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APPROACHES

ARTICLE

A duoethnography about musicking at an older adult care home during COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a global problem. Older adults, who are considered high-risk individuals, have been particularly impacted and have experienced increased isolation and loneliness. Musicians also experienced loneliness during the lockdown period. Therefore, the purpose of this duoethnography is to explore the culturally situated meanings two research participants ascribe to musicking at an older adult care home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research participants are two community musicians who have facilitated weekly musicking sessions at an older adult care home for the past five years. During the hard lockdown, we serenaded the older adults in the street in front of the care home. Our data collection was stimulated by photos, session plans, song choices, diary reflections, and individual accounts. To explore our dialogical understanding, we used storytelling and Pinar's (1975) four-step method of *currere*, namely regressive, progressive, synthesis and analysis. The findings indicated that musicking during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed us to share and express compassion and care towards the older adult residents and each other. We, therefore, argue that musicking, with the necessary hygienic precautions, should be encouraged as a form of reciprocal care during a global pandemic.

KEYWORDS
musicking,
duoethnography,
older adult care home,
currere,
ethics of care,
COVID-19

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INTRODUCTION

Loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a global problem (Sutin et al., 2020). In particular older adults, who are considered high-risk individuals, have experienced increased isolation and, as a result, intensified loneliness (Mukku & Sivakumar, 2020). The head nurse at Oak Tree Care Home for older adults appealed to us; "Please come back. They are dying of loneliness". Oak Tree is a pseudonym we used to protect the care home and all the stakeholders.

Not only older adults but also community musicians worldwide experienced isolation and loneliness (Van der Sandt & Coppi, 2021; Youngblood et al., 2021). The two authors of this article also experienced "frustration, sadness and loneliness" (Youngblood et al., 2021, p. 213) because we could not do what is meaningful to us, namely make music with the older adults and interact with our colleagues. Musicking (Small, 1999) is meaningful to us since we build relationships (Cohen, 2011) through our weekly social interaction.

We had been facilitating weekly musicking sessions at the Oak Tree Care Home since 2018, before the hard lockdown was put in place in South Africa by President Ramaphosa on the 26th of March 2020. Oak Tree Care Home is situated in Potchefstroom, in the North West Province of South Africa.

These musicking sessions included the security guards who gave us access to the care home, the nurses who brought the older adults to the living room, the kitchen staff who would move to the music as they passed by, and all the people who performed and listened to the music. True to Small's (1999) concept of musicking, these sessions included movement, singing, improvisation and listening to music.

Small (1999) defines musicking as follows: "To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance" (p. 12). Similarly to Dons (2019), our musicking sessions consisted of co-creation with the older adults. We were sensitive to the older adults' preferences and noticed that they preferred singing instead of moving to the music. The songbook was created from songs the older adults chose to sing. They also had the opportunity to improvise with us during instrumental activities. Musicking has benefits for older adults living with dementia. These include being engaged, connecting with others, affirming their identities and being present in the moment (Dowlen et al., 2018). Dowlen et al.'s (2018) findings relate to Small's (1999) explanation that "the essence of music lies not in musical works but in taking part in performance, in social action" (p. 9). Through this active engagement, relationships are built, making the musicking meaningful (Small, 1999).

Our musicking matches the description of Higgins' (2012) third perspective on community music which can be understood as an approach to active music-making outside formal teaching. Musicians who work in this way want to create relevant and accessible music-making experiences that integrate activities such as listening, improvising and performing (Higgins, 2012). Active music-making was our goal in choosing activities for our musicking sessions. We adapted the activities according to the ever-changing preferences of the residents. However, during the hard lockdown, we could not present our weekly musicking sessions at the care home since we were not allowed to leave our own homes.

Virtual interaction was not possible since the care home does not have Wi-Fi. We were deeply concerned that the older adults might have thought that we had forgotten about them. After the head nurse's request that we should return, we battled to balance interacting with the older adults and not putting them or ourselves at risk. We agree with Crisp (2021) that "the health of participants must be prioritised over the continuation of the activity" (p. 136).

Therefore, similar to balcony singing in Italy (Van der Sandt & Coppi, 2021), we decided to play in the street outside the building while they sang with us from their front porch. These musicking sessions, which we consider social-cultural events (Odendaal et al., 2014), were an opportunity for the older adult residents to move outside their rooms and building to the porch and into the fresh air and sing. Moreover, since we had to work from home, on the whole, it was also the only time in the week to make music and interact face-to-face with colleagues.

"Performers are hardly ever mentioned in writings on the meaning of music" (Small, 1999, p. 1). Hence, in this study, we focus on our own experiences through a dialogue with each other in which we share our experiences and our stories. Although the experiences of community musicians during the COVID-19 pandemic have been explored in a special edition of the *International Journal of Community Music* (Clift, 2021), voices from South African community musicians during the pandemic have not been heard yet. Clift (2021) encouraged reports from Africa.

