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Finding my place: Examining concepts of community music as a visiting artist in rural

East Timor

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Abstract

This article explores being a musician in a foreign community, considering the author's experiences as a visiting artist in East Timor as a manifestation of this. East Timor is one of Asia's poorest and least-developed countries, a former Portuguese colony that suffered brutal occupation by Indonesia for 24 years and which has only been an independent state since 2002. The author establishes a community musician's role as an 'outsider' to the communities in which they work, and considers this in terms of her four-month artist residency as an unknown foreigner in a developing rural community, where the traumas of recent conflict and ongoing poverty gave additional layers of complexity to her work. Through narrative inquiry and an autoethnographic lens she describes a community music project that grew organically from very informal and unstructured beginnings, highlighting the importance of trust and mutual exchange. The author's experiences and interactions ultimately suggested a transition from outsider to accepted community member, and are discussed as acts of hospitality, gifts, and tests utilising L. Higgins' conceptual framework for community music activity.

Key words:

Community music

East Timor

Collaboration

Post-conflict

Cross-cultural

International development

Introduction: The facilitator as outsider

As a professional community music facilitator being an ‘outsider’ is a familiar role. I lead creative music projects on behalf of arts or education organisations that take place in environments where I am not a natural member. However, within the creative music workshop setting there are common understandings – a familiarity with the culture of the environment, its rules and structures, a motivation towards the project at hand (particularly if the group is self-selecting), a common language for communication – these and others inform our initial interactions.

In time too, the creative process we undertake together, emphasising openness to unpredictable musical outcomes, ensemble playing and collaborative invention of new music, can yield a strong sense of community as a natural by-product (as observed in Higgins, 2007b). In this new community everyone is an *insider* as it is a community of shared experience, established by the project itself and the environment that I create which invites people to take part, and values each person’s contributions.

In this article, I consider my experiences as an outsider leading a community music project in an environment where I was a foreigner in every way – a remote town in the fledgling independent state of East Timor, where I spent four months undertaking an artist residency in 2010-2011. This experience challenged my own notions of who the community in a community music project is, who I – as an outsider and visitor – could be within a new community and how this might emerge, and therefore, what being a musician in a community is at its core.

I begin by describing the setting, with a brief overview of some of East Timor’s recent history and challenges, narrowing the focus progressively to consider the town of Lospalos, the site of my residency, and some of the social norms I observed among my neighbours. This leads into a description of a music participation project, charting its transition from informal and unstructured through to performance outcome. Interspersed throughout this description are discussions of the possible meanings and interpretations of this project, utilising the conceptual tools for describing and understanding community music activities developed by Higgins (2007a, 2007b, 2012). By the end of my residency many things had changed, and I conclude with a reconsideration of my ‘outsider’ status.

Methodology - describing these experiences

In this account I examine the meaning of my experiences in Lospalos as a narrative inquiry considered through an autoethnographic lens. I was there as a music practitioner rather than as a researcher, and draw upon my detailed field journal, video footage and autoethnographic recollection. These narratives are embedded within my experiences, rather than being descriptions of particular events (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou 2008). There is no “certainty” here – others present during the events I describe might proffer different narratives and interpretations (Barrett & Stauffer 2009: 2; Bowman 2009: 214). As a practitioner, there to initiate and lead music-making activities over a short period of time, it was not possible for me to formally interview participants or record their responses to my project. For this reason the voices of East Timorese people are largely absent from this account; however, their responses to my residency can be found in an earlier *International Journal of Community Music* issue (Howell & Dunphy 2012).

Within the narrative I refer to myself in the first person. A second protagonist in the events described is my partner Tony, a professional musician who worked with me during my time in Lospalos.

East Timor’s cultural context

East Timor is a half-island that sits between the northern edge of Australia and the eastern reaches of the Indonesian archipelago. It is the poorest and least developed country in Asia. The country is ranked 120 out of 169 countries in the U.N. Human Development Index – a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education and standards of living – and it is estimated that 41 percent of the million-strong population live below the poverty line (UNHR 2011).

East Timor’s current context is complex. A Portuguese colony for 500 years, it remained under-developed and isolated, with traditional ways of life continuing for the vast majority of the population throughout this period. It suffered full-scale military invasion by the Indonesian army in 1975, and lived under brutal Indonesian occupation for 24 years, a period

that led directly to the deaths of nearly a quarter of the Timorese population (around 180,000 people) and the rise of a popular resistance movement (Kingsbury & Leach 2007).

