Social Wellbeing and Community in the Processes of Musicking and Dance-Musicking: Investigating Students' Social-Artistic Interactions

Ronald Kibirige

NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Abstract: Social wellbeing is cultural-specific and largely dependent on phenomena surrounding a people. It is profoundly rooted in the understanding that the state of being healthy is achieved not only through medicalised treatment, but also in our daily community interactions. This chapter investigates the social-artistic interaction processes of musicking and dance-musicking, focusing on how they can facilitate, activate, and sustain students' transformation from one state of being to another. It draws on social-artistic experiences in a community children's ensemble in Uganda and focuses on detailed musical and body-rhythmic action, reaction and interaction that unfold in transcendental pedagogical moments of musicking and dance-musicking. As such, the discussion hinges on students' embodied music and dance-music interaction in teaching and learning contexts. The chapter explores the concept of liminality and Ubuntu philosophy as theoretical frameworks, and adopts a combination of ethnographic and autoethnographic methods to investigate practical social-artistic experiences through which students achieve transformation to enter into a state of wellness in a social sense. From these experiences, I conceptualise a social-artistic model of a practitioner's embodied state of being and transformation from one state of being to another. The broader aim of this study is to create an awareness of the multifaceted social benefits of the social-artistic interactive processes of musicking and dance-musicking that can activate and enhance students' wellbeing in school environments.

Keywords: social wellbeing, musicking, dance-musicking, social-artistic interaction

Introduction

The term *wellbeing* is widely used in educational contexts to refer to the human physical, psychological/mental, emotional, social, spiritual, economic, and intellectual state of being well, healthy and happy. It has also been contested, as it may have a multitude of definitions as well as significant cultural and social meanings in different communities (Weare & Nind, 2011). Wellbeing is regarded as a matter of concern in many public policy instruments (Fisher, 2019).

The Norwegian Directorate of Education (2020) noted an increase in the proportion of pupils that feel socially excluded, which negatively affects their wellbeing. To counteract this trend, Norway's new school curriculum reform framework for primary and secondary education (2020) clearly emphasises health and life skills focusing especially on students' physical and mental health. This has in turn caused a substantial growth of related research on school-based interventions drawing attention to educational institutions (Batt-Rawden, 2007, 2018; Eiksund, et al., 2020; Skoglund et al., 2021). A humanistic state of being well is experienced by individuals and communities worldwide. For instance, in the current formal East African education system, Uganda in particular, academic institutions are slowly but increasingly becoming aware of social wellbeing despite the strain on resources in this field (Kigozi et al., 2010).

Using examples from Uganda, this study focuses on social wellbeing as a form of wellbeing that relates to socially interactive human engagements that promote an individual's state of being socially well. This state of being (healthy) is not only achieved through medicalised treatment, but also in our daily social interactions (Anders, 2018; Goffman, 1974). I will discuss the processes of musicking and dance-musicking as community social-artistic mechanisms that articulate, effect and sustain social wellbeing among students/practitioners (Elliot, 1995; Kibirige, 2023c; Small, 1998). Within the community social-artistic interaction contexts of this chapter, I use the term *practitioners* to refer to musicians and dancers engaged in their music, dance, and dance-music practices in both formal and non-formal contexts. This word is used interchangeably with "students" as they are the main focus of the study. By social-artistic interaction, I refer to the interaction which focuses particularly on

the social situatedness and interconnectedness of an artistic phenomenon such as music and (or) dance – interaction that views students' social surroundings and alliances in the community as both a resource and situated knowledge. Although music and dance have existed as part of community life unfolding in community social-interactive events for a long time (Stamou et al., 2022), scholarly efforts looking into and beyond the embedment of social wellbeing in such local community interactive mechanisms are still scanty (Jain & Brown, 2001; Olvera, 2008; Sheppard & Broughton, 2020). Societies, especially local communities, have always had certain practices for social interaction, some of which may not depend on substantial economic resources.

While the embodied processes of musicking and dance-musicking inform several aspects of human life and community activities, academic discourses have not paid enough attention to detailed essences of such processes from the practitioners' point of reference, especially on a micro level of interaction (Connolly et al., 2011; MacDonald et al., 2013). How do these processes activate, enhance and sustain a practitioner's state of being socially well, thereby facilitating their transformation from one state of being to another? I investigate this notion of social wellbeing in two contexts of social-artistic interaction/engagements: 1) Musical and dance-musical interactions in a children's community-based organisation called Peace Africa Children's Ensemble (PACE), located at Kawempe-Ttula, a suburb of Kampala in south-central Uganda, and its members' social-artistic interactions at their designated secondary schools; 2) My social-artistic and transcendental choreomusical interactions with members of PACE unfolding in artistic engagements that articulate their transformation from one state of being to another.