In this special edition, community musicians shared their experiences of the loss of live musicking; challenges and resistance of moving musicking online; inequalities of access to space and technology; positive experiences of online musicking and renewed thinking about the social role of music (Clift, 2021). The dilemmas of the lockdown have been particularly intense for older adults receiving palliative care. However, Schmid et al. (2021) found that "music is surprisingly resilient in the face of disruption, distortion and disturbance" (p. 326). Although there have been qualitative studies in this special edition (Crooke et al., 2021; Jaber et al., 2021; Morgan-Ellis, 2021; Rivas et al., 2021; Schmid et al., 2021; van der Sandt & Coppi, 2021), none followed a duoethnographic approach.

RESEARCH APPROACH: DUOETHNOGRAPHY

Duoethnography is a collaborative research approach where two or more researchers work in tandem (Sawyer & Norris, 2009) and engage in dialogue to make sense of their lived experiences through the research process (Norris et al., 2016). These multivocal texts are based on a relationship of mutual trust (Chang et al., 2016). We had already developed mutual trust during the eight years we had been working together. Duoethnography, a term coined by Norris et al. (2016), is especially valuable for representing, regenerating and reconceptualising experiences. Researchers use duoethnography to bring suppressed stories and subjugated knowledge to the forefront (Norris et al., 2016).

This duoethnography aims to explore the culturally situated meanings two research participants ascribe to musicking at an older adult care home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our duoethnography takes the form of a dialogue with critical reflections, taking Kinnear and Ruggunan's (2019) study as a model for the structure of our article; introduction, research design and approach, dialogues and discussion, and contribution.

DATA COLLECTION

To collect data, we had three reflective dialogues on Zoom. We recorded, transcribed and added the three dialogic reflections based on our experiences during COVID-19 in one heuristic unit in ATLAS.ti, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software programme (Friese, 2019).

These discussions were structured according to past experiences, present circumstances and future dreams. 211 photos, 81 session plans (which included songs, materials, instruments, activities, and the roles of all the various participants), 126 song choices and 19 diary reflections (directly after sessions) from 2018-2022 helped us to remember and engage in a dialogue about our experiences.

THE *CURRERE* METHOD

Duoethnography builds on Pinar's (1975) concept of currere, the individual's life curriculum. This method entails exploring "the complex relation between the temporal and conceptual" (Pinar, 1975, p. 1) by following four steps, namely regressive, progressive, analysis and synthesis. In our dialogues and shared stories, we followed these steps.

In the first regressive or retrospective step, we looked to the past, using songs as references to share stories of our culturally embedded histories (Norris et al., 2016). Therefore, our stories were a dialogue between each other and our dialogues with cultural artefacts (Norris et al., 2016), in this case the songs in relation to our work at the care home.

In the progressive or rather prospective step, we looked to the future (Norris et al., 2016) and shared our evolving interests and future dreams regarding our work at Oak Tree Care Home for older adults (Pinar, 1975).

The analytical third step included a description of the biographic present, including responses to the past and present. In this step, we considered the interrelations between the past, present and future (Pinar, 1975). For this step, we used ATLAS.ti 9 to analyse our transcribed dialogues. We used thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) to code salient quotes, and develop categories and themes. Twelve themes (Table 1) emerged, and we reported them and their relation to scholarly literature throughout our narrative. The analytical step is thus not described separately in this article, but it is intertwined throughout the other three steps, namely: regressive, progressive and synthesis.

Step 1 - Regressive	Step 2 - Progressive	Step 3 - Synthesis
Theme 1: Reasons for musicking	Theme 1: Future dreams	Theme 1: Playing music during COVID-19
Theme 2: Mortality	Theme 2: Adapting the music sessions to the older adults' needs	Theme 2: Our transformations
Theme 3: Music and memory	Theme 3: Inner conflict	
Theme 4: The spirituality of musicking	Theme 4: Long-term commitment	
Theme 5: Remembering songs and stories		
Theme 6: Cultural identity		

Table 1: Findings – the three steps and corresponding themes

Lastly, during the synthesis step, we asked: What is the meaning of the present musicking at Oak Tree Care Home for older adults for us as musicians, facilitators and researchers? We shared our "aha!" moments (Rinehart & Earl, 2016). Our finished duoethnography has a coherent structure, both thematic and chronological (Norris et al., 2016).

PARTICIPANTS

Both researchers consented to participate in this duoethnographic study. The research participants in this study are two colleagues, Helene: a researcher, music educator and bassoonist and Cathy: a music theory lecturer and pianist. Not only do we play together at the care home, but we also perform together as members of the classical chamber music ensemble, Trio Joie de Vivre.

We took responsibility not to reify, trivialise or romanticise (Norris et al., 2016) the story of the other participant in the duoethnography. We also carefully chose what we revealed since we are not anonymous, and neither are the friends and family members we discuss. We present the article in a dialogical form and indicate our separate voices by our names (Rinehart & Earl, 2016).

