Diacono family, who founded the band. The Beland Band is one of the oldest band clubs on the island. The building was constructed at the beginning of the 18th century, during the same period as the Parish Church. The original architectural design was Baroque seen in parts of the façade on St. Catherine's Street.</p>	<p>The Zejtun Band Club was formally founded in 1933, after it had functioned for some time as the Labour Jazz Band. Notable maestros who directed this band were Maestro (Mro.) Onorato Gauci, Mro. Giovanni Maria Dalli and his son, Mro. Hector Dalli, whose compositions are amongst the most popular with band clubs in Zejtun.</p>
<p>exchange and develop cultural heritage and cultural expressions, as well as to benefit from the cultural heritage and cultural expressions of others. (Article 27)</p> <p>Freedom of expression, access for information and education are also mentioned as human rights key factors contributing towards integral cultural rights and the Band Clubs to offer this.</p>	<p>decisions which affect all the islands' inhabitants (Boissevain, 1965, p. 47). As seen in Table 1, the Band Clubs in Zejtun have been considered a community hub with alliances forged and established via socio religious political agenda cultivated through performing arts, however, their activities shortly widened to encompass both the musical and other cultural activities' (Times of Malta, June 8, 2021).</p>
<p>The Band Clubs' contribution to the community</p>	<p>The Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sport and Voluntary organisations, the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector, together with the respective Band Clubs provide the following bi-lingual information (Maltese and English). For the intent of this paper the English version is presented in Table 1. The locality of Zejtun is in the South Eastern Region of Malta. Zejtun houses two Band Clubs, and their edifices occupy the centre of the village square together with the parish church.</p>
<p>Value in place of service is an important aspect of the Band Clubs modus operandi. The Band Clubs provide an informal and non-formal music education and practice; hence it moves away from the regimented service system and rationale.</p>	<p>When music education is formalised within schools and non-governmental organizations, it often becomes aligned with justice-oriented aims (Shorner-Johnson, 2017) of providing universal access to music education. One can claim that the Band Club is the equivalent of the nursery at a soccer club, where young players are trained, with the Band Clubs offering wide access to music education. The Lafayette Centre of Musical Arts advocates the cross curricula benefits of music and sport (see Table 2) in cognitive, physical and social/emotional areas.</p>
<p>With institutionalised communities of practice, there are two kinds of institutionalisation: "institutionalising communities of practice themselves and institutionalising their existence in the organization" (Wenger-Trayner, 2011). The Band Clubs fit into the second category, that is, institutionalising the existence of communities as groups that are independent, have a committee and are formally registered as non-government organisations (NGOs). The Maltese Band Club (il-kazin tal-banda) referred to as il-Kazin (meaning a small country villa) has an institutionalising existence and is the jewel in the crown, the paragon hub of the local community/adult music scenario in Malta. It sits at the heart of the village core, representing village unity underpinned by collectivism, and heterogeneity.</p>	<p>Qualified, experienced, and/or promising bandsmen are hired to teach the young and adults alike. This service is provided for free, as is the musical instrument. However, in turn for this</p>

Table 2: Cross curricula benefits of music and sport (from Lafayette Centre of Musical Arts).

	MUSIC	SPORTS
Brain/Cognitive Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved educational outcomes • creative thinking and problem solving skills • higher academic achievement (especially in math, science, languages) • higher grades and higher scores on standardized tests) • increased literacy and numeracy skills • expanded cognitive capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased focus and concentration • increased ability to process stimuli and process information
Physical Growth and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhanced fine motor development • supports ambidexterity • develops timing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhanced motor skill development • bone development • balance/coordination • combats childhood obesity • gain strength, agility • supports overall health
Social/Emotional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased aesthetic/emotional growth and capacity • confidence • discipline • motivation • establishes lifelong participation in arts & culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teamwork • opportunities for outdoor play • discipline • confidence • self-esteem • establishes lifelong active lifestyle • develops sportsmanship

service, the apprentice-performer will perform free of charge for the initial years, followed by a token payment (as a sign of appreciation) in the later years of service. This gesture may include honorary bestowed titles such as instrumental instructor.