The Peace Africa Children's Ensemble (PACE)

PACE is a community children's organisation that uses the transformative power of music and dance to educate, nurture, sustain and artistically equip children from culturally diverse communities with the social, cultural and social-cultural skills they need for succeeding at school and in their future careers. PACE interacts with and supports children at

primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. At present, most of its members are at lower and upper secondary school. The main ideology behind PACE is to promote an understanding of the arts from a community-based, social-artistic perspective. Indeed, artistic presentation/performance is a central part of this ideology. However, PACE focuses more on the process of *doing* and how this process of interaction constructs, reconstructs, develops and promotes social creativeness, awareness of self and the other, as well as on grounding the very core aspects of coexistence embedded in the music, dance and dance-music practices in which they engage. These are undergirded by the understanding of being *omuntu mu bantu* (a person among other persons), which is at the core of the *Ubuntu* philosophy. This approach to the social-artistic processes of musicking and dance-musicking would benefit school settings if wholistically adapted, as it embeds and activates several ways of creating healthy, friendly and collaborative school environments.

The chapter begins by presenting the main premise, including the study's main research station, context and geographical scope. I then discuss the theoretical and methodological approaches applied and my own position within them. Supported by these approaches, I describe my engagement with the research material and experiences, which takes place at two levels of transformation: 1) the micro level, which explores the practitioners' embodiment of wellbeing by focusing on how transformation can manifest itself and be sustained through embodied musical and dance-musical interaction, and 2) the macro level, which draws on the micro aspects as building blocks for practitioners' transformation to discuss the macro aspects of the notion of social wellbeing. Finally, I sum up the discussion with some pedagogical reflections and conclusions.

Theoretical approaches applied

The theoretical framework of this research draws and focuses on community and the processes of musicking and dance-musicking that present the bodily actions of music, dance, and dance-music as a means for social-artistic dialogue. In this embodied dialogical interaction, I apply choreomusical analysis (Damsholt, 1999, 2006; Felföldi, 2001; Gore et al.,

2020; Kaeppler, 1996) as a tool to investigate student musicians' and dance-musicians' social-artistic interactive experiences that pivote their transformation to a state of wellbeing. Such inter-human social-artistic experiences call for social-functional as well as practitioner-centered approaches that can enumerate the embodied music and dance-music dialogue that may be silent and/or invisible to an observer, inscribed within the practice and/or felt by the practitioner.

The analytical approaches applied here illustrate students' transcendental moments that facilitate and nurture their transformation from one state of being to another. This transformation relates to folklorist Arnold Van Gennep's concept of liminality that he developed in the early nineteenth century, which was subsequently taken up by Victor Turner (1967) and widely used by many sociologists, anthropologists, and other scholars studying rituals (Collins, 2005; Schechner, 2017; Szakolczai, 2009; Thomassen, 2009). Van Gennep (1960) contends that rites of passages do exist in every culture and constitute three distinctive phases: the preliminal, liminal, and the post-liminal. The preliminal phase involves a state where one is still in a situation from which one would like to break away. The liminal phase is transitional; the individual engages in the act (transition rites) that break them free from the preliminal phase. This act therefore marks the actual breaking of the threshold between the preliminal and liminal phases. The post-liminal phase is where one has gone through the liminal phase and gained a new identity. Therefore, liminality represents a "holding" stage where the individual has not yet reached the post-liminal.

Practitioners' music and dance-music embodiments are grounded in inclusive and coexistential community contexts as well as an understanding of human interactive relations. Therefore, I apply the theory and philosophy of *Ubuntu* (Broodryk, 2006; Lefa, 2015) here. *Ubuntu* activates harmonious coexistence through human agency and interaction that form a key ingredient of individual and community social wellbeing. *Ubuntu* grounds the understanding that we can understand an individual musician through their engagement with other musicians or musical beings. It therefore grounds the notion that we need other human beings in order to be human (Kamwachale, 2012). On a micro level, the

discussion engages the theory of *Ubuntu* through embodied rhythmic, sonic and body-sonic action; it also brings forth a reaction detailing a practitioner's social-artistic corporeal, and "coexistential" sense of being. On the macro level, the application of this theory draws on educationist Alfdaniels Mabingo's (2020) assertion about *Ubuntu* being an undergirding framework for dance pedagogies in local communities, for our state of being socially well and healthy is activated and lived through a creatively complex interplay between individuality and communality.

Methodological approaches used

This study draws on both ethnographic and autoethnographic methods, with related approaches folding in and out of each other (Bradley, 1993; Creswell, 2013). On an ethnographic level, the study draws on participant and non-participant observations, open reflective discussions, practical pedagogical as well as free and non-prescriptive social-artistic interactions as methodological tools. I draw upon social-artistic accounts, giving precedence to emic interpretations of social-artistic transformative interactions and experiences following two informants that grew up at PACE.

Participant observations drawn upon here are from my personal artistic experiences with the students in pedagogical contexts, focusing on both individual and collective live embodiments. From a participant observational viewpoint, individual and collective artistically pedagogical dialogue between me (as a teacher) and the students ensued, creating what dance educator Tone Pernille Østern (2013) refers to as the teacher's "bodily-sensory experience." I therefore draw on this personal experience as part of the participant observation protocol, and reflect upon these experiences in an autoethnographic sense.