STEP 1: REGRESSIVE

In the regressive or retrospective step, six themes emerged from the analysis of the transcribed dialogues in ATLAS.ti: (1) reasons for musicking, (2) mortality, (3) music and memory, (4) the spirituality of musicking, (5) remembering songs and stories from our past, and (6) the formation of our cultural identity. Although we present our findings in a dialogue format, the dialogue is not raw data but rather themes that emerged from analysing the dialogue. We chose to present the findings as a dialogue since one of the tenets of duoethnography is being polyvocal and dialogic (Breault, 2016). Furthermore, "duoethnographies make the voice of each duoethnographer explicit" (Norris et al., 2016, p. 18). The reader should know who is saying what. Therefore, in the findings section, we constantly label who the speaker is, as is best practice in duoethnography (Norris et al., 2016).

Regressive, Theme 1: Reasons for musicking

"Musicking brings into existence among those
present a set of relationships." (Small, 1999, p. 13)

Helene: Maybe we can start at the beginning by asking why we started musicking at Oak Tree Care Home. I think the reason I wanted to start making music at Oak Tree Care Home might be different from why you wanted to start there. My uncle passed away as a result of aggressive brain cancer. Then my grandmother passed away, and my grandfather was utterly alone. So, my grandfather was moved to Oak Tree Care Home, just two blocks from our house. I did not know how to make his circumstances better. The only thing I know how to do is to make music. I think it was at that stage that I asked if we could go there to make music. I wanted to make sure I visited my grandfather at least once a week. He developed Parkinson's, and I thought maybe we could make it a bit better with Dalcroze-inspired activities. I've heard in a keynote address that Dalcroze helps with Parkinson's

(Kressig, 2017), and I had it at the back of my mind that we could do Dalcroze research to present in Poland at the International Conference of Dalcroze Studies.

Cathy: That was part of it, but it was not the main reason. I know long ago, even before your grandfather moved to Oak Tree, you wanted to work with older adults. My dream was always to use Dalcroze with young children since that is more within my frame of reference. As a student, we sang choir and played orchestra at care homes, and it was always a very upsetting experience for me. I was hesitant, but I thought it was a good project to be involved in. I guess if you hadn't done it, I wouldn't have either. Now I enjoy it, but it is still very upsetting.

Regressive, Theme 2: Mortality

"The real experience is one in which a person becomes aware of his/her own finiteness." (Gadamer as cited by Pio & Varkøy, 2012, p. 104)

Helene: What about it upsets you?

Cathy: Our mortality. I sit there every week and think about my own life. According to Partridge (2015), it is because of music's ability to create affective space that "music is particularly powerful in drawing us into reflection on mortality" (p. 4). Partridge (2015) also writes that the contemplation of one's own impermanence is probably not possible for extended periods of time without becoming "unhealthily morbid" (p. 3). However, Partridge (2015) argues that much of the cultural work we do and the value we place on that work relates to this awareness that life is short. This is also the case for me. Because of this awareness of my mortality, the work we do at Oak Tree has become very meaningful. It is my opinion that it is valuable work. It gives value to the lives of the older adults.

I see the older adults and their yearning for contact and conversations with us. When they are so grateful afterwards and say it is the highlight of their week, it upsets me to think that our singing folk songs and hymns together is the highlight of their week. Then I think, in 50 years, it might be me.

Helene: What upsets me is that I don't know if I will ever see them again. When I look at photos of 2018 and 2019, I see that almost 90% of the people we worked with have passed away. "Nearer my God to thee" was a song that my grandfather, a former resident at Oak Tree Care Home, always wanted us to play at his funeral. We always asked the people what songs we should bring to the next session, and one day he asked that we bring "Nearer my God to thee" to the next session. At that moment, I thought, let's sing it now because he was ill and you never know what will happen from one week to the next. We also played this song at his funeral.

Cathy: I remember that day, your grandfather got quite emotional and had to wipe some tears away.

Regressive, Theme 3: Music and memory

"Musical memory is known to be well preserved in many Alzheimer's disease case studies." (Jacobsen et al., 2015, p. 2440)

Helene: Something else that upsets me is the residents who have Alzheimer's and are anxious. Do you remember Sally, how she begged us to take her home?

Cathy: It takes me back to my grandmother. She had Alzheimer's. It is the grandmother who I grew up with, and I loved her very much. It was very upsetting when she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. The first time she could not remember who I was, was extremely traumatic for me. When we saw Sally first, she said, I don't know where I will sleep tonight. It reminded me of my grandmother. It opened old wounds.

Helene: Some of the people living with Alzheimer's would not be able to talk anymore, but they would sing. We remind them of the songs of their youth that they have already forgotten. In his keynote address at ICDS3, Kressig (2017) said that "musical memory can be preserved even in advanced stages and that exposure to self-chosen music can help recall self-defining memories" (p. 26). The results in the study by Salakka et al. (2021) also provided compelling evidence that the emotions induced by music have a strong link to autobiographical memories.