This rationale is mostly applicable where more than one band club exists within the same community, with the immediate need to share the territory and the quest for supremacy. The Band Clubs adopt the symbols either of the earthy strength of the lion or the altitude supremacy of the eagle, together with their respective colours. 'In addition to the blue and red scarves introduced in the 1950s, demonstrators now carry coloured umbrellas and cardboard lions' (Boissevain, 1984, p.172). These symbols are rooted in biblical and medieval traditions denoting power, courage and tenacity. The researcher draws parallels with the Tuscan city of Siena, which is characterised by its seventeen *contrade* (neighbourhoods), with an animal symbolising each *contrada*. Similar to the Maltese Band Clubs' allegory and symbol, each *Contrada* comes to life during the July and August festivities. The locals refer to this event as *il Palio* (a racehorse).

By way of example, the villages of Zebbug (Malta), which according to the 2020 National Census has eleven thousand inhabitants and Qormi, sixteen thousand inhabitants, have three Band Clubs each, with their respective Schools of Music. This phenomenon may be described as pluralism (more than one club) in the sector. However, this may present a resource exhaustion issue and compromise the value attributed to the practice.

In summary therefore, in the mind of many, the Band Clubs are interwoven with historical events and colourful personalities, religion and politics, (Social Activity), music performances, (Practice), non-formal and informal music education (Participation).

Methodology

Informal practice as part of the community and adult music making

Investigating the informal teaching practice evaluation and reflections as it happened Pre, During and Post COVID-19 pandemic in Band Clubs, the study draws on Bamberg's "small story approach" with narrative inquiry as the research

tool “within which narratives and narrative inquiry present a more modest but thoroughly viable contribution” (Bamberg, 2012, p. 202).

The study adopted narrative inquiry as the preferred methodology because: it unfolds in real time, as both participants corresponded with the researcher and told their stories; and both participants are from the southwest part of the island, with a population of circa three thousand inhabitants. In this way:

Narrative inquiry is a methodology that offers the chance to bridge the divide between the researchers and practitioners by allowing practitioners a voice in the construction of new knowledge in the form of the jointly constructed narrative. (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p.19)

Observation and text examination as an analytical tool helped the researcher to listen and to reflect on the participant’s narrative, and its unveiling process. It merged as Storying as a Process, and the Story as a Product, wrapped in time as a factor because “Stories allow us to watch what an experience can do to people who are living the experience” (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 20). Barrett and Stauffer (2012) also discuss the engagement manner through music and their respective narrative “alternative accounts of why, when, where, and how people engage in music experience and learning (Barrett & Stauffer, 2012, p. 2).

Participants

The researcher interviewed two female band players who belong to the same southern band club established in 1908 in their personal account. For the purposes of this paper, and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation Act (GDPR), the researcher refers to the participants as ‘novice’ and ‘experienced’. By doing so, the privacy of the participants has been secured.

The gender of the two participants demonstrates that the Kazin is no longer a male-dominated institution. It has opened its doors to the wider community, physically and on air as most of the Kazini run their own FM radio stations. The experienced participant in her email

correspondence to the researcher stated the following:

I am the first woman from my family and even from the Local Band itself from Qrendi that plays this instrument [that is the trumpet] (Experienced participant - 2021, June 30).

The novice participant also commented on issues of gender when she stated:

It’s a reality that the Maltese system did not look for hidden talents 10 years ago. (Novice participant - 2021, July 4)

Both participants are University of Malta graduates. The experienced participant holds a Master’s degree in Diplomatic Studies, with an undergraduate degree in History.

I have a B.A (Hons.) in History as well as an M.A in Diplomatic Studies. Certainly, both had nothing to do with Music and Music learning. Yet, I found it very useful when also coming to Music exams - where you have a section in the exams that particularly relates to the history of the respective composer and the genres of different music and eras (Experienced participant - 2021, June 30).

The novice confirmed that she is a Social Policy graduate.

