

Sounds of Progress in the Academy: An Emerging Creative Partnership  
Peggy Duesenberry & Raymond MacDonald  
Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama: Department of Psychology  
Glasgow Caledonian University

**Abstract:** This paper provides a project overview of an emerging partnership between Scotland's national conservatoire, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) and *Sounds of Progress* (SoP), a music training and theatre production company specializing in working with people with disabilities. The paper seeks to introduce this partnership and its institutional context, to relate current work to previous research on other SoP projects, and to give an overview of some issues arising from the workshops, including professional training, new artistic possibilities, and integration with non-disabled musicians.

**Key Words:** music and disability, Sounds of Progress, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD)

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Scotland's national conservatoire, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD), has begun to open its doors and, tentatively, its curriculum, to disabled performers. In a recent development, RSAMD has begun to work with *Sounds of Progress*, a music training and theatre production company that specializes in working with individuals with a variety of impairments, including people with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. The first joint project, known as "Spotlight," is a series of musical training workshops in which disabled and non-disabled musicians work together.

#### The National Context for Inclusion of Disabled Students

As recently reviewed by Barnes, universities in the United Kingdom did not become accessible for people with disabilities to any significant extent until the 1990s (Barnes, 2007); likewise, the conservatoire sector has not been at the forefront of movements to promote active participation by performers with disabilities. In 1999, the UK Quality Assurance Agency published a Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities that identified the need for an "element of proactive change within institutions" and required higher education institutions to enable "disabled students' participation in all aspects of the academic and social life of the institution" (QAA, 1999). Although this led to an increased awareness of the need to provide a level playing field for students with disabilities, many higher education providers perceived conflicts between wider inclusion and the pursuit of excellence.

The QAA Code of Practice encouraged the now widely-used system of Learning Agreements, in which a disabled student declares his/her disability, is assessed by occupational health practitioners, and an appropriate support system put in place by the institution. The

Learning Agreements system is similar to the individual negotiations in Canadian universities, described by Jung (2003), with the important difference that UK Learning Agreements usually involve a welfare officer in arranging adjustments with individual instructors and examiners, and ensuring they are carried out. The Learning Agreements approach is also enforced by regulations concerning “reasonable adjustments” in the UK’s Disability Discrimination Act 1994 (DDA). The DDA has been criticized by disability theorists as ineffective or, more strongly, a charter allowing the non-disabled to excuse their oppressive practices (Barnes, 2000; Corker, 2000). This criticism relates closely to Jung’s view that accessibility based on individual negotiation serves to maintain the interests of the non-disabled educational establishment.

In December 2006, a new Disability Equality Duty came into force in the UK, which requires public bodies to “act proactively on disability equality issues across the board, rather than on an individual basis” (Disability Rights Commission, 2006, p.4). The Disability Rights Commission has described this as a “quantum leap in legislation with an emphasis away from minimum compliance towards building a positive culture change.” Changes to physical plant, admissions procedures, and IT systems form a necessary part of the move to promote equality for disabled people, and to lessen the onus on individual disabled students for seeing that their needs are met. They further raise the threshold at which students need to make the decision to disclose a disability. Promoting equality, as distinct from preventing discrimination, moves UK public institutions towards an engagement with the social model of disability.

These differences in the legal requirements relating to higher education may be related to the Linton/Hanks categories of social practices regarding disabled people. The reasonable adjustment or Learning Agreements model fits with the “Limited Participation” category, in which “disabled people’s roles and status are largely derived from their ability to be productive in terms of the standards set by the dominant majority” (Linton, 1998) and, in the case of students, they can participate and gain degrees as long as they can “keep up.” The Learning Agreements system for reasonable adjustments allows UK students with disabilities a better chance of “keeping up” within the established curriculum. The Disability Equality Duty seems more closely aligned with Linton’s “Participation and Accommodation” category, in which “procedures and standards are adapted to include everyone” (p. 54).

### The Institutional Context

“It’s easier to move a graveyard than to change a school of music.”<sup>1</sup>

The present legal climate regarding disability requires the conservatoire sector to ask what it should be doing to educate disabled performers. With the exception of students with dyslexia, who form the largest population of students with disabilities in this sector, any answers other than “nothing” or “we’ll accept a few SuperCrips”<sup>2</sup> represent a radical change for conservatoires. Educating disabled musicians involves changes to existing teaching practices, a potential impact on the curriculum, and legal obligations regarding discrimination and equality. These are questions affecting all educational institutions, and relate to creating an environment in which people with disabilities can “keep up.”