The East Timorese voted for independence in a UN-sponsored referendum in 1999. The Indonesian army's subsequent withdrawal was bloody and merciless, leaving 70% of the country's physical infrastructure – roads, buildings, telecommunications - burned and destroyed, thousands killed, and thousands more displaced and traumatised (Chomsky 2003; East Timor Government 2008). A UN transitional administration governed the country until 2002, and a UN political mission remains in place in 2011. In 2006 and 2007 further crises broke out, with more violent loss of life, displacement and trauma.

Thus, contemporary East Timor melds its indigenous identities with “the cultural baggage of its consecutive colonial occupiers, meshing these in varying degrees of success with the requirements of the larger contemporary world” (Kingsbury & Leach 2007: 15). The population is hardy and proud, but living with the traumatic memories of recent events and a weariness of instability and foreign involvement in their land.

East Timor is divided into thirteen administrative districts, their boundaries based upon tribal and linguistic lines. As part of my residency, I spent two months in a remote town called Lospalos in the eastern corner of the half-island. Lospalos is a small town surrounded by pristine jungle, highlands, and small-scale agriculture. The majority of people live on subsistence farming. Electricity is available only in the evenings. There are no landlines – only mobile phones. There is a single strip of shops, a small daily produce market and a larger weekly market that attracts buyers and sellers from the small villages throughout the district. The lack of convenient and affordable travel options to Lospalos, and the town's distance from the Timorese capital of Dili means that very few foreign visitors get to Lospalos.

An outsider in Lospalos

I struggled to develop music projects in Lospalos when I first arrived. I had a host organisation whose activities were, I'd understood, based in Lospalos (albeit with Australian-based directors); however it quickly became evident that they had no real presence or profile in the town at that time. My proposals for exchanges with traditional musicians, collaborative projects with adult musicians and children, and training opportunities for young musicians

and teachers, were received with initially enthusiastic, but later prevaricating responses. Support from the local State Secretariat for Culture – the official channel through which music activity should normally happen – was offered in words but not matched by deeds.

I keenly felt myself to be an outsider and uncomfortably aware that I had been invited to work in Lospalos by other *foreigners*, rather than by locals. The local people had no particular context for my residency, and it did not seem to have come about in response to expressed need from them.

The Motalori context

The house I rented in Lospalos was in the Motalori locality – a ‘suburb’ on the main road into the town centre. An old and sturdy white brick Portuguese-era house, it was on relatively high ground, surrounded by grass and coconut palms. My landlord and his young family lived in a wooden dwelling behind my house. Most of the other houses in Motalori were simple structures with dirt floors and walls made of palm leaf shingles and flat roofs with no ceilings. On rainy days the bare land surrounding their homes quickly turned to mud.

I wondered about social division in this neighbourhood, in terms of who played with whom, and who talked with whom. The local boys – numerous and boisterous – were regular visitors to our house, but whenever they arrived, the landlady’s children would leave the group and head back to their house. I asked their mother about this. ‘Those boys are too dirty. Their clothes are always dirty,’ she stated matter-of-factly. Her children didn’t like playing with them for this reason. She told me, ‘In Timor, if you go to someone else’s house, you should put on your clean clothes. When these children come to your house in dirty clothes, you should send them away. It’s not respectful.’

I was not concerned about the boys’ clothes, but I noted the division. I had the impression that these boys had limited life opportunities. Only a few attended school, several couldn’t read or write at all, they weren’t used to being organised as a group, and they didn’t know Tetun (the national language, not local to Lospalos and usually learned in kindergarten or school). These were very poor people and in addition to not having clean clothes to wear each day, many did not have enough food to eat. They were small for their age and very thin.

These apparent divisions notwithstanding, there seemed to me to be a strong sense of community in Motalori. As with many traditional societies, ‘community’ in East Timor is a far more bounded notion than it is in the individualistic West. Systems of kinship are clearly defined, and friendships often observe geographical boundaries for the children. Language binds people and also distinguishes them – East Timor has 16 different languages and subvarieties present across the small land mass (Taylor-Leech 2007).

Jamming with the Motalori children

Local children initially stopped in front of my house out of curiosity, their interest aroused by the instruments they could hear us playing. They were shy at first, but once one group had decided to venture forth, word of the musicians spread, and the numbers of visitors increased each time the instruments came out.

