

Traditional.

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From: Sarah Munro, Foulis Mains, Evanton, Ross-hire IV16 9UX Phone: 01349830366 email: alphamunro@aol.com

Dear Sir,

December 6th 04

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Inspired by a Nesta Fellowship in 2001 to investigate the efficacy of modal music (music outwith conventional western scale patterns) in the therapeutic setting and unable to find much research in a traditional Scottish cultural context, I decided to survey participants of the leading organization within the Feis movement. The results paint an outstandingly bright picture of the efficacy of traditional music passed on and nurtured by outstanding tutors and organisers. They have also given me a deeper understanding of people's attitudes to traditional music and musicianship in general, particularly in the Feisean setting. Learning music by ear, for instance, has many important advantages and is a relatively unresearched area.

I hope this evidence will interest you.

This Study examines Attitudes to Traditional Music in the Feisean Setting

Main Findings:

- **Positive attitudes** to traditional music are largely **socio-cultural**. Traditional music is **fashionable**.
- The **pioneering policy** of the Feis offers children the **opportunity to play up to three instruments** at a Feis with positive results.
- **Learning music by ear aids attentive listening, creative process and concentration**. It offers opportunities to players who find reading music hard and is **appropriate** for children with **learning difficulties**.
- **Traditional modal music is popular and creates links with world music** and other styles such as **jazz**
- The opportunity to link **music, song and dance** at a Feis **encourages melodic and rhythmic understanding** as well as cultural knowledge.
- **Confidence and self-esteem** are established through identification with groups of people who have a positive image.
- Traditional music encourages **creativity and ownership**.
- Traditional music's strong **social appeal** offers opportunities for **social inclusion** and brings people together from diverse musical backgrounds.
- Traditional music's both **informal and formal nature** makes it a **versatile medium** for **community** use.
- **Performance opportunities** from a young age build **musicality**, confidence; social, self and musical identity as well as expressive skills. Virtually the entire cerebral cortex is engaged while musicians are performing.
- The importance of a **basic knowledge of the Gaelic language** for a **true understanding** of **Oral culture** is vital.
- The correlation between **music and health**

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Munro

Sarah Munro Musician/Artist

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**INTRODUCTION: RESEARCHED ATTITUDES TO TRADITIONAL
SCOTTISH MUSIC DRAFT**

Introduction

Traditional Scottish music in modern society offers huge social, psychological, physiological, emotional and educational benefits to all ages in an area where cultural roots are still vibrant. Participation in traditional music provides musical identity and helps our systems adjust to the background's linguistic vibration.

After a gap caused mainly by the arrival of television and a rise in pop music during the 60s, 70s and 80s, the last 20 years have seen a resurgence of traditional music, song and dance in the Highlands. This has undoubtedly been helped on enormously by the success of the Feis Movement (Feis, a Gaelic word for festival refers to a movement which originated in Ireland, promoting traditional culture through week long festivals, and community classes), public exposure to traditional music on local radio and television, an upsurge in local festivals, the inclusion of traditional music in the curriculum for schools and of course a more stable economy allowing people the opportunity to buy into private tuition.

Inspired by a Nesta award to investigate the efficacy of modal music in the therapeutic setting and unable to find much research in this area in a traditional Scottish context, I decided to survey Feis Rois participants of all ages attending Feisean and community classes. The results paint an outstandingly bright picture of the efficacy of traditional music in the Feisean setting where Scottish culture is

nurtured and passed on by exceptionally committed tutors and organisers. They have also given me a deeper understanding of people's current attitudes towards traditional music and musicianship in general, particularly in the Feisean setting.

Firstly, what is my definition of Scottish traditional music? Today traditional music is a broad term describing all types of indigenous folk music. Francis Collinson in his book 'The Traditional and National music of Scotland' suggests that traditional music should only refer to music that is passed on by oral or aural transmission alone and that 'national' should be the term given to music disseminated in printed form. For the purposes of this questionnaire I refer to the broad term.