For a national conservatoire, the Disability Equality Duty also requires consideration of the representation of disabled people in the arts, and who should be doing that representation. Included here is the question of what conservatoires should do to support and educate disabled performers not attempting to work in the mainstream, but preferring to operate within the Disability Arts movement. This includes issues of programming Disability Arts events for the public, and making sure all students are, at a minimum, aware of the sector. The Spotlight Project highlighted here represents an additional arena, that of specialized training for disabled musicians wanting to become active performers whether or not they wish to identify with the Disability Arts movement.

The Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama's (RSAMD) response to the Disability Equality Day so far has taken several forms, including inclusion of wider access in the remit of the YouthWorks Department, the appointment of an Access Coordinator and formation of a Reachability Committee to oversee institutional responsibilities for equality in terms of race, gender and disability, staff development sessions to build increased awareness of the reasonable-adjustments approach to the existing curriculum, vast improvements to the physical plant to enable access, and occasional performances and workshops by disabled performers. RSAMD's YouthWorks Drama has an actor with a visible disability on the staff, and the School of Drama is preparing for the matriculation of its first acting student to use a wheelchair. The significance of this "first" is hard to overstate: In 2003, the Arts Council of England reported that, in the 1980s, an Equity survey found that no disabled actor had ever been able to access professional training in the UK, though there were some disabled actors who had trained professionally prior to becoming disabled (Sutherland, 2003). There is little evidence that professional theatre training prospects for people with disabilities have improved much since then.

The Sounds of Progress (SoP) Spotlight workshops form part of this multi-faceted approach to the Disability Equality Duty. The workshops are especially significant in that they represent a rare integration of a group of disabled musicians who are unlikely to "keep up" with existing degree programs, with non-disabled student musicians as part of their Bachelor of Music (BMus) curriculum.

### Sounds of Progress

The musical activities discussed here are focused on the work of Sounds of Progress (SoP), an integrated music production company based in Glasgow that works predominately with individuals who have disabilities. SoP provides opportunities for people to explore their creativity through music. The company's ongoing work includes delivering music workshops and recording and performance projects (MacDonald, Miell, & Hargreaves, 2002). The company encourages musicians to develop their skills to the highest standard and has an explicit educational objective in terms of developing the musical skills and awareness of all individuals who participate in SoP activities. The company focuses on enhancing a wide range of musical skills, but developments in rhythmic ability on percussion instruments, singing skills, and compositional and improvisational skills are some of the educational objectives employed.

The company aims:

1. To provide access to creative music activities and professional training.
2. To facilitate integration between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged individuals.
3. To challenge existing perceptions of disabilities.
4. To create employment opportunities.

SoP coordinates and delivers a range of musical activities including music education programs, performance and recording-based activities and music therapy interventions. As described by SoP's music development officer Sally Clay:

“We've got three main divisions within the organization ... We've got the workshop program which starts with people with little or no musical experience... and then we've got a kind of middle thing which is where this workshop is, which is Spotlight project and associated things like that which is basically for musicians that have... developed a skill [already]... And then after the Spotlight we've got the bands, which are... more professional level.”

#### SoP Gamelan Workshops

SoP has run Javanese gamelan workshops in which individuals with no previous experience of music making are given the opportunity to explore their creativity through music. A series of empirical psychological studies focused upon the SoP approach to delivering gamelan workshops in the 1990s (MacDonald, Davies, & O'Donnell 1999; MacDonald, Miell, & Hargreaves, 2002). In gamelan music there is no conductor. Instead, all communications are accomplished musically by one drummer leading the other musicians (Lindsay, 1989; Kartomi, 2001). Effort is therefore required by everyone to follow the variations in tempo that occur and emphasis is thus placed on group based communication. Another important feature of the use of gamelan with people with disabilities in mind is accessibility. Complicated digital dexterity is not required to commence playing many of the instruments in the gamelan ensemble. Given these particular characteristics, the gamelan caters to all levels of ability and is therefore an ideal ensemble to use for therapeutic applications of music.

The gamelan workshops that were studied lasted approximately 90 minutes and began with rhythm exercises. The purpose of these warm-up sessions was relaxation and to help set up cohesive group dynamics, which are essential to the success of a workshop. The rest of the time was usually given over to playing the gamelan. Various methods were employed by the workshop leader to communicate musical ideas to the participants.