I remember my grandfather was diagnosed with Parkinson's and could not remember anymore. We sang a song that he taught me as a child, Ps 146, "Prys die Heer met blye galme",[1] a Psalm for giving thanks. This Psalm was important to him and reflected how he lived his life, full of gratitude and constantly praising God. When we play this Psalm in the musicking sessions, it is a way for me to remember him, remember what was important to him, honour his memory, and process the grief. Vist and Bonde (2013) found that music and songs could help their participants out of the chaos of grief into the world again. Volgsten and Pripp (2016) also found that music can turn memories of negative events into positive feelings, which was also the case for me with this Psalm.

Cathy: My grandmother, who had Alzheimer's, loved the song "Liefste Tannie ons bring rosies".[2] I chose to bring it to a musicking session because I identified the song with my grandmother. I still get sad when I hear it. I even remember her gestures. The song is about kisses, and then she would show how she blows kisses to us. She was a very loving grandmother. Because I loved my granny so much and had so many special memories associated with the song, I decided to learn the song's lyrics and sing it to my children. My second born son was in NICU after his birth, and I was very emotional because he had some infection. One night it looked like he was making eye contact and focusing on me while I was singing this song. This was a very precious and spiritual moment. Interpersonal connection with a loved one through musicking is often a spiritual experience (Boyce-Tillman, 2020).

Helene: I remember how my father and I visited my uncle in the ICU. We sang his favourite hymn to him, "How great thou art", which we chose as one of the songs in the care home songbook. While we sang, all the machines were quiet. It was the strangest thing, a peaceful feeling, and the moment we stopped singing, all the machines started making beeping noises. It was upsetting but also good to have had the opportunity to get closure and do what we could. Priskos (2021) explains how singing at the bedside of a dying loved one can be a way to say farewell and still talk to our loved ones and walk them 'home'.

[1] "Praise the Lord with joyful sounds"

[2] "Dearest aunt, we bring roses"

Regressive, Theme 4: The spirituality of musicking

"The relationships between those taking part."
(Small 1999, p. 16)

Another rite of passage song with special meaning for me is "Soos 'n Wildsbok".[3] We sang this song at our wedding because I liked the words and the melody. When we sing it at Oak Tree, the sincerity with which the older adults sing this song always touches me. They have this craving to be close to God and be with him one day. It often feels more like church to me than church itself. Through this whole pandemic, one of the things that I miss the most is going to church. We also sang it in the University choir.

Cathy: Yes, that is my association with this song. For me, the University choir was a very enriching experience. It brought back my love for music and enriched my faith.

Helene: Yes, the University choir was also an exceptional experience for me. When I started studying music, I was not allowed to play bassoon in the symphony orchestra as my lecturer felt we still needed to work exclusively on technique. So the University choir became a musical home for me and my only social life as a student.

Two other songs with special memories for me are next to each other in the songbook. Those songs are "God is Liefde"[4] and "Blye versekering"[5]. These songs are my grandmother's and mother's favourite songs, which they requested to be sung at their funerals. I enjoy playing songs close to the hearts of the people I love; maybe it also means something to the older adults. I was always very close to my grandmother, and the song "God is Liefde" is also how she lived her life. She had unconditional love for us and would never judge us. She just loved us. My grandmother formed my theology, as I believe God is love. We sang this song at her funeral.

Regressive, Theme 5: Remembering songs and stories

"Musical experiences helpfully link music's world
with the everyday world." (Ansdell, 2014, p. 320)

Cathy: I thought about some stories about the folk songs we sing, and two songs, "Wandellied"[6] and "Die vrolike musikant",[7] always make me think about my eldest son because he loves those songs and loves to sing them. My husband feels it is essential that the children know their traditional folk songs, so we listen to these songs in the car.

Helene: Yes, I must say that these folk songs and feeling that you belong in a particular tradition meant a lot to me as a child.

Volgsten and Pripp (2016) see music as the content of personal communicative memories when specific music from an individual past or childhood is being played. "Communicative memory is based

[3] This song is from Psalm 42 and the title translates to "As a deer longing for water, my soul longs for the Lord."
[4] "God is love"
[5] "Blessed assurance"
[6] "The wanderer's song"
[7] "The friendly musician"

on everyday communication within relatively small groups" (Volgsten & Pripp, 2016, p. 146). According to Volgsten and Pripp (2016), music may also be the content of cultural memory with respect to the style, genre and repertoire. "Cultural memory is distanced from the everyday. It is organised and institutionalised through rites, sacred sites and canonised texts" (Volgsten & Pripp, 2016, p. 146). The songs that the older adults chose to sing in these sessions were part of their past and attributed to their cultural memory and their cultural identity, as it was mostly older folk songs. Songs reflect our identities and can help us to get to know each other better (Ilari et al., 2013).

Regressive, Theme 6: Cultural identity

> "Singing songs from different cultures may play important roles in the construction of our identities and in how we perceive and understand others, and ultimately ourselves." (Ilari et al., 2013, p. 202)

Cathy: My husband is Dutch, and his parents immigrated to South Africa in 1981. So he did not grow up with traditional Afrikaans folk songs but only learned them later in his life, and, interestingly, he is so fond of these songs now. Maybe because he does not associate these songs with all the baggage that some Afrikaners associate with these songs.