Furthermore, I lived in a children's home similar to PACE during the period 1997–2001 as part of my upbringing. I am therefore an earlier beneficiary of this social-artistic pedagogical interaction in this setting, in which the processes of musicking and dance-musicking are key tools for social and pedagogical interaction. My roles in PACE as artistic instructor and volunteer administrator were inspired by this orientation in addition

to communal musical and dance-musical experiences. Therefore, this study, in part, pivots on an underlying personal agency – an autoethnography unfolding from personal social-artistic experiences.

The materials analysed as part of this study include a series of open-ended and close-ended interview interactions with five current student practitioners and three past students of PACE, two of whom are followed up to the present day. Several records of artistic engagements, some of which are musicking and dance-musicking rehearsals, as well as two personal engagements with drum music *(engaabe)*, are examined. One of them is a rehearsal, and the other is a recording of a rehearsal leading up to a performance. This material has been selected from a mass of artistic engagements with the participants both at and beyond the PACE home. When dealing with this material, focus is put on the processes and moments of *doing* (see figure 1) in which an understanding of practitioners' transformation can be developed (see figure 2). It is from this understanding, experience and artistic inquisition supported by the concepts of liminality and *Ubuntu* that a social-artistic model of practitioners' embodied states of being and transformation, as shown in figure 3, is conceptualised.

All materials that are part of this study have been obtained and used in observance of ethical considerations for research in Uganda. Consent was given by both the participants and the PACE administration for academic use of the material. I have stressed anonymisation of some of the informants' names by giving them pseudo names such as Meta and Mika.

Towards a state of being socially healthy/well

The state of being healthy, or wellbeing, is not only achieved through medicalised intervention, but also through active interaction with our immediate and surrounding environments. For students, these environments can include their families, classrooms, or peers within community setting. Active interactions such as the processes of musicking and dance-musicking, be they in a school setting, community or family (extended or not) activate students' social, artistic, and collaboratively creative being (Kibirige, 2020, 2023b, 2023c; Wenger, 2000). In both

school and larger community settings, this opportunity and guided ability for a student to social-actively engage with other individuals around them is a process of generating human social capital (Kibirige, 2023a). In many local communities in Africa, community members depend on such human social capital for their wellbeing.

The processes of musicking, dancing and dance-musicking in such communities have for many centuries been key in initiating, activating and maintaining this social capital. At PACE, this social dependence is activated through artistic activity and social-artistic care for the students. The artistic interaction enhances the student's ability to be that person among other persons – an understanding that is at the core of the *Ubuntu* philosophy. This interaction has a lot to do with the educator's ability to create a safe environment for the student to explore artistically in order to transform from one state to another. Transcendent social-artistic moments such as that seen in figure 1 below both cultivate and absorb the participants into an artistically collaborative group identity – a community in which such continued social vibrations and artistic sensations activate and maintain their state of being socially well.

Figure 1. *A moment in a musical, dance, and dance-musical interaction at the PACE home.*
Members of PACE in a moment of Amaggunju music and dance-music interaction. Photograph by author at the PACE home, May 2011.

The photograph in figure 1 above captures a moment in the group's interaction with the *Amaggunju* music, dance, and dance-music tradition of

the Baganda people of south-central Uganda – one of several traditions in the PACE repertoire. It is in the continuum of these moments that interactive learning is achieved. At PACE, the process of interactive learning can be marked into three general stages, each of which is dependent on the student's/child's state when they join the ensemble.

In the first stage, new children are part of the interaction; however, they are not necessarily required to take part in the social-artistic engagements such as scheduled rehearsals. While they might participate passively through listening to others rehearse, or freely sing and dance on their own, they are not prohibited from joining in on the musical and dance interactions if they so wish without any prompting from the facilitators, caretakers or peers. The second stage is when they start to imitate their colleagues or join the rehearsals on their own and start to learn the songs and (or) movement patterns. At this stage, they are picking interest, experiencing the interactions at different levels, as well as learning through imitation by mirroring each other and the instructor(s). They engage their bodies and voices practically with guidance, care, and instruction from the instructor(s) or facilitator(s). The third stage is when they have picked up the basics of the art and are engaging with it freely on their own. At this stage of engagement, they may be encouraged to either take part in a production of a performance guided by the instructor(s) or explore musical or body-rhythmic phenomena on their own.

For example, in figure I above, some of the PACE practitioners were in an artistic moment in stage three, combining both the performance aspects and social-artistic experience. This was a non-prescriptive moment captured at the PACE home after a brief performance held on the PACE grounds. Unaided by anyone else, the students went into a free and ecstatic social-artistic interaction with the *Amaggunju* tradition, which was not part of the planned performance program. This is quite a common scenario at PACE; at the end of a planned performance engagement, students jum passionately into such moments, breaking boundaries and limitations falling into a free and spontaneous moment of musicking and dance-musicking. Speaking of these moments at PACE, Noel Kaggwa, a member of the ensemble, narrated that:

Abaana bafunayo akaseera nebekubira omubali gwebatasobodde kuteeka mu show. Sometimes show ebeera nnyimpi nebatemalaayo – ekinyegenyege kibatwaliriza ….aahh nebata nebetaaya. Akaseera ako kaba special okulaba n'okubeeramu kubanga osobola okulabiramu abaana byebakola byotalabira mu rehearsal oba mu performance.