Secondly, what is meant by attitudes? Attitudes, according to Abeles and Chung, can be thought of as a 'learned predisposition reflecting the way one feels about a subject while not in the presence of that subject'.

My questionnaire covered a huge area. It touched not only on people's emotional, physiological and psychological responses to music and musicianship but also on the social aspects of music i.e. on music as a collective experience providing a shared identity. Feis weeks bring people from many backgrounds together and the music underpins and highlights their social experience. An immersion in culture revitalises it.

The Feis movement provides an integrated creative experience and it succeeds. It is concerned with putting equal opportunities into practice. It is a perfect space for those with low spectrum disability and I have witnessed the enriching effects (on all levels)

Feis weeks have on children in the autistic spectrum. My own work in the disabled setting continually demonstrates the positive effects of traditional music. Strong rhythms encourage toe tapping, dancing, clapping, smiling, focus, and engagement with musical instruments. Repetitive phrases in song and melody line are useful tools for exercising aural memory and body percussion. The occurrence of certain pitches in traditional music can become reference points as well. The octave is one such point. It is the first interval of the harmonic series with a doubling of the frequency. It supports the tonic note. Other pitches that frequently appear are the fifth and the third. Perhaps traditional music helps us align ourselves with the harmonics?

'Elemental' music should always be connected with movement, dance, play and language. Carl Orff, music educationalist of the 1930s, worked with a unity of skills. He was certain that this weave would always communicate and help lifelong learning. He was right. The ear-brain-body complex does develop through tonal improvisations. At the forefront of this process is the limbic system, that part of the brain that receives messages about external events directly from sensory organs and from the primary and association cortex.

Some of Celtic music's best qualities derive from its gapped and modal scales. They are a vital part of cultural sound. They embody a sacred sense of place, an emotional history, a strong connection with the natural world, a language, a religion and an oral tradition. Results in my 'survey' indicate a taste for tunes in modal scales. The five note gapped pentatonic scale is universal to most cultures. It underlies many Gaelic melodies and songs, it is easy to improvise in and its qualities warm us. In addition, research indicates it is part of our musico-linguistic heritage.

Modes in traditional music derived from Ancient Greek tribes. The word *modus* comes from the verb 'modulari' to sing. Each tribe had its own mode and these modes were a collection of melody type phrases, rhythms and poetic forms. Different orders of tones were created for emotional effect. Today some of these modes are still effective. These modal and gapped scales not only resonate in our western history but in our great musical unconsciousness.

Feis Rois stages three Feisean – Junior, Senior and Adult. Weekly community classes exist outside these times.

The Junior and Senior Feisean are residential 5-day festivals taking place during school holidays. Children are offered tuition in fiddle, clarsach, chanter, pipes, tin whistle, drums, Gaelic song, guitar, highland dancing, step dancing and drama. At the Senior Feis groupwork is as important as individual tuition. Song writing, composing and music arranging are inclusive. Gaelic conversation is a central part of the daily timetable at Feis Rois; evening activities include drama, sports, art and crafts, ceilidhs and dances. The Adult Feis covers a long week-end and offers tuition in fiddle, pipes, tin whistle, guitar, gaelic song, step dancing, keyboard, clarsach and groupwork with evening activities in composition, extra groupwork and song. Ceilidhs, dances and sessions enrich the whole experience and bring people together in informal settings.

Questionnaire Participants: 138 Junior Feis children attending the five day festival in April 2003. A random sample of 40 Adults attending the Adult Feis in May 2003. A

random sample of 25 teenagers (13-18) attending Feis and community classes in Ross-shire.

Procedure: 1) Junior Feis, 2003: A day towards the end of the week (Thursday) was chosen for the children (9-12). At a morning break time the children filled out the questionnaires with the help of the supervisors and myself. 2) Adult Feis May 2003: On day two questionnaires were left on a table in Ullapool High School where the music classes were held for volunteers to fill in. 3) September – October 2003. Teenagers (13-18) attending weekly community classes filled out questionnaires and returned them to me by post.