Helene: The mother of my husband is German. I sometimes think I wanted a German husband because I associate more with European culture, and I think it is because of all the baggage with our culture in South Africa. I sometimes feel guilty about the songs that we sing from the previous Apartheid regime. Lickel et al. (2005) describe guilt as a "powerful emotion of self-condemnation" (p. 145). Sometimes I was hesitant to sing some of the songs, because of the words, for example, the song "Vanaand gaan die Volkies koring sny".[8] I was conscious of the black nurses in the room, and I wondered how they perceived these words. I was also wondering if these songs are still relevant today.

Cathy: Yes, I hear what you say, but on the other hand, I feel that this is part of our culture and our history. Perhaps some of the words or terminology are not appropriate today, but when the song was created, it was not strange. I also do not think the older adults sing any of these songs with bad intentions or with hate in their hearts. They sing them because they enjoy it. I am also really tired of being forced to be ashamed of my culture and my history in South Africa. We are also not always sure of the history of the songs. For example, with "Vanaand gaan die Volkies koring sny," when he sings that his loved one hangs from the bush, it sounds shocking because you imagine someone hanging from the bush, but I read in a study by De Klerk (2008) that the loved one refers to a barrel of wine, hanging from the bush and that is waiting for them for when they finish harvesting. I like our songs and feel I can be proud of them, even though I acknowledge that everything in the past was not necessarily right and that we made mistakes.

Helene: Yes, after you explained the words, the context, and that the older adults mean no harm, I do not feel guilty about these songs anymore. I also like our folk songs, and it is a culture that I share. That is why I liked it when my children could join us in some sessions and learn some of the songs. I also enjoy it when the black nurses wholeheartedly sing these songs along with big smiles. Now the intention of these songs is shared jollity.

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[8] "Tonight the farm hands are going to cut the wheat"

STEP 2: PROGRESSIVE

When we analysed our own stories, four themes regarding the future emerged, namely (1) our future dreams, (2) adapting the music sessions to the older adults' needs, (3) inner conflict and (4) long-term commitment.

Progressive, Theme 1: Future dreams

Explore how we "ought to relate."
(Small, 1999, p. 18)

Helene: I have been thinking a lot about our work at Oak Tree Care Home, and I would really like to do more for their well-being in the future than we are currently doing. Some of my future dreams for Oak Tree include qualifying myself further, doing more for their well-being by facilitating interaction, introducing more intergenerational musicking, and in-service music training for nurses.

Since I can remember, I have always wanted to do music therapy, but that was never possible, and that is why I am doing a second Master's degree in Positive Psychology. When we started sharing our stories of the songs with them at the beginning of this year, I started really feeling that there was a connection between them and us because of things like shared memories and things they can identify with in the stories. I think it also lets them trust us a little more. I would really like it if they would also start sharing some stories from their side or if we could start doing something creative with them that will have a little more therapeutic value.

Cathy: That is wonderful. I was always a little scared to go into therapy or some form of counselling with the older adults because I felt that it was outside of my scope of knowledge, but I think it is a great future dream to have with these sessions. Not necessarily doing therapy or counselling with them, but just connecting with them on a more personal level; maybe we can start a sing and talk/share session.

Helene: For me, it is also quite special if their children or grandchildren attend some of the music sessions with them. They are really fond of small children, and I know your dream, in the beginning, was to work with them; maybe it is something that we could combine in the future. So perhaps we can also think about having an intergenerational session once a month.

Cathy: I think that it would be wonderful if we could do something like that in the future. I know in the past, your children attended some of the sessions, and the older adults loved it.

Progressive, Theme 2: Adapting the music sessions to the older adults' needs

"Musical experience is something done with others."
(Ansdell, 2014, p. 320)

Cathy: Something that I was thinking about the other day was how the sessions changed after COVID-19. Because of the pandemic, we were forced not to hand out any instruments or other materials we used with the more Dalcroze-inspired sessions. Handing out the instruments sometimes bothered me because I was always afraid that they would feel as if we were treating them like children and taking

away some of their dignity if we handed out maracas, sticks or hand drums. It sometimes disturbed me when I saw one of the old ladies, and I could see that she was a little irritated with the instrument or scarf. So when we couldn't hand out the instruments anymore, and our sessions just became singing in the middle of last year, I felt like the older adults enjoyed the sessions more and were more comfortable in the sessions, and that also allowed us to start sharing these stories and experiences from our lives with them, and I feel like this really helped with the connection.

Helene: I think they feel safer singing, and they know what to expect with each session. Ridder (2008) says that, especially with the older adults living with dementia, it is an important clinical technique to "stimulate reminiscence and a feeling of identity in a safe and secure relation" (p. 1). Singing is not something strange that they do not feel comfortable with, like moving around. Moving while musicking is something that does not come so naturally in our culture, and they are often not used to that.