The experienced performer has been exposed to the Band Club culture from a young age, saying *I started learning music at the age of 8 years (Experienced participant - 2021, June 30)* with her family members actively engaged. She stated that:

I have half of my family members deeply rooted in Band Clubs and Band Marches and they also are musicians. Thus, the love for belonging and contributing to a Band Club and playing an instrument was very natural to have as a trait. (Experienced participant - 2021, June 30).

She explained:

I still continue my lessons and rehearsing with my Local Band and also attend and play in Band services that our Band goes to play in other Feasts around Malta... namely: its Annual Concerts of Christmas, Lent/Easter and the most exciting Concert that takes place on 9th August. (Experienced participant - 2021, June 30)

The novice performer spent considerable time in Australia as a recipient of the Student International Programme, administered by the University of Malta and Victoria University, Australia. This opportunity

enabled her to expand her experience by studying, working and living in different Australian States and Territories. The experience widened her worldview and outlook. The novice participant describes it as a valuable and unmatched life experience.

Consequently, the novice participant developed an egalitarian reception to other musical genres, including Alternative Rock, Jazz, Musical Theatre, Country, Electronic Dance Music, Jamaican music, referred to SKA. The palette of musical diversity borne out of an international experience freed the novice participant's musical vocabulary, and social interpretation. Hence, the local band club music repertoire and practice is a bi-product of an informed choice. She started attending the Band Clubs at the mature age of 28, long after finalising her tertiary studies.

Practice, Participation, and Social activity were unveiled as part of the participants narrative.

Data gathering

The researcher interviewed both participants virtually via emails and for one, face-to-face discussion. The questions asked related to:

- 1) Practice: experiences before COVID-19, during and projecting for the aftermath, that is the transition period;
- 2) Participation: the frequency and sustainability of community and adult music practice; and
- 3) Social activity: a sense of belonging that is the Band Clubs as a community of learners. As well as emails, occasional face-to-face meetings took place.

The experienced participant was only available for email interview, consequently, the face-to-face meetings were between the researcher and the novice participant.

Findings

i) Pre and current-COVID-19 musical environment

For the experienced participant COVID-19 and the resulting change in ways of working impacted the way the Clubs operated. She noted:

there has been a huge difference when comparing pre-COVID-19 and present days when coming to Band Clubs and Maltese Band Clubs and traditional Feasts. The Performing Arts in Malta has experienced a huge downfall when it comes to its activities, concerts, performances, band marches, both in closed and open areas. This also heavily affected Band Clubs when it comes to their respective Music schools where everyone, in particular Music Directors and tutors together with their students, had to find the right ways and means in continuing to teach and learn both composition and performance via online platforms.

At 'our band club', all music lessons and Band meetings during the pandemic had to be conducted online. Due to COVID-19, rehearsal activities stopped abruptly and the Band Club had to close its doors, abiding by the restrictions in place. However, we made sure that music lessons would still take place online so that such contact would not diminish and the student can still continue their lessons with their respective tutor and continue where he/she left off. (Experienced participant - 2021, June 13)

The researcher noted that the experienced participant referred to theory and practice and how COVID-19 changed this: *In pre-COVID-19 days, normally students and even Band musicians had the luxury to learn both theory and practice their instruments with the Music Director and tutors there on the spot once a week extending their knowledge, experiences and skills further (Experienced participant - 2021, June 13).* The researcher finds this comment concerning as learning theory and practice are not a 'luxury' but should be the cornerstone of the practice and possibly a consistent practice as part of a satisfactory community and adult music education. The changed COVID-19 environment highlighted the importance of offering both music learning areas.

ii) Instrument choice, the self, the future

Both participants based their choice of instrument on personal and personality choices. The experienced participant noted:

The sound, its pitch, its size, everything that constitutes a Trumpet really resembles my character, stamina, energy and I found it very natural to go and give my very best 100% of energy in it. With regard to the choice of instrument as well as the choice of learning, to keep advancing in the Band Club was

my own decision. I have never regretted it either.
(Experienced participant - 2021, June 30)

The language utilised is strong, projecting parallelism between the musical instrument and the character. However, there are similarities and common threads in both participants' narratives in relation to instrumental choice and instruction, for example in the preferred way the teaching/ learning/rehearsals were designed, implemented and provided.