Sarah Munro May 2004

Researched Attitudes to Scottish Traditional Music 2003/2004

Results from the groups questioned suggest that positive attitudes to Traditional Scottish music for those between 9 years and 55 years are largely socio cultural. Traditional music is fashionable. Elemental music communicates. Children (9 - 12) and adolescents (13 – 18) play because they think it's 'cool' and share the adult's (18 - 55) view that it helps them understand their tradition and culture. Adults and adolescents indicate a loyalty to the tradition and some have long family connections with it. It is important to them. After a gap caused by a rise in pop music and the arrival of television the last 20 years have seen a huge resurgence of traditional music, song and dance in the Highlands helped enormously by the success of the Feis Movement, summer schools at Sabhal Mor Ostaig (the Gaelic college on Skye), public exposure to traditional music on the radio and television, an upsurge in local festivals, celtic rock bands and the inclusion of traditional music in the schools' music curriculum. On the other hand there are huge areas in the Highlands and in the rest of Scotland where the traditional music programme is still way behind, where there are few teachers to pass it on, where it is not included in the school agenda and where it has died in the home and the community.

Results show that only 59% of the children surveyed believe that traditional music helps you learn about Scottish history and culture; 57% feel the music is affiliated to the landscape conjuring up peaceful scenes, and reflecting the rhythmic movements of animals. However, 78% of the adolescents and 80% of the adults with a matured knowledge show a more positive response when it comes to appreciating music and cultural links.

The chance to play even one instrument in the primary school is still limited to a very few places. The Feis movement, on the other hand, gives all ages the opportunity to play three instruments in a week, thereby allowing children the time to find an instrument most suited to them, a chance to concentrate on the instrument of their choice, and the ability to nurture second and third talents. 36% of the children at the Junior Feis play two instruments, 26% play three and 14% play four instruments. 39% of the adolescents play two instruments.

Singing and dancing, besides instrument playing, are an important part of the Gaelic tradition. Results in the Junior and Adult surveys indicate their popularity. However, adolescents show a preference for a traditional dance form such as step or ceilidh dancing. The learning of more than one

discipline is undoubtedly positive and is an additional aid to rhythm and melodic skills.

Carl Orff, music educationalist of the 1930's whose ideas are currently having a revival, always worked with a mix of skills, "Never music alone, but always connected with movement, dance and speech." Orff was assured that music born of the natural rhythm of language and the natural rhythm of speech would always communicate. Step dancers at the Feis have an opportunity to put dance to song and to traditional music thereby demonstrating the music song, dance connection.

The urge to make music, dance and imitate movements is seated in the limbic system, an area of the middle brain that also deals with our emotional reactions to music. Music can activate the flow of processes in the limbic system. The development of harmonic understanding and sophisticated musical analysis lie in the left- hemisphere whilst the right hemisphere is superior in distinguishing intonations, voices and musical experiences. However, the degree to which the musical brain is lateralised is still debated. A considerable amount of research has shown differences in right and left hemispheric processing.

When our minds and bodies are in balance, learning on all levels becomes easier. Movement and sound awaken the brain and energise it. If a cranial nerve, such as cranial nerve 8 (connected to hearing and balance) is blocked by fear and anxiety causing bodily stiffness, effective listening is massively reduced. Traditional music helps the vestibular system's (organs of balance in the inner ear connected to muscles in the body) development and co-ordination. Dynamic dance rhythms are contagious. The unconscious act of pulsating with the music we hear happens because we are rhythmic creatures and rhythmic movement helps balance, emotional expression, listening and attention. They keep our circulation moving in a cold climate. Particular dances grew from particular responses to climatic conditions and environments.