Cathy: Yes, in the past, some of the people would walk out of the room again if they saw that we were handing out scarves or instruments, or they would stay at the back of the room and tell us that they are only going to watch the session, but with the new singing format, we never get that anymore. It is better for their well-being.

Helene: So, regarding their well-being in the future, we can adapt our sessions more to the needs of the older adults by also introducing more songs of their choice. Maintaining their autonomy should be a priority in older adult care (Boyle, 2008). We could introduce more music listening and imagery, engage in conversation rather than movement, and create a safe space for them.

Progressive, Theme 3: Inner conflict

"Who should get music?"
(Ansdell, 2014, p. 329)

Helene: So another thing is that the social worker at Oak Tree Care Home also works at another care home, Autumn leaves, and she asked me if we could please come to Autumn leaves as well and have music sessions there. So I have mixed feelings about it because I do not want to leave Oak Tree. So this is where my inner conflict comes in because it feels to me like I am choosing the easy option of the people that I am familiar and comfortable with, who are more accessible and with whose culture I can identify and whose songs I know, and this is also part of my music past which is why I would choose to rather help them, but I also feel that we cannot be everywhere. We only have so much time.

Cathy: It feels like we built a relationship with the people from Oak Tree for four years now, and we cannot just leave them. If the music sessions at Oak Tree have to stop for some other reason, it becomes a different situation, and then we can start looking at something else. I also feel bad about not going to Autumn Leaves, because their needs are greater than Oak Tree's, but I cannot do both. There is really no time. Maybe we can encourage or recruit other people to do something similar at Autumn leaves and we could work with them and guide them in the beginning.

Helene: Yes, we can ask our Community Music colleague to start musicking at Autumn Leaves.

Progressive, Theme 4: Long-term commitment

> "Community music facilitators consciously cultivate environments of trust." (Higgins, 2012, p. 165)

Helene: What is the timeline in your head for how long you would still want to continue with our sessions at Oak Tree Care Home?

Cathy: Well, I see it as part of my job now, and I will continue until they do not want us there anymore. Originally when we started at Oak Tree in 2018, I thought it would be a one or two-year project. I never thought that it would carry on for five years. The first year was very time-consuming for me, especially the planning of the sessions. So at first, I often thought that I did not have time to do this for much longer than a year, but as we continued, it became easier, and I really started enjoying it, and it started to have meaning for me. So I started feeling that this is what my work is about: Giving back to the community and doing something valuable. I really see it as a long-term commitment.

Helene: I am glad that we share the vision to continue at Oak Tree and that we both enjoy making music that is meaningful to other people and us. We both believe that community music engagement should be a long-term commitment. As Curtis and Mercado (2004) explain, you must maintain long-term relationships with vulnerable individuals. At Oak Tree, the older adults, staff and management consider us part of the family. They trust us.

STEP 3: SYNTHESIS

In the synthesis step, where we looked at the current situation, two themes emerged: playing music during COVID-19, and the transformation within ourselves.

Synthesis, Theme 1: Playing music during COVID-19

> "The physical space shapes the social space." (Small 1999, p. 16)

Helene: So, during COVID, the head matron contacted me and asked us to please come back and start making music again, but I was initially hesitant because the older people are a vulnerable group.

Cathy: Yes, so to be COVID-secure, we played outside, in the street, many Mondays. When we did the sessions like this, I felt very isolated, as if we couldn't connect with the people because we were standing so far away from them and wearing masks. I couldn't hear them when we sang, talked to them or made eye contact. So we lost some of the connections and conversations during that time. However, playing outside was also better than doing nothing, and other community members, like the guards at the gate, and people in the neighbourhood, joined in the musicking, and relationships were built with them.

Helene: Yes, we involved the community outside the palisades because the sound travelled into the neighbourhood. People from the community passing by heard us, took photos and even sang with us. I found it interesting that the nurses and the matrons were more involved because they had to take

the lead in the singing sessions as they had to hand out the books and announce the songs we were singing. Now they even lead musicking sessions when we have exams or holidays. Consequently, relationships were built between the nurses and residents.

Cathy: I agree with you. It was nice to have the nurses and matrons more involved. I enjoyed observing the interaction of the matron with the older adults during these outside sessions, and I also thought the older adults enjoyed it as they shared stories on the porch.

Synthesis, Theme 2: Our transformations

"Good music is music that does good."
(Ansdell, 2014, p. 320)

Cathy: In the beginning, it was really difficult for me to plan the sessions. This was because my music theory teacher background differs from yours as a music educator. My lessons are always goal oriented. So I start with the end goal, asking myself what I want the students to know by the end of the lesson. Then I began to apply music education principles to plan the practical activities, Dalcroze-inspired activities and worksheets to reach this goal. When preparing the music sessions for Oak Tree, I did not know where to start as there was no real goal I could work towards. It took me a long time to change my mindset and realise that I can just plan the activities for enjoyment, and they do not necessarily need to learn a concept at the end of each musicking session.