The novice commented about her logic behind the choice of an instrument and herself and suggested a future way of choosing instruments:

I chose the saxophone over other instruments because of the connection that I felt with the sound and the way it is played... I wish there was some kind of Open Day giving the opportunity to potential band players to listen to various instruments individually and learn a few things about each of them before deciding - rather than leaving it to chance. (Novice participant - 2021, June 17)

The idea of an Open Day as part of the Band Clubs calendar, where one can be exposed to the band instrumentation in a friendly and practical manner, is a powerful future approach for Band Clubs.

iii) Social justice and musical opportunities

The novice made a strong statement about social justice and circumstances dictating choice of music education:

Unfortunately, I was born into a family which does not give value to people who take on a musical career. When I was young I was not exposed to music performance and when in my early teens I showed interest to learn, I was not encouraged to pursue it. Finances were a significant barrier to learn (Novice participant - 2021, July 4).

This statement links with the idea of social justice, family background, and expectations. These may be based on predetermined factors including finance and fixed family ideas about a future career not being seen as possible through musical education.

iv) The music teaching and learning environment

Both participants prefer the face-to-face, as opposed to the virtual teaching and learning experience. This came out in strong and convincing statements such as:

There is no comparison to a live lesson where the teacher can see and listen much more effectively (Novice - 2021, June 17) and for the experienced participant, *in my opinion, nothing beats physical lessons, rehearsals and activities that characterise a true Music Band Club and Maltese Feasts and Traditions* (Experienced participant - 2021, June 13).

The experienced participant noted other aspects to be considered:

It was a huge challenge in finding the right allocation of time, coordination and online platforms in avoiding any discomforts. Moreover, this has also affected everyone even on psychological levels. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, most Bands Clubs had to close down and could not operate the way they used to (Experienced participant - 2021, June 13)

These comments bring to the forefront the logistical and organisational challenges that need to be addressed when Band Clubs are forced to teach online. By addressing such issues the Clubs can be in a better position to secure and increase student engagement, in person and free. Not bound to a particular venue, supported by time-flexibility, which may translate into virtual sessions from different time zones of the globe potentially provides a rather less restricted platform between the participants. At the same time this approach takes the positive aspects of online learning, adopted during COVID-19, leaving out the frustrations and challenges, in conjunction with face-to-face learning.

Castellano (2018) states that digitally connecting music facilitators and communities may establish mutually beneficial relationships to experience convenient and diverse opportunities. However, the downside of such practice is the physical-social aspect noted by the experienced participant. A blended system, balanced and effective, as outlined above, would address the current expectations and needs without jeopardising the standard yet would be respectful to its tradition that is the band club as a social hub. The researcher interprets these comments by participants as the Band Club not yet acknowledging the challenges and positives aspects of the online teaching and learning platform.

v) Music practising

In relation to her current practice the novice participant, when asked about her initial general experience at the Band Clubs and how she feels and evaluates her progress, expressed herself partially positively:

It was difficult to keep a momentum of learning when practicing online. There is no comparison to a live lesson where the teacher can see and listen much more effectively. During the 10 months prior to COVID-19, I attended lessons to familiarise myself with solfeggio and notation - without actually playing the instrument. (Novice participant - 2021, July 4)

This statement sheds light on the preferred way of teaching and learning, that is, face-to-face, for the participants. Here, the face-to-face interaction is interpreted as more beneficial than the online, despite the benefits of the online approach including environmental (zero-emission) benefits, mobility, and an array of professional applications. The two participants are in agreement about their preferred learning delivery mode, that is face-to-face, without ruling out the benefits associated with online learning, and/or a blended delivery.

vi) Views about music education

The participants were positive about the Band Clubs music education but gave very different views about the tertiary music education environment in Malta. The experienced participant noted that:

Unfortunately, few opt for Music in University in Malta, knowing that it does not give you the same wide opportunities as other subjects do in building a stable and advancing career. Those that opt for Music at University would mainly go further and study abroad or else opt for a Teaching career here in Malta. (Experienced - 2021, June 30)

The experienced participant's view may be interpreted as a utilitarian rationale. It is detrimental to acquiring knowledge vis a vis a process-driven system advocating high paid functional positions. As a result, it may weigh in more social responsibility on the Band Clubs, its program of studies, delivery mode and opportunities. On the other hand, the novice participant states:

When I was 18, I wanted to pursue a musical degree but I did not have all the requirements. An A level result in music was a must and I did not have it. Therefore, I took on the second best degree which could fulfil my life goals. However, I often look back and wonder how different my life experiences would have been had I pursued a musical career. (Novice participant - 2021, July 4)

The two accounts are different in their outlook, rationale and purpose. However, it comes across as the experienced participant had the opportunity to pursue music professionally and opted otherwise, while the novice's circumstances did not enable her to pursue music professionally. Both candidates are committed to the local community and adult music scene. They are courteous, engaged, have made meaningful connections and enriching experiences and their narratives indicate a renewal in the dissemination of knowledge and practice.

The two participants gave very different stories about the role of Music as career or lifelong activity. For the experienced participant:

I was never of the idea that Music would be also my leading disciplinary role and keep on advancing in having a Music career. I always portray Music as a passion, a talent that you keep developing at your own pace and time and not bound by any timeframe of studies and courses. (Experienced participant - 2021, June 30)

She continues with no indication of music as a formal career path, but rather for pleasure:

I started off with scratches of composition on manuscripts [a stave copybook] and continued developing my skills and learning until I had also attended Master Classes (both locally and abroad) and also sat for Music Exams. Up till now I hold Grade 6 in both composition as well as performance and I have also participated in numerous Orchestras, Competitions, Music Workshops, both here in Malta as well as abroad. (Experienced participant - 2021, June 30)

Here is deep music learning as outlined by Ramsden (1989), across a range of music activities – composition, theory, playing exams and performance in ensembles, with enjoyment and passion but no career interest. The novice participant, however, would like to have had the opportunity to start learning music earlier in her life:

Table 3: Participants’ music learning rationales.

Experienced Participant	Novice Participant
Music: Lacking a stable and advancing career progression. Thus, regarded as a hobby.	Music: It is regarded as a profession with a career progression. But started learning music in mature age.
Choice of Instrument: Trumpet based on family tradition.	Choice of Instrument: Saxophone, rather by chance, with no family tradition.
Delivery mode preference: face- to face	Delivery mode preference: In person
Collective participation and sense of belonging: A staunch supporter and avid band member.	Collective participation: A rather middle of the road approach with a mild connection to the band club.
Repertoire choice: Traditional and with a local - community affinity orientation including band marches and religious hymns and anthems.	Repertoire choice: Contemporary and International with different genres including Jazz, and Musical Theatre. Thus, catering for the wider community, village-outsiders, and visitors.

I feel that had I been born into a musically inclined family, I would have been exposed to music and therefore encouraged to practice and compose my own music. (Novice participant - 2021, July 4)

The two participants’ rationales are summarised in Table 3.

Conclusions

Through their vivid accounts the two participants earmarked the positives and challenges for Band Clubs: Practice, Participation, and Social Activity, drawn from the past, the present and what they foresee for the future, and expressed the need for a more informed practice that reflects both fluidity and sustainability. In this way, a more informed practice can respect the tradition, and acknowledge the value offered by the Band Clubs in their community. The participants expressed the desire to preserve what has been achieved through generations, as part of a national cultural identity. However, they also felt that community practice should keep pace with the continuous changes in the field.

The Band Club is a community of members, recharging itself as the communal principal source for generating, disseminating and accumulation knowledge. Perhaps the Band Club administration can focus more on its communal arena as if shifting its narrative towards a more holistic pastoral care duty. The role of pastoral power, by comparison, is to constantly ensure, sustain and improve the

lives of each and every individual (Johnsons, 1997), thus, ensuring an improved and sustained inclusive practice. This exchange of knowledge between the individual and the community may lead to new paths with diverse music genres, aligned with individual instrumental practice within the band community.