Traditional music isn't the only music played by this population. 50% of the juniors, 35% of the adolescents and 57% of the adults play in other styles such as classical, jazz, world music, rock. The three groups were surveyed for their favourite tunes to indicate whether there was a bias for modal tunes, i.e. tunes in celtic folk scales. It was interesting to note that the 46% of junior's favoured modal tunes to major tunes as did 43% of the adolescents whilst only 15% of the adults chose modal tunes alone as their favourite, however 55% of this group went for a mix of major and modal tunes. Of course there are all kinds of reasons why children and

adolescents favour modal melodies. For a start they communicate culturally, physically, emotionally and therefore psychologically. Modal tunes are fundamental to jazz music and world music traditions and are to be found in rock and classical music as well but to a much lesser degree.

Celtic sound springs from the use of gapped scales as in pentatonic and hexatonic scales, and the Ancient Greek modal scales such as in Dorian, Mixolydian, and Aeolian. Many Scottish tunes are of mixed modality. The pentatonic scale is not only called the most universal scale, it precedes the major scale both historically and pedagogically. Technically, pentatonic can mean any five tones but in Orff Schulwerk, Kodaly and some ethnomusicology circles, it means a specific five tones. – the first, second, third, fifth and sixth degrees of the Western major scale. The pentatonic scale is in use in diverse cultures ranging from the cultures of the Native American Indians to France, Tibet, Africa, China, India, Russia and elsewhere. It is also part of our linguistic heritage according to the Bernstein theory. Pentatonic sequences are found in musico-linguistics; they feature universally in children's play calls: G, E, A, G, E. They are also, more or less, an unconscious sounding of the first five tones of the harmonic series: C,D,E,G, sort of A. .

The rich Greek musical heritage present in Celtic music can be traced back to Babylonian, Sumerian, Egyptian and Vedic traditions. Each mode had its own set of ethics. In the Middle Ages (800 – 1400) the Dorian scale was the equivalent of our C major scale. Dorian scales, are part of our religious heritage, frequently used in ritual and to be found in Gregorian chant and the Celtic Church. Its serene character brought a sense of exultation to melodies. Gregorian chant according to Kathrine Le Mee is a conscious musical form designed to ‘ennoble singer and listener through its intrinsic beauty’. There is no doubt the influence of chant present in the Gaelic tradition. This is, perhaps, an example of exoteric use. Aeolian, melancholy, dreamy was also a popular 16th century mode and when Glareanus (16th century) measured usage of medieval modes he claimed that Aeolian was the most frequently used. The Mixolydian mode is open and joyful, another scale used for religious chants of the Ancient Greek day and the tuning of the bagpipe scale.

The modal tunes cited in the questionnaire are popular tunes and rhythmically successful. Physical energy generated by fast modal tunes for children and adolescents is valued matching needs to physically move and develop. Added to which at these stages their bodies are the main pathways for memory and learning. Stressed adults value the sedative effects of slow modal tunes. In the therapeutic setting in which I work

modal tunes, both slow and fast are often successful. Fast tunes help engage, focus attention and unlock muscles; slow tunes relax and encourage dreaminess. Whether the stress is joyful or harmful the body will need to readjust back to a state of homeostasis.

Greek modal tunes in Dorian and Aeolian, pentatonic minor tunes are plaintive. In the Middle Ages the Dorian scales was the Research indicates that people's emotional responses to music in minor modes are quicker than for music in major scales. They resonate more quickly, emotionally and physically. Look at the popularity of modal tunes in the Hit Parade, Bob Dylan songs, Beatle songs, Tracy Chapman.

Sadness is not always associated with sad or plaintive melodies, especially in traditional music. The positive rhythmic quality of a plaintive melody makes it a happy one.

It is interesting to note that pentatonic scales and modal scales appear lower in the harmonic series than the Western contemporary major scale. Not only can we hear harmonics (if we listen carefully) when we play a single note on an instrument rich in harmonics such as a violin or an accordion but it is possible, in resonant places, to hear them in well-sung notes.

The art of bi-vocal singing was practised in celtic times and is being revived today in the West. It is still in regular use in Tuva, Outer Mongolia and parts of Africa. With skill this art is available to us all and reveals the universal harmonic/modal patterning within. The octave and the fifth the first couple of harmonics, to reveal themselves, are the stable base of diverse musical cultures.