These visits became jams on the veranda and were daily, informal music-making sessions for anyone who wanted to turn up. They took place without any special planning or promotion and were open to all. I spoke quite good Tetun by this time (the local language in Lospalos is Fataluku, but many people spoke or understood Tetun) and this helped me establish a rapport with the children and to lead the sessions.

At those early jams the children were a large, noisy group, street-smart and quick-witted. Mostly boys, they were excited to play music, but they snatched and grabbed at instruments in a very chaotic way. I wasn’t always sure I liked these boys at the beginning. Sometimes they were so rowdy and aggressive I wanted to pack everything up and send them away. Later, watching video footage of the earliest jam sessions, I saw how focused they were, despite their tremendous excitement. They loved the music making, and began to watch us throughout the day, waiting for us to go into the room off the veranda where we stored the instruments. Within a minute of instruments appearing, the children would descend upon us.

Figure 1: The first veranda jam, December 2010

Musical information was communicated non-verbally or through symbols and repetition. We explored songs with percussion accompaniment, experimented with structures and graphic scores, and jammed on traditional chants and songs in the local Fataluku language.

Sometimes, older boys would volunteer *tebe tebe* (traditional dance rhythms) that they knew, or sing popular songs, accompanying themselves on guitar.

In time, the group of boys who came to us most regularly became the leaders of the jam ensemble. They were the ones most familiar with the instruments and with the cues Tony and I used. They helped us prepare the workshop space before each jam, and would guide others who were less familiar with the workshop routine. They took it in turns to play the instruments, and would watch the players before them intently, memorising the riffs and progressions so that they would be ready to play when it was their turn. Each time a new melody or riff was invented, it would pass through the group, peer teaching peer.

Girls rarely came to the informal jams. Girls participated in the more formal workshops we conducted at other Lospalos venues; however, the late-afternoon veranda jams were male-dominated events.

Discussion – Hospitality and welcome

In engaging with the children and creating regular opportunities for them to play with each other and with us, I was in a sense creating a community around me. The children's community already existed, but in the invitation to make music together, I created the possibility of a new community, bounded by shared experience and inclusion.

Higgins (2012) suggests that the notion of hospitality 'encompasses the central characteristics of community music' (133), and that it is a practical evocation of community in the work of community musicians. He identifies the music leader's *welcome* as a key component of community music practice, so that the invitation to participate in the workshop is an act of hospitality, in essence and in practice.

The veranda jams were an unconditional, open invitation from Tony and me - an invitation with some 'imposed conditions' (Higgins 2008: 333) in that we decided when the music would happen each day, but in which our leadership and welcome demonstrated a willingness to 'give something without getting anything back' (333). Participants could come and go as they chose, and could influence the music-making in different ways, nominating musical content and sharing their knowledge and skills. They could learn to play a pre-existing piece

of material, or they could just join in on the spot. They chose what they wanted to play, negotiating instrument changes with each other rather than with me. In the midst of all of these choices and decisions, Tony and I demonstrated our comfort in working in an unpredictable, open-ended environment, in which the primary strategy was to respond to the group's interests, and create a sense of musical delight and togetherness. This was our welcome and our invitation.

However, the jams were dominated by a core group of young boys and it appeared that perhaps, in this traditional society with its differing social rules for girls and boys (and between foreigners and locals), their participation meant that some others decided to exclude themselves (the girls, for example, or the landlord's children). Clearly, the rules governing the pre-existing community's social interactions and expectations were still maintained, despite the open welcome and unusual diversion that Tony and I offered.

It is interesting, too, to consider the idea of *hospitality* in this context. I was an outsider, new to both their town and country. There was much that I did not know about how things were done there. In many ways I felt that I was the one in need of hospitality and welcome! However, it takes time to build trust in a traumatised country, weary of foreign authority imposing itself. In the first weeks of my residency, people were still trying to make sense of me, I believe. The onus was on me to demonstrate my warmth, my welcome and hospitality in order to plant the seeds for that trust.

Making instruments

We had a range of instruments to share, including drums fashioned from large plastic buckets, and soft-drink bottles filled with high-pressure air that gave a bell-like pitch when struck. Three sets of resonant metal chime bars provided melodic and harmonic material. Tony and I experimented with making instruments from freshly-cut bamboo. We created 3-tone 'xylophones' and pairs of bamboo 'claves', and these additions ensured enough instruments for everyone. Children also started to bring their own instruments to the veranda – including plastic piping that was blown like a trumpet, a guitar, and a descant recorder.