English translation: Children get a moment and play on their own what they were unable to put in the performance. Sometimes the performance is brief that they do not give/release all they can – they get carried away and break free. It is a special moment to see and be part of because you can see what the children do that you would not see in a rehearsal or performance (*sic*). (Personal interaction, January 10, 2023)

As Kaggwa contends, such explosive embodied moments are part of the observable process of transformation. The students' ability to break free into this ecstatic state using the artistic material learnt over a given time, speaks to their continued progress of moving towards a state of being socially well; again, depending on the state they were in when they joined the group.

Embodying wellbeing – manifestation and sustenance of transformation on a micro level

In a social-artistic environment, musicking and dance-musicking can facilitate, cultivate, and sustain transformation from one state of being to another (wellbeing) through wholistic interaction. In the detail of sustained music and/or dance-music interaction, the practitioner may achieve momentary transcendence. Such moments can become building blocks for a practitioner's transformation into a state of being socially well. This process of transformation therefore develops from micro social and social-artistic levels of interaction, growing into this desired state. It is therefore important to explore these processes more from the practitioner's viewpoint rather than only from the observer's. From a practitioner's point of view, we are able to go beyond the audible and visible manifestations to the practitioner's inner-felt sensations in the process of *doing* that foment such embodied being, un-being, non-being and

becoming, which may in turn lead an individual into the desired *new state of being.*

At the micro level of social-artistic musical and dance-musical interaction, the practitioner is in a sustained embodied dialogue and negotiation in which they engage with tensions, extensions, flexions, as well as anticipation; this happens both explicitly and implicitly, and it also happens on personal and interpersonal levels. On a personal level, the practitioner engages their own musical self through sonic, bodily, body-rhythmic, body-sonic interplay that elicit their sensorial and/or emotional interaction through musical or dance-musical action. On the interpersonal level, the practitioner interacts with their fellow practitioners. Again, this occur melodically, melo-rhythmically, bodily or body-rhythmically, collaboratively creating a social and social-artistic vibe that elicits their sensorial and/or emotional interaction through musical or dance-musical action. An example of such a personal and interpersonal social-artistic dialogue in which we engage bodily with musical tensions, extensions, flexions as well as anticipation through musical and dance-musical engagement is shown in the video excerpt linked from the QR code in Figure 2 below.

Recorded and produced by Adnan Ssenkumba for PACE, and posted on peaceafrica1 YouTube channel on September 10, 2011: https://youtu.be/9En0IJ2ZNO 8?si=Pr8cMBf8ABz1A8AC

Figure 2. QR code – a video excerpt of Amaggunju, Ekitaguriro, and Orunyege dance and dance-music traditions in social-artistic and performance contexts.

The video excerpt captured social-artistic engagements that were made into music, dance and dance-music expositions on stage. The renowned music, dance and dance-music tradition called *Orunyege* from south-western Uganda is a social and social-relational tradition enacted by both girls and boys, each gender with its own body-rhythmic patterns (see 2:01 in the video in Fig. 2). They both share the same music in the dancing and dance-musicking process, making use of both

percussive and melodic instrumentation. The *Orunyege* choreomusical interaction brings together a combination of syncopative and percussive constellations of male dancers' *ebinyege* (leg rattles) and female dancers' *amajugo* (ankle bells), a dialogical, repetitive, and highly rhythmic set of three drums (*embuutu, empuunisa, engaabe*) played individually, *amadinda* (xylophone), *endingidi* (tube fiddle) and vocal expressions by everyone involved. All of these are accentuated by bodily rhythm, rhyme and temporal multiplications as well as sonic and motivic formulations geared toward exploring personal and interpersonal interaction. They initiate, develop, and maintain a vibrant musical and choreomusical dialogue and embodied negotiation between the musicians, dancers and dance-musicians that is simultaneously not only visible and audible, but also invisible. In this tradition, the practitioner is both a musician and dancer, because the action of musicking/rhythming is one of dancing, and the action of dancing is one of music-making. The instrumentation, lyrical pronunciations and invocations, rhythmic ankle bells and leg rattle enchantments, as well as the bodily (micro) rhythms, both visible and invisible, all combine and harmoniously coexist to create live musicking and dance-musicking moments through which the practitioners traverse and transcend different modes of being. It is this continued interaction that facilitates practitioners' transformation over time.

Author's practical experience

As I reflect on the social-artistic transformative experiences of children at PACE, I focus on my own embodied musical and dance-musical interactive experience in playing the *engaabe,* as it is referred to in south-western Uganda. Transformation from one state of being to another may not happen in just one musical or dance-musical interaction; rather, it rises from momentary transcendences over time.