The emotional effect of music has to have a corresponding physical effect. All physiological effects of sound inevitably provoke a psychological reaction. Heart rate, blood pressure, respiration, skin temperature, electrodermal activity (arousal levels), brain waves are all influenced by music. Stimulating music tends to enhance body energy, induces bodily action, increases blood pressure while sedative music can reduce heart rate and blood pressure. In the questionnaire 71% of the children went for exciting, energetic dance tunes overall. Only 10% of children valued slow tunes. The adults, however, were divided in their enthusiasm for slow and fast energetic tunes. 45% valued fast energetic tunes, while 45% went for the slow sedative ones.

The return to the old trend of teaching melodies by ear is apparent across the surveys. This is not new for any of those surveyed. 75% of the

children have done this before, 85% of the adults and 91% of the adolescents. However, only 44% of the children find it easy. Perhaps this indicates this method's infrequent use outside the Feis. On the other hand, 69% of the adolescents find it easy, demonstrating that confidence has been developed through time by attending Feis classes. Only 57% of the adults find learning by ear easy. Many adults who have never learnt this way before find it hard to shut out mental chatter to concentrate on melody. Learning by ear goes back to mother/infant bonding when babies tune into pitch, timbre, dynamics and rhythms of words for linguistic development. It is a natural process and the earlier the young player is taught by ear the easier it is. Inflections and stresses of language are imparted at the same time, especially if the melody is a song melody. And at all stages the tune receiver brings with it her or his own psychological and emotional response to the music from a whole history of emotional experiences as does the transmitter but once again the sharing of music can become a shared consciousness. For successful learning a good personal relationship characterised by a feeling of warmth is a critical variable in performer success.

The art of attentive listening empowers. It effects changes within the mind-body-emotion complex. The intention and focus we hold in learning determines whether we are listening or hearing. When we listen with

intention for utilising information in a creative process we listen with insight and engagement. Learning music by ear aids this process and helps concentration, neural processing and aural awareness. Better listening and attention in relation to verbal language are preconditions required for other developmental activities such as cognition, communication, socialisation and adaptive behaviour. An improvement of listening and organisation of communication responses lessens frustration, anger and maladjusted behaviour. The study of listening was the focus of a 20th century French physician, psychologist and educator named Dr. Tomatis. He researched the effects sound frequencies have on the energy levels of the body and the ability to learn language. The ability of the ear to focus on frequencies determines success in learning, language and music. The frequency of pitches, as well as tonal colour are localised in different parts of the cortex. Some pitches stay on the same side of the brain as the ear that is hearing a sound. So the transferral of an oral culture helps us all not only become part of the culture artistically and socially but also helps us adapt to its linguistic vibration. According to the followers of Dr. Tomatis the vibration of our physical landscape affects our linguistic vibration.

Tunes learnt by ear are remembered more easily. 67% of the children and 69% of the adolescents find this. Children commented on the fact that

learning by ear makes you 'really listen', that the tune is learnt more thoroughly and can be worked on more quickly. Only 57% of the adults on the other hand find this easy due probably to the fact that it is only in the last 15 years that there has been a revival in the trend to learn by ear. Adults who have not had this experience in childhood may develop a psychological block. However, this can be overcome in the hands of a sympathetic tutor. Learning music by ear does not require the same skills as learning words or reading musical notation. It offers opportunities for players who find reading music hard and is appropriate for children with learning difficulties. In addition it can allow access more quickly to creative unconsciousness in the right brain. In my opinion learning music by ear allows access to the creative unconsciousness. 52% of the adults believe that learning by ear helps concentration in other areas, 47% of the children agree.

The U.S. psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's theory of Flow and Optimal experience may fit in with the intense concentration, skills required and involvement needed for learning music by ear. Learning by ear may create a flow experience. This highly esteemed psychologist has done much work in the field of optimal experience. Flow is characterised by 'intense involvement, deep concentration, high skills, challenges, clarity of goals, feedback, a loss of time sense leading to an intrinsically

rewarding experience'. Research into flow experiences show universally increased happiness, cognitive efficiency, intrinsic motivation and self-concept. 47% of the children think that learning music by ear helps your concentration. 52% of the adults agree.

