

MUSIC IS ORGANISED SOUND

This session the participants always in groups; the group as a whole or divided into smaller groups. In this way you create a high feeling of safety amongst the participants, which is very welcome when you work with music. All methods used are presented as assignments which the group has to solve. This keeps the minds focussed on the assignment and not on the stress of performing music.

Exploring sound possibilities

All participants sit around one large table. Now everybody has to think of a way to make a drum roll. Participant A starts with a drum roll, B imitates him, C follows etc. etc. When the whole circle is making the drum roll, then participant B introduces a new one. Keep on doing this until you can think of no other way. (Trust me there are hundreds of possibilities).

This method helps the participants to learn new ways of producing sounds.

Tribal battle: The group is divided into two. Both groups are sitting behind a table opposite of each other. Now a participant of group A walks to table B and start beating a kind of drum roll or a rhythm, his whole group joins him from behind their table. This provokes a participants of group B to go to table A and starts to beat a own drum roll or rhythm. Of course his group follows the lead. In this way you change turns until no new drum rolls are beaten.

This method helps the participants to learn to make “music” together as a group.

60 seconds quiz: Divide the participants into smaller groups. The quizmaster gives short assignments to fulfil to the groups. The group which performs the best, wins a point (try to let everybody end up with the same points) . The groups only get 60 seconds to come up with an “answer”. Your assignments go from practical to connotational:

Melody/tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a low sound - Create a sharp sound - Create a sustained sound - Create a very short sound
Rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the fastest drum roll. - - play a dance beat
Harmony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combine a sharp and a low tone - Create a sound which is the sum of at least 3 different ones - Everyone in the group makes a different sound
Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the loudest sound. - make the softest sound (with all together) - - play with loud and soft
Tone colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a mood with sounds - create a stressy sound - - create a gentle sound
Connotations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Imitate an animal - - Imitate a sound of nature
Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make a hierarchy in sounds - sleeping song (nursery rhyme) - - make a song in A – B – A form

This method helps the participants to learn new ways of producing sounds, of giving connotations to sounds and of creating something together.

Ostinato → body percussion → ecopercussion

A ostinato is a melody, a rhythm or a harmony created by combining several layers of simple motives, repeating this constantly. (You can find a decent definition somewhere else ;-)) The groups sit in a circle. The trainer build up a ostinato by letting 2 persons repeating his actions. When the first two play a certain motive, he learn the next two another motive and thus adds a second layer to the ostinato, and so on and on. After doing this exercise you can start again, but now it are the participants who need to come up with the motives (like the first exercise with the drum rolls).

In this way the participants learn to listen to each other and create something together.

We continue the ostinato excercise, but this time we start using bodyparts. We emphasize strongly on trying out as much a different body parts as possible.

In this way the participants learn to discover new sounds and create something together.

Plastic cups: each player gets 2 plastic cups and a chair/table. Everyone gets a minute to explore the different sound possibilities of the plastic cups and the chair. They cannot break the plastic cups (yet). Now we form 4 groups of participants, each in one corner of the room. The ostinatos now continue. All groups need to build 1 ostinato together, each group maintaining an individual group sound. The ostinato needs to build to a climax, where in the end the cups get destroyed.

In this way the participants learn to discover new sounds and play together in groups.

Eco percussion

We now introduce a pile of recycled materials and wooden sticks. For the rest of the session the participants will be using and exploring the different sound possibilities, by creating a eco percussion band. To get to know the different sounds the participants can first try out some 'instruments' and select one which is theirs. Next the participants are going to sit in a circle facing outside, and preferably closing their eyes. The participants now are transported into a strange world, full of strange animals which make strange sounds. Each participants' instrument is such an animal. One by one they explore all the sound possibilities of the instrument, afterwards the other participants can give the animal a name. The order of the animals is open.

In this way the participants learn to explore new sound possibilities and make connotations to sounds.

The participants choose new instrument, and are challenge to create a group sound of different instruments. The only rule is that each instrument needs to exactly sound the same strength.

In this way the participants learn to come to a balanced group sound.

The participants now choose new instruments. Now they need to explore which sounds of the instruments sound the best together according to them. They choose 3 sounds on their instrument. Again they build up a ostinato, but as soon as they are playing they can change their sound in the ostinato (not the ostinato rhythm).

In this way the participants learn to play with sound colours.

Composition

The participants are divided into smaller groups. Each group gets the assignment of making a short composition which starts with an ostinato – then something happens – and then we go back to the ostinato. Then let the different groups listen to each other (with their eyes closed), and let the public explain what they hear. You can repeat this exercise, now with the assignment of giving sense to the composition (a machine starts, gets stuck, gets fixed and starts up again).

This is a composition exercise which allows the participants play the compositions for each other they can learn to perform in a safe way.

The group stand in a circle. The trainer says a word in a particular rhythm. All the participants repeat a few times in group. When everybody is saying the word in the same rhythm the whole group drums the rhythm on their instrument. Now each participant gets the task of finding out own rhythms. We train it one by one. Once we have all the rhythms we play the rhythms in sequence, each rhythm is played 8 times.

This composition exercise learn the participants to build a rhythmic composition by juxtaposing words.

The player has one instrument. Now they have to discover a word which perfectly describes their instrument (this can be in their own language or in English). The rule is that a low sounding instrument uses only words with 1 or 2 syllables, A mid sounding instrument 3 – 6 syllables and a high sounding instrument 4 – 8 syllables. Once they have their words, they form a group with 3 – 6 other players. Now they have to play their words all in the same metre, however the low sounding instrument “pronounce” their words slower in time than the higher sounding instruments.

This composition exercise learn the participants to build complex rhythmic compositions by superposing words.

Performance

As final assignment you can give the whole group (or the smaller groups) a composition assignment which they have to perform to a public. The composition needs to last 10 minutes. Also decide where the public should be: lying on the floor, eyes closed, looking outside a window, sitting in a corner, ...

Et viola, you have your eco percussive band.