In the video in figure 2, I use an intrinsic rhythmic inter/counteraction between the *engaabe* (long drum) player (myself), the other dance-musicians and the dancers. The *engaabe* drumming is a sonic rhythmic and percussive interaction between the drummer and dancers that rhythmically and percussively articulates the inner and outer dialogue, tensions, bodily anticipation and negotiations of the male dancer with support of

all the vibrations and reverberations of the rest of the musical constellations surrounding the practitioner in a moment of *doing*. It is easy to think that this drummer is playing what the dancers are dancing, or that the dancers are dancing what the drummer is playing. They are both not necessarily doing this, although their intrinsic melo-rhythmic and percussive interconnectivity in the moment of *doing* visibly indicates that this is the case (Nzewi, 1974). It is in this interconnective, mutual interdependence that the dialogical negotiation through repetitively varied sonic and motivic interaction unfolds.

As observed in the video, I depend on my ability to intuitively anticipate, rhythmically extend, act, react, interact and syncopatively connect to my inner artistic self and that of the dancer. As a drummer in this moment, I am not only held together with the dancers by our rhythmic, sonic and body movement connectivity; we are also held together by the manifestation of our momentary artistic bond we develop as well as the care for them in this this teaching and learning process. As I play, I fall into an embodied flow of the dancer's lived bodily movement actions and accentuate, mark, share, and intuitively interact with their (dancers') feelings, tensions and extensions through rhythmic, and sonic multiplication, retention, anticipation, as well as understanding of the melodic, motivic, and rhythmic flow of this music a dance-music moment. This does not only require artistic acumen on the part of the educator but also sensitive collaborative skills.

The *Orunyege* long drum player reaches a moment when he gets deeply immersed in the motivic flow of the dancer's movements and rhythmic interplay that they come to share, express, negotiate, extend them to accommodate their feelings even unconsciously. Within the tradition's contextual confines, the dancers and dance-musicians dialogue through a multiplicity of movement and movement-sounds. Such sustained wholistic social-artistic dialogues foment moments of transcendence through musical and dance-musical interaction that nurture and sustain practitioners' transformation from one state of being to their state of being socially well. I play with care and flexibility to accommodate the students' abilities and create a safe artistic environment for them to explore freely and safely. I do so by following the flow of their bodily

and body-rhythmic reaction to, and interaction with the dialogical, percussive, as well as the syncopative rhythms I play for and with them in that moment as a pedagogue. It is within this safe space and freedom that momentary transcendences unfold. These moments of micro artistic actions, reactions, and interactions become building blocks for transformation on a macro level.

Manifestation and sustenance of transformation on a micro conceptual level

PACE's social-artistic programs present many examples of children who have achieved such transformation. For this study, I have interacted with and followed up on some of them. The transformation of Meta (23), and Mika (20), described below can give us insight into this experience.

Meta's transformation

Meta joined PACE at the age of eight. Before joining, she attended a primary school in her village where she had reached primary three class level (P3). Even at this young age, she had already had community orientation in a few dancing and musicking traditions. Meta lost her father at the age of four, and she was not coping well with this sad life event. She did not speak much and often sought seclusion from public spaces. This had started to affect her progress at school and slowed down her language/speech development. Her uncle, grandmother, and mother approached PACE to admit her. This was not because they could not take care of her, but because they believed she could benefit from a more interactive space "where the thoughts of losing her father" might not arise as easily. They were also aware of the fact that PACE would provide her with a better learning environment. The shift from her old school to the new one gave her an additional hard time as the life conditions there were different. However, after a few months of social and social-artistic interaction at PACE, her grades improved. In her second term, she became one of the top three students in her class, and never came down from this position for the rest of her primary school time. I observed that her music, dance, and dance-music interactions became expressive, meditative, and

mediative mediums. She affirms this observation in an open interview interaction in which she explained to me that:

> Right from the process of learning and artistically interacting with the details of the bodily rhythmic patterns we engage with, I feel I have been able to explore and kind of overcome and manage my grief, personal worries, tribulations. There are musical and dance moments in time in which I feel I am at terms with myself.
>
> (Personal interaction, December 8, 2022)

In less than a year, Meta had settled in, found her passions, and was on the way to success. At the end of her lower secondary school level, she had become an ambassador for the rest of the children at PACE, and by the end of her upper secondary school, she had become the junior dance and dance-music engagement director. PACE supported her university studies and, upon completion, she got employed as an administrator and human resource manager at a community primary school.