Helene: Yes, I remember that we negotiated the space between music education, community music, and community music therapy. You wanted to teach them something, and I wanted to facilitate social interaction.

Catrien: Your initial thought was to start Dalcroze sessions at the care home. At first, I thought that the Dalcroze activities would really be interesting and fun to use as I enjoy these movement activities so much, but when we started with these sessions with the older adults, I started to doubt whether it was going to work. The older adults did not expect movement activities in a music session and were reluctant to do the activities. I could also sometimes see the irritation on their faces when we handed out claves or shakers. For me, it felt a little like we belittle them (not intentionally) by handing out instruments they associate with children's music classes.

Helene: Yes, being a music educator interested in Positive Psychology, I was motivated to facilitate interaction between the community musicians, the older adults and the nurses. Knowing the potential Dalcroze-inspired activities have to facilitate social interaction and the joy such interaction brings, I was determined to make it work. Even after seeing that they did not want to move, I persevered. In hindsight, I realise we should have adapted to their needs sooner.

Cathy: Yes, we realised change was necessary. Later we did adapt. Systematically we started changing the sessions to their requests and the activities we could see they enjoyed, mostly singing and listening. So during COVID, we started sessions in which we were just singing with them, which continued for two years.

Helene: Interestingly, in 2022, we started implementing one interaction or improvisational activity during our musicking sessions, and now it is working. I think it is due to our long-term commitment and the mutual trust we developed over the past five years.

Cathy: At this moment, our work at Oak Tree feels like the most valuable part of my job because it is important and has meaning to others. Our work there also gives me some perspective on making music because if I prepare for a concert or am accompanying students, everything has to be perfect and every note in its place, but the older people always appreciate the music even if I make mistakes. Then I think that you do not always have to play everything perfectly and correctly for it to mean something to people.

DISCUSSION

Through our stories, it became clear that the meaning we ascribed to musicking during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed us to share and express compassion and care towards the older adult residents and each other. As community musicians, we adopted the roles of sharing love and compassion through musicking. Although this new form of musicking within the constraints of mask-wearing, visors, palisades, and physical distancing was limiting, it allowed us to explore, affirm and celebrate (Small, 1999) the relationships and community we share. Not only did we foster relationships with the older adults and each other, but relationships were also built between nurses and residents since the nurses were actively involved during the musicking sessions. Van der Merwe et al. (2021) also found that musicking plays a vital role in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, both as a proactive and coping strategy. Granot et al. (2021) had similar results and found that music could be used to reach all the goals of well-being, facilitate social connectivity and regulate mood and emotion across cultures during COVID-19.

Musicking at Oak Tree and working with older adults made us aware of our own fragility and mortality. Grenier (2006) writes that older adults experience feeling frail, which illuminates their own sense of mortality. We interrogated and reflected on the choices that we made during these sessions and adapted them to serve the well-being of the older adults. According to Veblen (2013), some Community Music initiatives focus on participants' personal and social well-being more than on musical instruction. The older adults' social well-being was our main focus with these music sessions.

Our song choices also had personal significance for both of us. While musicking, we treasure childhood memories and the memories of those who have passed away. Jakubowski and Ghosh (2021) state that "music can bring back vivid and emotional memories of lifetime periods and events" (p. 649). The study by El haj et al. (2015) also suggested that autobiographical memory is enhanced in Alzheimer's Disease patients when they are exposed to their own-chosen music. According to El haj et al. (2015) this is an important aspect to keep in mind when you want to stimulate older adults' memories. In our session, it was also important to us to consider the requests of the older adults in choosing the repertoire. Fraile et al. (2019) found that the musical learning capacities of Alzheimer's Disease patients were preserved despite memory and language difficulty. This is something that we should definitely consider in the future during our sessions as we can start including the learning of new songs.

Our weekly face-to-face musicking and interaction relieved our own sense of loneliness and that of the care home residents. Alleviating loneliness during the pandemic was important, especially for older adults, who often use group singing to feel less lonely (Creech et al., 2013). Granot et al. (2021) found that music facilitated social connectivity during COVID-19. Musicking allowed us to be present

and attentive during a time of extreme isolation. We were able to share our desires and anxieties. We felt what could be done was done to care for the older adults and ourselves. This ethic of care stems from the work of Klaver et al. (2014) and relates to their definition of professional loving care (PLC), an ethical view of professionalism in providing care.

> A practice of care in which competent and compassionate professionals interact with people in their care; ...the main purpose of this type of caring is not repair of the patients' body or mind, but the care-receivers' experience of being supported and not left on their own. (Klaver et al., 2014, p. 761)

In her book *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics & Moral Education*, Noddings (2003) states that there is a form of reciprocity in caring that "is not contractual" (p. xxi). In other words, we do not "expect the cared-for to balance the relationship by doing what the one-caring does" (p. xxi). We acknowledge that we are relational beings and as such being allowed to care for the older adults at Oak Tree gave us the opportunity for self-actualisation (Lynch & Walsh, 2009). The world is not divided discreetly into caregivers and care receivers, and we inevitably fall into both categories many times.