73% of the children maintain that creating a composition is 'cool'. 65% of the children did not have the opportunity to do this during the week. This perhaps indicates an important gap to be filled and requires expertise. Composing music creates an emotional signature, a creative snap-shot of a given moment in time. It calls on musical skills and theory. It is a creative act and the basis of all creative acts is strong emotion and imagination. Creating a group composition is powerfully bonding. 96% of the teenagers maintain that composition is important, however, in the weekly class situation this is an area that needs funding. At a teenage Feis week this is a subject offered by composers. The adults are less keen on composition and only 25% think it's important which is probably due to their primary wish to play a tune, join in and enjoy the craic. For those who wish to compose, composition is on offer at their Feis as an evening class.

Traditional music is a creative medium. Grace notes, style, bowing and variation can be individualistic. Improvisation and playing variations of a tune are ways into the creative process. The folk idiom, with its reassuring repetitive structures and modal scales, provides a springboard for easy improvisation and composition. Structure is often simple: AABB, a structure that correlates with 'innate foundations of brain patterning which turn out to be universals'. Modal tunes require no sophisticated modulation to other keys.

Creative thought process incorporates the limbic system with the right left regions of the neo-cortex joining inspiration with cognitive and intuitive intelligence of the neo-cortex. When we strengthen pathways between brain centres, future communication abilities strengthen. Greater flexibility of thinking and feeling becomes available through processes that involve the emotions in the learning experience.

Improvisation, if defined as 'a spontaneous creation of music in performance' is a creative skill not to be found as much in Scottish traditional music as say in comparison with current Irish traditional music where according to Irish musicians it is more closely bound to the melody than in underlying chord progression as in jazz. Improvisation, however, in terms of variation -bowing, ornamentation, rhythmic, stylistic - has

always been there in traditional Scottish music. Although used in many cultures in the East improvisation, using the former term, is still under used in the West. Jazz has refocused its relevance in western society. It is very educational, requiring an absolute knowledge and understanding of the music in context. It communicates and can be communicated with. It is both individualistic and social. It is an exciting medium and emotionally fulfilling and can also create 'flow'. Attitudes to improvisation in this survey are on the whole positive and there are a number of players who use it. 47% of the adolescents improvise as do 50% of the adults. 65% of the children would like to learn. However only 20% of the adults are keen to take it up perhaps stemming back to lack of confidence and experience.

Intercultural music is popular with 62% of the adults, less so with adolescents surveyed but then these young people may not have been exposed to it in the same way. The British music scene is acquiring intercultural characteristics. This is well documented. New hybrid forms of traditional music are emerging, on the other hand, as Anthony Everitt writes in the Gulbenkian Investigation into Participatory Music' these could result in rootlessness. From a creative point of view, however, the hybrid forms are an exotic reflection of global influence and focus attention on creative connectedness. Besides they are only an expansion

of the mother tongue in many instances. While discussing the future of traditional music with music students at Ethno Folk Music Camp, Sweden 2003 it was pointed out to me that in Bulgaria, music students are encouraged to play traditional melodies: a) in the original form, b) in a variation c) and to use them as a base for improvisation in other styles.

For everyone the best moments of the Feis are learning new tunes, new skills, listening to their tutors perform and sessioning. 93% of the children gain in playing confidence during their Feis week as do 81% of the adolescents at their classes. The importance of confidence and self-esteem is a much-researched issue. Research proposes that individuals have a fundamental motivation to develop and maintain a high level of self-esteem and that this is established through identification with groups of people who have a positive image since social identity and personal identity are linked. Feis Rois has a very positive image and provides excellent opportunities for children to develop their own through identification.