Our instrument-making efforts attracted the interest of adults, and we discovered that our next-door neighbour Mario had traditional instrument-making skills. Mario taught Tony how

to make a *kakalo*, a bamboo log drum that was traditionally played by children to scare foraging animals away from precious food crops (King 1963). We later organised an instrument-making day on the veranda, making a further 12 *kakalos* with the help of local teenagers.

Figure 2: Our first kakalo, made by Mario

Later, Mario showed us his attempts to make a bamboo flute. He examined our woodwind instruments with interest, impressed by the key-work and its mechanisms. We gave him a descant recorder that we had brought with us from Australia and Tony began to teach him to play using mime and demonstration, as the two men did not share a common language.

Figure 3: Mario and Tony with their recorders

Towards a performance outcome

I learned in Lospalos how few popular or contemporary songs there were in Fataluku. Popular music on the radio was mostly in Indonesian or English. Church songs were sung in Tetun. Local artists had limited opportunities to record their original music.

A popular song on radio at the time was *Forever Young*. As a gift for my teenage friends, I decided to translate the English lyrics of this song into Fataluku. Jamming on *Forever Young* became a regular part of the daily veranda jams and attracted older participants to the jams, including a teenage guitarist and several girl singers. In the last week of my residency we decided the time was right to present the song – and our music-making - to a wider audience.

We arranged to give a live performance of the song on local evening radio. On the day of the performance I had no idea who would turn up. Timorese people prefer to stay inside their homes after dark – there is a sense of self-imposed curfew that remains after their recent history of riots and instability, and years of military occupation.

I was delighted when the group started to arrive at the house, dressed in smart clean clothes for the occasion. Even more gratifying was the sight of Mario arriving with several of his sons, his recorder in his hand. We were touched that he'd decided to come along. This was no longer just a children's activity, but a collaboration among like-minded people.

As we gathered at the radio station before the performance, everyone was very nervous. Mario's hands were shaking. We squeezed into the tiny studio space, squashed on the floor or lined up against the wall. Afterwards, there was a palpable sense of pride in the event. No-one had ever done something like this before. It was the first time that the radio station had ever broadcast children, or presented *malae* [foreigners] and Timorese people performing together.

Discussion – gifts, exchange, and working together

What motivated the Motalori boys to come to our house each day? It was a fun and social diversion, and an opportunity to interact with new people and do new things – a rare novelty in Lospalos. Many of the children and their parents also saw it as an important learning opportunity (Howell & Dunphy 2012), seeing any new skills or knowledge as having future value.

My motivations were centred on cultural exchange. I hoped that I could learn East Timorese musical traditions through working collaboratively with East Timorese people, whether in a workshop context or otherwise. It took some time to establish this idea of exchange, with its assumption that everyone has something of value to bring to the process. This is counter to the East Timorese people's experience of foreign visitors – nearly all the foreigners who have come to East Timor since 1999 have come to 'help' the Timorese. This can lead to a learned passivity among local people where the helper is perceived as the main provider and authority, as well as a likely source of income.

Through a series of gifts, ignited by the process of individuals choosing to work *with* each other rather than be worked *on* (Higgins 2012: 158), the idea of exchange became understood implicitly. A 'circle of exchange between facilitator and participant' (153) was established, activated by the children when they first walked up the driveway and approached the veranda in response to the music we were playing and our invitation to them to join in. This was what Higgins labels the 'call', the moment of choosing to participate. My response was friendly and open, with an active commitment to facilitating this shared musical journey. This was the 'welcome' (158). I offered the workshops as a gift from me to them with no expectation of reciprocity. However, as the relationship between us grew, the 'counter-gifts' (153) also became more apparent and challenged the more usual capacity-building model of foreigners helping locals.

The daily opportunities to play music were the first gift, and the children's identification with our veranda as a place for learning seemed evident. They demonstrated a hunger for experiences, an impressive capacity to absorb new things and were strongly self-motivated. The teaching and learning was multi-directional, moving from the facilitators to the participants, between the participants, and from participants back to us, which corresponds with Higgins' (2008) description of the workshop as a democratic event, where 'the power... lies with everybody' (333). There was constant peer teaching, and the children regularly shared traditional rhythms, chants and songs with us, a counter-gift that we greatly valued.

We were invited to lead a workshop at the kindergarten in the centre of town. We wanted to bring our instrument collection with us, but without access to a car, were unsure how we could carry them there. The local boys discussed this amongst themselves, and located and loaned us a wheelbarrow. They took great pride in wheeling everything into town for us, and waiting for the workshop to end in order to wheel everything back.