The researcher feels that this may serve as a feeder effect where the individual develops the ability and inclination to promote new ideas. Thus, the community responding accordingly in an active or passive manner. The individual has the power to trigger an innovative line of thought that may lead to a new direction. While the community as a receptive body may opt to either side, that is open to new ideas, and, or reject new ideas. That is either compromising with the line of thought, and jeopardising the action, or supporting the individual as the hero, the catalyst for an internal review.

For example, a member or some members may propose new ways of engaging music pedagogies that may lead to diversification and scope, exploring and untapping new territories and opportunities. This may attract new members and potential band affiliated musicians. Hence, the Band Club becomes more of an umbrella society extending its music service and practice to a wider audience. This in return rejuvenates the Band Clubs and facilitates the music education process by providing voice to ethnic minority groups, and artistic freedom.

This means that students can experience a diet of contrasting difficulty levels with music rooted in the optimal balance between difficulty and accessibility, as a key aspect of *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; Keay, 2018; Kirchner, Bloom, & Skutnick-Henley, 2008).

If the future of teaching and learning for community musicians is to be partly online, a potential peril may be the diluting of community traditions, with online learning sourced from another country. Hence, musical leaders need to be the custodian of the communal-tradition and practice. A balance needs to be struck making the best out of the two worlds - internationalism and tradition – through a blending of the best of the two approaches, face-to-face and online.

Online learning allows diversity and breaks free from the constraints of a place or institution, and fixed time zone. Online platforms could also include informative sessions addressing important historical events, including overseas performances, social, and religious collaboration significant to the community, a triangular effect based on social justice, education value, and communal equity. This effect sits in harmony with the traditions and heritage of the Band Club as the community anchor organisation. The preservation of the Band Club is equally important due to its pedagogical and methodological renewal efforts.

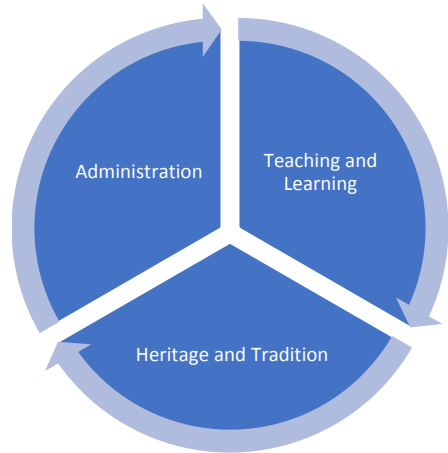
Despite the family challenges, one participant found the Band Club was a welcoming community environment. Consequently, the social and gender gap can be narrowed by providing possibilities, facilitating community practice and adult music-making as a human right and not a privilege.

Potential further exploration

The research identified three areas to be potentially explored, discussed further, and implemented in the future as part of an informed praxis focusing on the local scenario of community music making (see Figure 1).

Firstly, the administrative team manages the logistic aspects of the Band Clubs including routine schedules, and cultural events including

Figure 1. The three main areas of potential exploration and research



gala concerts, and visits from dignitaries and distinguished guests.

Second, the teaching and learning practices spanning from young to mature age students which may include projected learning outcomes commensurate with the students' standards, ethics and further in-house or external development sessions including seminars, workshops, and offshore exchange programs.

And thirdly, the heritage and tradition including the service of a professional curator, and, or music archivist, digitisation process of the music archives together with the historical library and the oral tradition documentation with the participations of the elders of the community.

The Band Clubs recognise that these areas to be explored are borne out of global necessity. It requires communal will to embracing these areas as a learning curve, an experience based on resilience, with a positive and collaborative attitude, thereby securing Practice, Participation, and Social activity to the current and future generations.

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Jes Grixti is a Maltese-Australian composer and academic. His music has been performed internationally, including at Carnegie Hall in the USA. His findings are centred on music education and community music-making. He is currently a visiting academic at the University of Malta.