Research suggests that music's appeal with these groups lies hugely in the social factor. 87% of the children feel that making friends at a Feis is as important as learning the music. 91% of the adolescents 80% of the adults go to a Feis to socialise. Music underpins and heightens social

experience from the cradle to the grave. It contributes to many of the ceremonies that mark significant events in people's lives, weddings, christenings, parties, ceilidhs, dances, funerals, public celebrations. In the Highland of Scotland it contributed to collective work experiences such as waulking the tweed, milling, milking the cow. As Professor Colwyn Trevarthen states 'The function of music is to enhance in some way the quality of individual experience and human relationships.'

Our responses to music are influenced by group processes and group processes influence the music. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the adolescent situation. Group formation promotes important friendships at a time when adult control begins to be rejected in many instances.

Developmental issues are involved including acquiring a set of values and beliefs, performing socially, responsible behaviour, developing emotional independence from parents and achieving mature relations with staff.

Searching for a self-identity is one of the most important tasks during adolescence and a strong musical identity is positive at this stage engendering a sense of security and belonging. Group identity through music is both inclusive and exclusive. 82% of the adults play for the craic.

Music is not just socially important to this generation of Feis class participants; it is also of therapeutic importance. 82% of the adults and 82% of the adolescents feel this way and give a number of reasons: reduces stress by releasing tension, creates a positive emotion, like meditation, enriches, focuses, cleanses, gives confidence, identity and 'boosts my ego'. Music exists more in felt time than in real time, it can offer an aesthetic and holistic experience. Belief and creative art are essential and universal functions of human life. If the Feis music immersion weeks week-ends and after school classes can transform negative emotions and promote well-being we have a deep well and another solution to human homeostasis.

The enjoyment of performance rates high.

81% of the children enjoy it for many reasons from building confidence, the enjoyment of entertaining others to the fun of perfecting skills and 'showing off'. 96% of the adolescents love performing. Reasons for enjoying range from 'the buzz', feel good factor to making people happy. Research shows that group performance in any culture is about social engagement, manual and expressive skills, confidence, solidarity, self-identity and musical identity. It improves the learning of musical skills and in the group situations there is far less stress involved than in solo performance. It is to be encouraged and points in my experience to the

importance of providing children with non-threatening performance situations from a very young age. In addition, connections between brain cells are called synapses. Recent brain research demonstrates that these connections grow stronger with use and weaker if they are not used. Brain scan maps taken during musical performance show that virtually the entire cerebral cortex (central processing area of the brain) is active during a musical performance. Almost every system of the brain is at work simultaneously during a musical performance. This 'workout' strengthens the connections between brain cells, allowing the brain to function more efficiently.

Through studies of the Nigerian Anang Ibobo tribe (J.Messenger, 1958) there is evidence that some sort of developmental process occurs with learning about music and its structures. This takes place naturally in all individuals as a result of exposure to the musical products of the culture. In the tribe it is apparent that these musical skills are built by engagement in musical performance. In Scottish traditional music it is possible to understand how learning of music and structures takes place naturally and this can be maximised by exposing children to the tradition at an early age. In all performance practiced skills and an innate understanding of the music is important for quality performance and playing of music by memory must surely help this process. Group entrainment heightens the

experience shared by group players and revitalises. Among the most intimate and powerful things to share are the ritualised patterns of art of which music, song and dance are the most immediate. (C. Trevarthen from *Musical Identities* by R. Macdonald et al, 2002)

Teenagers enjoy performing for further reasons. Performance helps in the development of the work ethic especially if they can earn money from musical engagements. It also assists in feeling useful and accepted by professional peers and by demonstrating the right musical behaviour they maintain positive relations with their peers. For adolescents music performance requires real physical activity. This cannot be overlooked. Embodiment refers to the biological and physical presence of our bodies which are an important pre-condition for subjectivity – emotion, language, thought, sexuality and social interaction. Bodies convey meaning, as do facial expressions. Feis performance opportunities for this age group are a potential ground for gaining respect and approval from the opposite sex. Feis Rois is particularly good at providing performance opportunities for adolescents with a Summer Ceilidh Trail and a young performers' register that is distributed to Tourist facilitators.