Languages were part of the exchange and gifts. My ability to speak Tetun suggested a commitment from me to the community and enabled me to communicate directly with the group. However, not all the children could speak this language (as it is learned in school and not all children were able to attend school), so the children endeavoured to teach me key words in the local Fataluku language, and translated my instructions for their peers when necessary.

The translation of *Forever Young* was also conceived as a gift, as so few popular songs could be enjoyed by the young people of Lospalos in their native language of Fataluku. This gift had great longevity, with adults in other parts of Lospalos approaching me for copies of the words, wanting to share the translation even more widely.

Mario, our next-door neighbour, built a warm relationship with us, marked by mutual gifts and exchanges. He shared his knowledge of traditional instrument-making with us, making the first *kakalo* that inspired our instrument-making workshop. The gift of a recorder from Tony to Mario followed this sharing of knowledge, and recorder lessons ensued. Later, when some of my music students in Australia visited, Mario and his family showed them how to make simple instruments from wound bamboo leaves. I feel he must have valued the

relationship as much as we did; he was the only adult to participate in the performance at the radio station, doing so on his new recorder, despite his nerves.

All of these exchanges were characterised by cooperative working and collaboration and a desire to give something without expecting anything in return. But it was the unconditional nature of the gifts that inspired the cycle of giving. Interestingly, the ethical principle of reciprocity and cooperative living – known as *fulidai-dai* in one of the local languages – is deeply embedded in East Timorese society (Salvagno, n.d). As an outsider, perhaps the most effective way I could demonstrate my commitment to the community was to share what I could with it, and in this way, the circle of exchange that ignites the music workshop process (the invitation, the participant's response, the welcome) is mirrored in the cycle of exchange that builds community.

I was very happy that they asked me to show them how to make traditional instruments. I enjoyed this – I want to help them because Mana Gillian and Maun Tony helped our children (Interview with Mario, Howell & Dunphy 2012).

Testing the welcome

As my residency moved into its final weeks, I became a more familiar presence in the community. Word of the musicians in town had spread and Tony and I were invited to lead workshops in a number of other venues, such as a kindergarten and a weekend activity program run by a convent. We attended conversation classes at one of the local English language schools, and had developed friendships with the teenagers and adults there, friendships that were demonstrated through impromptu conversations on the street when we passed each other by chance.

However, there were tests and challenges for me to pass. For example, some veranda jam participants distrusted my welcome. At the final rehearsal for the radio performance evening, two girls from the house next door asked me to collect them on our way to the radio station. I did as promised, but they did not emerge from their homes and we had to continue on our way without them. When I saw them some days later I learned they'd been avoiding me. 'We

thought you'd be angry with us,' one said, 'because we didn't come to sing.' I was taken aback and assured them they never had to sing if they didn't want to.

Another time, a child called out to me, 'Hey foreigner, give me one dollar!' – a crude demand that is common from children in busy, anonymous places like Dili (the Timorese capital, where there are many foreigners), but unheard of in a small and proud community like Lospalos. I was surprised to recognise the child as one of the regular veranda jammers. He saw my expression and ducked his head. The next time we met I gave a big smile – warm but knowing. He smiled back with a certain relief, knowing his transgression had been noted, but also seeing that the welcome was still there.

The biggest test was far more serious. One night in the last week of my residency I awoke to find a child moving silently about in our room. I screamed. He scrambled out the window. Tony rushed to follow him and glimpsed a light-footed youngster sprinting down the driveway, carrying a saxophone case in his hands.

Fortunately, that was the only thing that was stolen. Even more fortunately, the saxophone bag was found early the next morning, placed on the side of the road in front of a neighbour's house. But a black velvet pouch containing mouthpieces and other small parts was still missing, and without these parts, the saxophone could not be played.

An Australian colleague had told me in an earlier conversation that burglaries in Timor are nearly always giving a message to the victim (L.M. personal communication, 8 December 2010). It was important that I see this not as a betrayal of trust but as a kind of test. I took care not to show anger or to make accusations. Tony and I visited the neighbour in whose front garden the saxophone had been dumped that morning to assure him that we did not believe this meant he had taken it, that we believed him to be our friend. He thanked us, and told us that he had been worried that we – or others in the community - would accuse him. I also talked with some of the local boys, explaining that we were not angry, only sad that the saxophone still could not be played. Perhaps, I suggested, these boys could keep an eye out for the missing black pouch. The person who 'visited' us (I avoided using the Tetun word for 'burglar') might have thrown the pouch away in the long grass, and the children might see it when playing. They nodded, wide-eyed.