CONTRIBUTION

The meaning we ascribed to musicking with older adults related to three valuable lessons we learned through the duoethnography research process. All three of these lessons are relevant beyond the pandemic. Firstly, we need to respect cultural diversity. We need not strive for uniformity but can experience unity through diversity. We can be proud of our cultural heritage. We can be proud Afrikaners. With this notion of being proud of a culture that is associated with collective guilt, we disrupt the metanarrative. According to Schmitt et al. (2008), collective guilt "arises when people accept the notion of group accountability" (p. 268). When you experience collective guilt, you accept responsibility for the actions of the ingroup, even if you had no part in the event (Schmitt et al., 2008). Schmitt (2008) argues that one way to avoid the negative feeling of collective guilt is to reject the idea that a whole group can be assigned blame for some of their members, and that is what we decided to do as well.

Secondly, we learned that we immediately need to respect and adapt to the needs of the older adults and let go of our research or education agendas. Often research grants are driven by national priorities, neglecting individual needs. In this case, we received NRF money to go to ICDS4 in Poland, and therefore, at first, we had a Dalcroze agenda. We argue that musicians should not go into institutions with preconceived ideas of what they want to contribute. We should rather ask what is needed.

Thirdly we also learned to respect generational and cultural differences and present the musicking sessions with sensitivity. In this case, the Afrikaner older adults at Oak Tree Care Home associate musicking with concerts and church and therefore prefer not to move. We now respect this and never ask them to move. We disrupt the metanarrative that Dalcroze benefits older adults in general and point out that practices are always culturally situated and Dalcroze-inspired activities are not always appropriate.

We, therefore, argue that because musicking during COVID-19 at Oak Tree Care Home mitigated the loneliness of older adults and the musicians, safe musicking, with appropriate social distancing and hygienic precautions, should be encouraged as a form of reciprocal care to explore, affirm and celebrate (Small, 1999) relationships during a global pandemic and beyond.

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Ελληνική περίληψη | Greek abstract

Μια δυοεθνογραφία για τη μουσικοτροπία σε μια μονάδα φροντίδας ηλικιωμένων κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας COVID-19

Catrien Wentink | Liesl van der Merwe

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η μοναξιά κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας COVID-19 ήταν ένα παγκόσμιο πρόβλημα. Ιδιαίτερα οι ηλικιωμένοι, οι οποίοι θεωρούνται άτομα που ανήκουν σε ομάδα αυξημένου κινδύνου, βίωσαν αυξημένη απομόνωση και μοναξιά. Οι μουσικοί επίσης βίωσαν μοναξιά κατά την περίοδο του υποχρεωτικού εγκλεισμού. Ως εκ τούτου, ο σκοπός της παρούσας δυοεθνογραφίας (διπλής εθνογραφίας) είναι να διερευνηθούν τα πολιτισμικά προσδιορισμένα νοήματα που αποδίδουν οι δύο ερευνητικές συμμετέχουσες στη μουσικοτροπία σε μια μονάδα φροντίδας ηλικιωμένων κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας COVID-19. Οι συμμετέχουσες είναι δύο μουσικοί στην κοινότητα που διοργάνωσαν εβδομαδιαίες συνεδρίες μουσικοτροπίας σε μια μονάδα φροντίδας ηλικιωμένων τα τελευταία πέντε χρόνια. Κατά τη διάρκεια του αυστηρού υποχρεωτικού εγκλεισμού, παίξαμε μουσική για τους ηλικιωμένους στο δρόμο μπροστά από το κτίριο της μονάδας τους. Η συλλογή δεδομένων τροφοδοτήθηκε από φωτογραφίες, πλάνα σχεδιασμού των συνεδριών, επιλογές τραγουδιών, αναστοχασμούς σε ημερολόγια, και από ατομικές αφηγήσεις. Για τη διερεύνηση της διαλογικής μας κατανόησης, χρησιμοποιήσαμε την αφήγηση ιστοριών και τη μέθοδο τεσσάρων βημάτων *currere* του Pinar (1975), δηλαδή αναδρομικά, προοδευτικά, σύνθεση και ανάλυση. Τα ευρήματα έδειξαν ότι η μουσικοτροπία κατά τη διάρκεια της πανδημίας COVID-19 μας επέτρεψε να μοιραστούμε και να εκφράσουμε συμπόνια και φροντίδα προς τους ηλικιωμένους κατοίκους και μεταξύ μας. Συνεπώς, υποστηρίζουμε ότι η μουσικοτροπία, τηρώντας τις απαραίτητες προφυλάξεις υγιεινής, θα πρέπει να ενθαρρύνεται ως μορφή αμοιβαίας φροντίδας κατά τη διάρκεια μιας παγκόσμιας πανδημίας.

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ

μουσικοτροπία, δυοεθνογραφία, μονάδα φροντίδας ηλικιωμένων, currere, ηθική στην φροντίδα, COVID-19