65% of the adolescents feel that the learning of the Gaelic language is important to the traditional music process with the same percentage

appreciating the importance of the link between song, dance and music. However, only 47% of the adults consider the learning of Gaelic important to the learning of traditional music but then the learning of any Gaelic language was less encouraged in their youth. Reasons given for learning Gaelic in the traditional music setting were: for song translation, the understanding of rhythms and for the keeping of Gaelic alive. The connection between the song/dance/ music is less important to them. Only 38% of the children believe Gaelic is important to the learning of traditional music. As a pursuer of the Gaelic oral tradition this indicates that more needs to be done to keep the connections alive. Language inflections, rhythms, grace notes, form, tonal sequences, subject matter are all an important aspect of the music. According to Steven Feld in his book *Sound and Sentiment* 'Language codes musical concepts into a lexicon whose systematic features embody cognitive arrangements'.

Community music is important, maintain the adults with 70% putting this high on the agenda. The adolescents are strongly in favour of community music with 56% maintaining this very important and 35% moderately so. Only 42% of the children believe in its community ethic but then many surveyed were too young to hold a mature understanding of the term.

The importance of community music should score much higher. Why doesn't it? In Confucius' day it was the bedrock of society. Is there still a blind eye in some areas on amateur music making? Is there still confusion about what is good music? Is there confusion about the word community in this world of individualism? Surely, we can define, individualise and customise our own tradition communally and inclusively. Scotland's first minister Present Jack McConnell has given it his blessing. Fortunately, traditional music and culture is slowly being reabsorbed into the school curriculum and from here it is only a small step into the outer world of the local community. In the Highlands there is a fair bit of community music to be had already, thanks to promoters of traditional music such as the Feis movement, and in the modern pandemonium of everyday living despite a 101 varieties of after school 'club' on offer, it most certainly has a bright future.

My surveys are heart warming. Today's positive attitudes to traditional music are fertile soil for the growth of music and us in general. It was once un-cool to carry a violin to school, especially for a boy. Today, in the light of current trends, it's a cool instrument to be associated with. Traditional music not only symbolises individualism but collectivism and nationality. It waves the flag for social inclusion and creates a basis for cultural understanding. Long may it flourish as roots, mother-tongue and gateway to other musical genres.

Sarah Munro

Leader and tutor of Kiltearn Feis Rois Fiddlers

Nesta Awardee May 2004

Architecture and Culture

It is generally known that few public spaces are acoustically friendly. I would like to highlight this problem.

In all public spaces I work as a musician using music therapeutically, the acoustics are unhelpful – schools, residential homes, centres, hospital units.

Clarity of listening is an essential ingredient of my work. The way we perceive and absorb sound is paramount to the healing process. A single note can heal. So can an orchestra. Most modern architects have failed to create an adequate space for the sound wave.

My research in the field of current sound healing (Dr. A. Tomatis/Jonathan Goldman) highlights the importance of resonance, and the healing power of the overtones/harmonics. The fact that we all have a biological propensity for music is now recognized and points to the potential of music as healer. Music spaces can enhance the subtle energies. India recognized this years ago. Beautiful well-proportioned religious buildings followed rhythmic patterns called Chandas similar to those found in Indian classical music and by this aesthetic emotion, according to Ganapaty Sthpaty, devotees became one with the temple.

Not only would improved acoustics help the disabled they would also help any teacher, performer or listener. Teaching skills would improve as would performance with brighter sound. Sound is form, architecture is music. Today, in our urban world, we no longer really listen for survival purposes as we did in the forests of the world. Our hearing is blunted by noise. True listening is not valued as it was. Listening is essential for communication, self-identity, learning etc. Real listening helps the vestibular system, is the key to curing aggression, maladjusted behaviour and learning. etc. etc.

Improving the acoustic of public buildings in the future should be placed high on the agenda.

Sarah Munro

NESTA RESEARCH