Mika's Transformation

Seven-year-old Mika joined the ensemble under the same circumstances as Meta a few years later. At this point, according to his mother, Mika had a strong fear of crowds, and when his father passed away, the situation worsened, as the two had been very close. He had been unable to go to school for close to a year because of this fear. His mother took him to PACE not only because she did not have enough resources to support his education, but also because PACE had an interactive community cultural environment that could help alleviate his fear. While his first two weeks at PACE were not easy, the administration along with his mother gave him the required care and the interactive environment he needed to thrive. Mika started engaging social-artistically with the rest of his fellow children in just over two weeks from when he had joined the ensemble. Despite all his earlier troubles, he started to overcome his fear; two months later, he was able to start going to school. In my interactions with him as part of this study, Mika narrated to me that there were some times during his secondary school life when he could still get anxious if when he had been called on to speak. He mentioned a time when he was elected

as a prefect and had to speak to the entire school at morning assembly. "In the first two minutes of this address, I felt like I was sweating, but then I just imagined this as a musical interaction like we usually do at PACE. It was not the best speech, but at least I felt confident and interactive as I went into it", he said. Mika has now just finished his final secondary school examinations and is getting ready for university life.

From such experiences, observations, practical artistic interactions (performative or social-artistic), and narratives through ethnographic investigation, a social-artistic model of practitioners' embodied states of being and transformation is conceptualised.
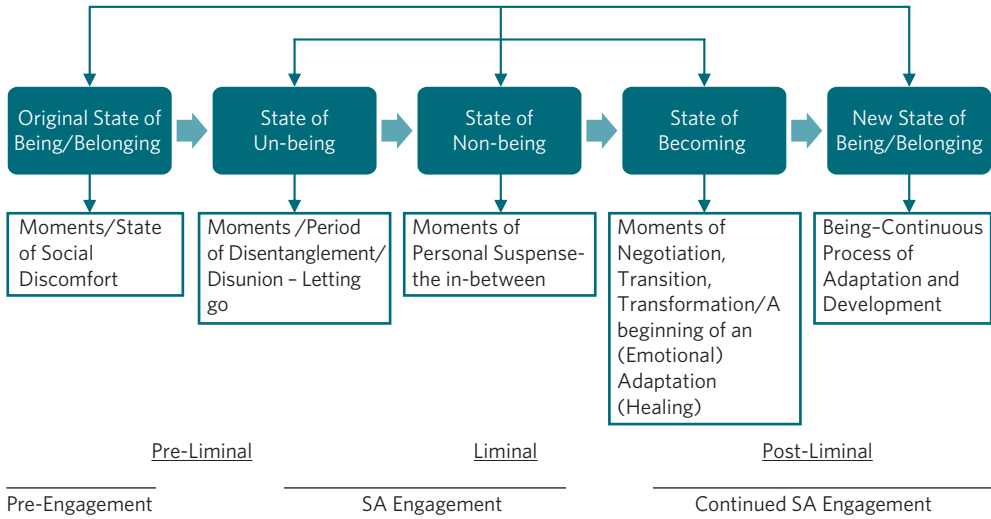
The five states of transformation

The social-artistic model of students' embodied states of being and transformation illustrates five distinctive states of transformation. Arnold Van Gennep's concept of liminality gives this model a general framework (1960). The model draws on the nuances of social-artistic engagement. As illustrated in figure three below, the five transformative states of being give an overview of how a student's transformation (such as those of Meta and Mika) can unfold and be sustained on the macro/conceptual level.

From the three-phase frame of liminality, five transformative states of being are not only conceptualised but also practically lived by the student. There are two states in the pre-liminal phase, one in the liminal and two in the post-liminal phase. These phases of transformation are not part of a ritual as described in the liminality frame. They are related to social-artistic engagements that are non-prescriptive processes unfolding in a sonically and motivically nuanced form. In this chapter, the three phases of liminality provide a frame and outlay of the process on a macro level, while the practical interactive actions, as discussed earlier, detail the momentary transcendence process on a micro level.

A student's state of being socially healthy can be influenced by many factors from their past or new/current environments. For instance, changes in their environments in addition to their perception of the past and present environments and ability to cope or adapt always play a role in shaping their wellbeing. At PACE, transformation is not consciously timed, as each child has their own capacity for coping. The instructors

Figure 3. A Social-Artistic Model of Practitioners' Embodied States of Being and Transformation -Practitioners' Transformation Through Social-Artistic (SA) Engagements.

take care to provide a safe space for transformation to unfold naturally. The original state of being is any state in which they arrive. It is a common phenomenon that humans adapt to their surroundings. This process of adaptation is what I refer to as the "state of un-being." It is the process in a moment, time or period in which an individual consciously or unconsciously lets go or adjusts to let in the confines of their present environment. This may include, but is not limited to, norms, values, culture or any other aspects of life (macro or micro) that enhance or affect a new state of being. In the case of PACE, musicking and dance-musicking, as described earlier, is one of the tools that do not only propel this process, but also sustain it.

Between the state of un-being and that of becoming exists another state, one in which a person is neither in the previous state nor in the next/desired one. It is an in-between period in which one does not belong. One lets go of the previous state but has not embraced the present/prevailing confines of being. This state of being is what I refer to as "the state of non-being." This period in the *doing* can be understood as the liminal state, threshold, or what Victor Turner would refer to as the "state of betwixt and between" (Turner, 1982, p. 17). This liminal moment in time becomes the threshold between the state of un-being, which Van

Gennep (1960) would call the "pre-liminal stage," and the state of becoming, which is also part of the post-liminal stage.