Initially participants were asked to repeat a rhythmic pattern being played on one of the sarons (a small metallophone type instrument). More complex patterns were played as the workshop progressed and there was opportunity for improvisation within the context of any piece of music. The improvisatory element was not strictly within the gamelan tradition and participants were free to express themselves as they wished, but in reality the improvised music stayed close to the rhythmic and melodic elements that were being played in other sections of the

workshop. The participants also had the opportunity to select a particular instrument of the gamelan. The emphasis was on group involvement and rhythmic awareness through musical participation, while at the same time attempting to cater for the individual needs of participants.

A key question for the next phase of the research emerged: What are the psychological mechanisms that underpin these developments? The relationship between the social and cognitive variables under study led to the development of a research project that focused on joint attention processes (O'Donnell, MacDonald and Davies, 1999).

### *Joint Attention*

Joint attention is defined as a shared focus of attention on the same object by two individuals and is similar to the concept of "shared social reality" (Rogoff, 1990). Both involve the need for a shared focus of activity or definition of the task and an agreed goal to work towards; these are negotiated between partners or group members. As a theoretical construct, joint attention has been well explored in language development work (Hughes, 1998; Morales, Mundy, & Rojas, 1998; Sigman, 1998). For example, the children of mothers who spend a longer time in linguistically active joint attention are observed to have larger vocabularies and more developed syntactic structures (Tomasello, 1992, 1995; Tomasello & Todd, 1983).

In a development of the MacDonald, Davies, and O'Donnell (1999) studies reported above, a further study examined the interactions between individuals attending the music workshops to explore the possible relevance of joint attention processes in this setting. Independent raters watched short clips of participants in the experimental group and the control group communicating with another individual during the assessment sessions, which took place before and after each workshop. They rated each participant on a number of aspects of communication, measuring the amount of joint attention present. The participants in the experimental group showed significant improvements over the course of the ten-week workshop period in joint attention in comparison to the control group (O'Donnell, MacDonald & Davies, 1999). This study provides evidence that the developments in communication skills that were observed as a result of participation in the music workshops can in fact, be linked to developments in "joint attention."

Evidence suggests that joint attention is disrupted in children with atypical development (Harris, Kasari & Sigman, 1996; McCathren, Yoder & Warren, 1995). For example, children with Down syndrome find situations of joint attention particularly difficult (Kasari, Freeman, Mundy & Sigman, 1995; Roth & Leslie, 1998). Given our evidence that participation in music workshops may be effective in developing joint attention skills, we suggest that working closely and coordinating with others on music activities, particularly playing the gamelan, leads to these developments. For example, gamelan involves a combination of listening to instructions, paying attention to others' performance, and appropriately executing one's own part in synchrony with others. It involves executing a planned sequence of actions in the context of a joint attention task (as indeed do many types of musical activity).

This research has gone some way towards mapping the effects of participation in musical activities on various specific musical, social and communication skills and uncovering a

mechanism which might underlie these effects (Miell, MacDonald, & Hargreaves, 2005). This approach operates at a micro level, attempting to establish causal relationships between music interventions and certain specific musical and psychological variables, and we suggest that there will be important interactions between developments in these individual abilities and wider notions of personal and musical identity.

Our research showed gains in key musical and psychological variables such as self-confidence and communication skills, and participation in music activities might also be expected to produce developments in more general beliefs, behaviors and feelings about the self and about musical abilities; that is, about the participants' personal and musical identities. Experimental and observational research on the impact of participation in musical activities does not shed light upon these more general beliefs and identities of the people who participate in music activities, and so further research was required.

### *Further Research*

In order to access individuals' own views of their identities we carried out a qualitative study using in-depth interviews with a small sample of participants who have been involved with SoP between 1990 and 2000. Adopting this type of research method is appropriate since it is a useful way to access individuals' own personal accounts, from their own unique "insider" perspective (MacDonald, Murray, & Levenson, 1999). The complex and sometimes contradictory nature of identities can be explored in detail through these extended accounts, and valuable information can be gained in the analysis of both the content of what is said, and the ways in which topics are talked about.

The method is also compatible with the wider aims of SoP itself, which seeks to give a voice to all the individuals who work with the company, enabling them to take artistic control and help determine the way the company develops. Such an approach is perhaps most graphically demonstrated in one of their shows, *Irreparable Dolphins*, which focused on life histories and personal stories of individuals with disabilities. These narratives formed the basis for a musical production that highlighted some of the realities of living with disabilities for members of the company. Each member of the cast was interviewed and the transcripts from these interviews formed the basis of personal stories that were performed by each individual on stage. These qualitative interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed in accordance with criteria outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (1998).

