

Sound hunters: An invitation for a soundwalk on the local community

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Overview

This workshop is based on the pilot project “*Sound Hunters: Towards a Pedagogy based on Listening and Sound Exploration in Early Childhood*”, that the authors are implementing in a non-formal educational context in Portugal.

This workshop emerges from “a double call” that has recently been made in the field of music education. A call that asks, on the one side, for a new perspective on the concept of “music” - that might include the entire soundscape that surrounds us (Landy, 2007; Solomos, 2020) - and, on the other side, for more inclusive and democratic practices in music education, that might create learning opportunities for all children (Benedict et al. 2015; Hess, 2017; Wright, 2015). In this workshop we aim to give a contribution to this double call by inviting participants for a soundwalk, that will be used as a means to (re)connect participants with the local soundscape through active and attentive listening (Clarke, 2005; Deans, Brown & Dilkes, 2005), and to introduce the idea of Sound Ecology (Schaffer, 1977; Truax, 2019; Etmektsoglou, 2019).

Departing from a previously prepared roadmap, and divided into 4 small groups, participants will take a route through the conference venue, while focusing on listening to the sounds that surround them, a process that has been defined as a Soundwalk (Westerkamp, 2011; Behrent, 2018). This route will have several stopping points where participants will find diverse listening tools such as “prepared headphones”, devices for recording and manipulate sounds, “listening acoustic cones”, among others. The purpose of these apparatus is to invite and facilitate different interactions with sounds, so that participants can engage in meaningful and active listening experiences related with the surrounding soundscape.

In the end, participants will share their experiences with the group in an informal conversation, where they will be invited to talk about important moments and key events experienced during the soundwalk. This conversation will be guided by the authors and aims to better understand how the soundwalk affected participants’ feelings and ideas about their sonic worlds, their relationships with sounds, the local landscape and local community, and their ideas about music.

At the end of the workshop it is expected that the participants might be able to: (i) Identify sound as part of each person's sensory experience; (ii) Identify, describe and compare different sounds and soundscapes; (iii) Explore, in a creative way, different sound sources and tools related to the perception and appropriation of sound; (iv) Explore the idea of Sound Ecology, relating sounds with the diverse environments in which they usually participate; (v) reflect and rethink their ideas and conceptions of “music” and “musical”.

Target audience: Children (2-5 years old), their families, educators, musicians, researchers and general public.

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