In the state of becoming, the student starts to let in the confines of the present environment, norms, values, culture, atmosphere, or any other aspects of life (macro or micro) that enhance, effect, or affect their new state of being (wellbeing), but not yet fully achieved their new state of being. In the last state of being, which is the new state of being, we see the practitioner having successfully achieved and being comfortably settled in, actively interacting with the elements of the new state of being. This entire process exists within a realm of tremendous interactions, tensions, extensions, as well as suspension, negotiation, or even contestation of past and present realities that one can observe both actively and passively. Musicking and dance-musicking provide the platform for these situations. The flow, structure, and duration of their manifestation are not fixed, but flexible depending on how complex the nature of the original state of being is. Within the purview of PACE, pedagogues exercise care to provide a social-artistically safe environment for the students, to help them achieve the desired transformation.

Even though such approach and view of these processes are common in local communities in Uganda, they are not yet emphasised in formal school settings. The ideas, approaches and conceptualisations in this chapter can be activated and considered for application in diverse environments beyond Uganda. Social-artistic interaction is one of the avenues through which social wellbeing could be activated and experienced by students in different contexts of school or community life outside the context of the present study. Indeed, focusing more on these interactions, for example in school curriculum development, can go a long way towards expanding and realising the social and health benefits of such processes for students and teachers alike. In the new school curriculum reform framework for primary and secondary education, where there is emphasis on students' physical and mental health, the social-artistic model of students' embodied states of being and transformation is an idea to consider, develop and expand on, even beyond the limits of its presentation in this chapter.

Pedagogical reflections and conclusion

Promoting an interactive, free and non-prescriptive social-artistic musical and dance-musical engagement cultivates an environment for students' primordial self-expression. Many societies have inscribed knowledge in music and dance-music traditions, some of which seem difficult to access and make easily available in formal academic structures. To get closer to such knowledge, music and dance-music researchers, students, teachers, pedagogues, as well as teacher education institutions ought to look at the arts not only in, but also beyond their preconceived presuppositions if we are to tap into its unending possibilities. This will further spark inquiries similar to this one that reveal the arts' vast tributaries of human social existences and coexistences. Students can find their own local social-cultural community "rites of passage" through social-artistic engagement to reach a new state of *being well*.

I have discussed how the processes of musicking and dance-musicking can sustain and activate social wellbeing. The focus has been on exploring how in these processes, practitioners are able to transform from a given state of being to achieve social wellbeing. The discussion has brought to the fore a practitioner-centered view of musical and dance-musical arts in exploring what is felt in the pedagogical processes of musicking and dance-musicking – that which unfolds within the practitioner in the moments of *doing* and how this activates their being that person among/with other persons. Drawing on practical experiences, observations, and interactive interview narratives, I have examined how moments of music and dance-music action, reaction and interaction propagate, enhance, and activate social wellbeing.

References

Anders, P. (2018). *Framing social interaction: Continuities and cracks in Goffman's frame analysis.* Taylor & Francis.

Batt-Rawden, K. B. (2018). The fellowship of health musicking: A model to promote health and well-being. *Music and Public Health: A Nordic Perspective*, 215–235.

Batt-Rawden, K. B. (2007). *Music and health promotion: The role and significance of music and musicking in everyday life for the long term ill* [Doctoral dissertation] University of Exeter.

Bradley, J. (1993). Methodological issues and practices in qualitative research. *The Library Quarterly 63*(4), 431–449.

Broodryk, J. (2006). Ubuntu African life coping skills. *Theory and practice, 1*(2).

Collins, P. (2005). Thirteen ways of looking at a 'ritual'. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *20*(3), 323–342.

Connolly, M. K., Quin, E. & Redding, E. (2011). Dance 4 your life: Exploring the health and well being implications of a contemporary dance intervention for female adolescents. *Research in Dance Education*, *12*(1), 53–66.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Sage Publications.

Damsholt, I. (1999). *Choreomusical discourse: The relationship between dance and music*. [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Copenhagen.

Damsholt, I. (2006). Mark Morris, Mickey Mouse and choreomusical polemic. *The Opera Quarterly*, *22*(1), 4–21.

Eiksund, Ø. J., Angelo, E. & Knigge, J. (2020). *Music technology in education: Channelling and challenging perspectives* (p. 285). Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

Elliott, D. J. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education.* Oxford University Press.

Felföldi, L. (2001). Connections between dance and dance music: Summary of Hungarian research. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, *33*, 159–166.

Fisher, M. (2019). A theory of public wellbeing [Report]. *BMC Public Health, 19*(1).

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.

Gore, G., Rix-Lièvre, G., Wathelet, O. & Cazemajou, A. (2020). Eliciting the tacit: Interviewing to understand bodily experience. In J. Skinner (Ed.), *The interview* (pp. 127–142). Routledge.