Later in the afternoon, one of the older boys strode up the driveway. 'It's been found!' he called out to me. 'Yes, found! You have to come to get it!' I ran to join him and we walked along the main road, a small crowd of children and adults gathering behind us, eager to witness the excitement. The boy led me to a nearby tangled block of bushland and showed me where the black pouch lay. 'No-one has touched it,' he told me. 'You have to pick it up. You have to check everything is there.'

Everything was there and I smiled and repeated my words of thanks over and over to the gathered crowd of onlookers. As we walked back to my house together everyone was smiling. Where before, there had been a subdued tension, now there was a festival atmosphere. People I'd never even seen before wanted to be part of the celebrations. Back at my house, someone produced a Frisbee and suddenly the front garden turned into a park where everyone – children and adults – was playing.

My landlady called me over. 'Is it there? Do you have it?' Other women were sitting nearby on the grass with their small children, women I had seen before but never spoken with. They now rushed to talk with me.

'We heard your screams in the night!' 'It was very loud – I thought there was a burglar.' 'Next time, you must scream "Burglar, Burglar!" so that everybody knows.' 'We were burgled three times last year. Here, eat these!' They passed a bowl of roasted nuts to me and urged me to eat with them.

Discussion and conclusion – Of tests, trust, and community music

This episode marked a turning point in the residency, where the landlord's children no longer left the veranda jams when the boys turned up, and the neighbourhood's girls were also regular participants. The conversation with the women and the sharing of the roasted nuts was the welcome that I felt had been missing when I first arrived in Lospalos to begin my music residency.

It was as if my startled screams in the middle of the night had demonstrated my normalness and human vulnerability to them, where in the past I had appeared only foreign and suspicious. Furthermore, the care we had taken to show a calm face in the wake of the

burglary and the conversations we had had with the children and neighbours had created the space for the community to take charge and solve the problem for us. In this way, perhaps, it showed our trust in them, despite the vast differences in our circumstances and perceived power or authority.

Trust, therefore, is the significant variable here, and time is an essential ingredient. Many Timorese people, through their brutal, traumatic recent history, have learned not to trust outsiders or foreigners assuming authority or leadership. In this context, the development of trust takes time, and carries considerable perceived risk for the local people. Despite the warmth of my welcome and invitation, and the enthusiasm of many people to take part, I was still an untested outsider.

However, trust did develop, and I believe the open-ended facilitation approach to music-making was a key component in this. Higgins (2012) observes that in a community music setting, trust and respect are qualities that can emanate from an environment that promotes and creates space for the voices of others. In the workshops I established, I did my best to present myself honestly, and invited the participants to do the same. In doing so, I created the possibility of us going on a ‘journey together... into the unknown’ (161) where we would play music together, but where they would play an active role in determining how we would do this. The tests along the way were decided by the participants but led to a more welcoming community for me.

By the end of my residency therefore, I no longer felt such an outsider. If, as Higgins (2012) suggests, *community* can be evoked through practical acts of hospitality, I was now a member of the local community, in receipt of these hospitable gestures. The presence of young girls at the veranda jams demonstrated that their parents now believed the workshops to be a safe and appropriate place for their daughters to be, and their participation suggested that a new community, one where inclusion comes from shared experience, had been formed.

It was the *community* that told me, indirectly, what it wanted from a musician in their midst. They did not want (or perhaps understand) a formal, structured creative music project. They were happy to get to know me, one day at a time, and see how I conducted myself. They appreciated the time I spent with their children, and the way I engaged with their local music

traditions, and they recognised our efforts in the wider community - contributions that no-one had expected or experienced with visiting foreigners before.

The community also allowed itself to be changed in small ways by my presence. During my time in the big white house in Motalori, my neighbours began to play more music amongst themselves – making instruments, blowing recorders, and singing more songs than we had ever heard before the veranda jams began. The instrument-making on our veranda provoked memories of long-forgotten or latent traditions and skills among the adults, and their children seemed as fascinated as we were to watch these in use. Most pleasurable for me was the sight on those last days, of the children all playing all together, the noisy boys and the landlord's quiet, clean children, on the veranda, while we packed up the last of the instruments and made our way inside. It seemed an apt demonstration of music creating its own insiders.

Figure 4: Nose rub with village elder

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