Jain, S. & Brown, D. R. (2001). Cultural dance: An opportunity to encourage physical activity and health in communities. *Journal of Health Education*, *32*(4), 216–222.

Kaeppler, A. L. (1996). The look of music, the sound of dance: Music as a visual art. *Visual Anthropology*, *8*(2–4), 133–153.

Kamwachale, J. K. (2012). *The African Ubuntu philosophy*. Yunibesithi Ya Pretoria. https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/28706/04chapter4.pdf?sequence=5

Kibirige, R. (2020). *Dancing reconciliation and re/integration: Lamokowang and dance-musicking in the Oguda-Alel post-war communities of Northern Uganda* [Doctoral dissertation]. Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

Kibirige, R. (2023a). Community dancing, and dance-musicking: A communitarian cultural regenerative system of knowing and knowledge activation. *International Journal for Research in Cultural, Aesthetic, and Arts Education, 1*(1), 34–38.

Kibirige, R. (2023b). On dance-musicking and collaborative musicality in formal and non- formal music and dance-music arts education. In O. B. Øien, S. S. Kolaas, M. F. Duch & E. Angelo (Eds.), *MusPed:Research: Vol. 6. Explorative perspectives in music and education* (199–224). Cappelen Damm Akademisk.

Kibirige, R. (2023c). Dance-musicking: Non-prescriptive dance, music, and dance-music engagement in cross-sectoral collaborative teaching and learning. *Dance Articulated, Special Issue: Dance in Cross-Sectoral Educational Collaborations, 9*(1), 144–162.

Kigozi, F., Ssebunnya, J., Kizza, D., Cooper, S. & Ndyanabangi, S. (2010). An overview of Uganda's mental health care system: Results from an assessment using the world health organization's assessment instrument for mental health systems (WHO-AIMS). *International Journal of Mental Health Systems*, *4*(1), 1–9.

Lefa, B. J. (2015). The African philosophy of Ubuntu in South African education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *1*(1), 15.

Mabingo, A. (2020). *Ubuntu as dance pedagogy in Uganda: Individuality, community, and inclusion in teaching and learning of indigenous dances*. Springer.

MacDonald, R., Kreutz, G. & Mitchell, L. (Eds.). (2013). *Music, health, and wellbeing*. Oxford University Press.

Norwegian Directorate of Education. (2020). The Norwegian education mirror, 2019. https://www.udir.no/in-english/education-mirror-2019/school-environment-and-well-being/#

Norwegian Directorate of Education. (2020). *Health and Llfe skills*. https://www.udir.no/lk20/overordnet-del/prinsipper-for-laring-utvikling-og- danning/tverrfaglige-temaer/folkehelse-og-livsmestring/?lang=eng

Nzewi, M. (1974). Melo-rhythmic essence and hot rhythm in Nigerian folk music. *The Black Perspective in Music*, *2*(1), 23–28.

Olvera, A. E. (2008). Cultural dance and health: A review of the literature. *American Journal of Health Education*, *39*(6), 353–359.

Østern, T. P. (2013). The embodied teaching moment: The embodied character of the dance teacher's practical-pedagogical knowledge investigated in dialogue with two contemporary dance teachers. *Nordic Journal of Dance–practice, Education, and Research, 4*(1), 29–46.

Schechner, R. (2017). *Performance studies: An introduction*. Routledge.

Sheppard, A. & Broughton, M. C. (2020). Promoting wellbeing and health through active participation in music and dance: A systematic review. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, *15*(1), 1732526.

Skoglund, A., Batt-Rawden, K. B., Schröder, A. & Moen, O. L. (2021). Perception of student life as promoting mental health and well-being: A study of first-year students in a Norwegian University. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, *23*(4), 487–497.

Small, C. (1998). *Musicking: The meanings of performing and listening*. Wesleyan University Press.

Stamou, A., Roussy, A. B., Ockelford, A. & Terzi, L. (2022). Music and dance enhance social interaction and task engagement in autistic young pupils and their peers in mainstream schools. *Support for Learning*, *37*(3), 450–463.

Szakolczai, A. (2009). Liminality and experience: Structuring transitory situations and transformative events. *International Political Anthropology 2*(1), 142–172.

Thomas, J. (1993). *Doing critical ethnography*. Sage.

Thomassen, B. (2009). The uses and meanings of liminality. *International Political Anthropology, 2*(1), 5–28.

Turner, V. (1967). *Betwixt and between: The liminal period in rites de passage. The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Cornell University Press.

Turner, V. (1982). *From ritual to theatre: The human seriousness of play*. PAJ.

Van Gennep, A. (1960). *Rites of passage*. Routledge

Weare, K. & Nind, M. (2011). Promoting mental health of children and adolescents through schools and school-based interventions: Evidence outcomes: School-based interventions. *Health Promotion International*, *26*(Suppl. 1), i29-i69.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*, *7*(2), 225–246.