According to the social model of disability, the degree to which any impairment impinges on everyday life depends more on the physical context and the views and reactions of others with whom the person is interacting than on the nature of the impairment itself. Each of the individuals interviewed here was aware of the impact of other people's expectations and prior assumptions about them, feeling that they were being judged on the basis of their appearance or assumed (lack of) competence rather than on their actual abilities. The participants all reported that working with SoP seemed to change other people's expectations of their capability. A very important aspect of SoP is the professionalism of the performances and the work needed to achieve this. The participants felt that the work they did with SoP was "a complete professional job" and that this became widely known, so that their audience came to expect a "full

professional sound.” In some ways, it was this professionalism that warranted the identities of both musician and person with a disability. The social constructionist view of identity as plural is one that in recent years has been drawn upon by disability researchers who argue that “disabled” is not the only identity open to individuals with a disability, as is often assumed. Other identities such as “professional” and “musician” are also made available and are publicly recognized through participation in these activities (Morris, 1993; Swain, et al., 1993). Linked in many ways to the issue of professionalism was a theme of gaining empowerment and a sense of personal responsibility from performing with SoP. For the people interviewed, taking responsibility for the work involved in doing “a professional job” was an important factor in feeling able to take on the identity of “musician,” or to broaden their access to different aspects of that identity.

The results from the first studies reported here highlighted the impact that music interventions can have on discrete personal and social factors. The preliminary analysis of the interview material suggests that involvement in musical activities also has more general effects on the way in which people think about themselves and their position within society. These two developments are related in that music can be thought of as not only facilitating specific changes in musical and psychological factors, but also as contributing to the identity projects in which the individuals are engaged. Whilst we have been focusing our debate upon the activities of one particular music company (SoP), this has been presented as an example of how any musical participation, suitably structured, can be an excellent vehicle for leading to musical and personal gains for participants. We do not believe these effects will only be found with participants in SoP activities, but rather suggest that when music is employed for therapeutic/educational objectives in a structured and goal-directed way by individuals with musical expertise and training, then outcomes of the type reported here can be expected.

## The Spotlight Workshops

### *Overview*

Spotlight is a three-phase program, run by Sounds of Progress, and spread over three years to provide long-term music training for disabled musicians with the ultimate goal of creating a “new professional-standard fully inclusive band or contemporary orchestra.” At the same time, Sounds of Progress hopes to “create a model that demonstrates good working practice in music inclusion”<sup>3</sup> and to give conservatoire students some training in artistic inclusion. SoP’s artistic director Gordon Dougall hopes that, by working with Bachelors of Music (BMus) students in the Spotlight Project, SoP will develop a bigger pool of professionals who could be trusted to work appropriately with -- and without patronising -- SoP participants. Phase One of the Spotlight Project concentrated on individual skill development and ensemble work. Phase Two is in conjunction with RSAMD, and focuses on creation of new pieces of music during weekly workshop sessions led by SoP’s artistic director Gordon Dougall and music development officer Sally Clay. The instrumentation includes winds (flute, oboe, saxophone), percussion (drum kit, bin whackers, tuned bells), pianos and bass-line instruments (cello, guitar), and sessions are held weekly. Phase Three, which is planned for winter 2007/08, will focus on public performances.

An important part of the Spotlight ethos is to construct an inclusive musical environment that is creative and not patronizing. By using a combination of aural tuition and improvisation, the focus is on inner hearing and creativity, and there is no need to read music. In addition, like most students in higher music education in the West, the RSAMD BMus students involved have little prior experience in improvisation, so they are being challenged musically as are the Spotlight participants.

The Phase Two workshops held at RSAMD are structured in three parts: warm-up, directed rehearsal, and a more relaxed improvisation session. As the group assembles, they do warm-up rhythm exercises followed by a circle game involving naming each other and swapping places. Rhythm exercises have been used previously by Sounds of Progress, at the start of gamelan workshops for people with learning disabilities; these had the similar purpose of setting up group dynamics and fostering joint attention ( MacDonald, Davies, and O'Donnell, J. 1999). The circle game serves to center everyone, ground the group in the Spotlight ethos, and provide the routine that is good for all participants and essential for members with autism. As described by SoP's music development officer Sally Clay:

“We have this name game and the function of that is, obviously, there's a lot of people in the group who've got autism, learning disabilities and things where their concentration won't be necessarily on a level, won't have been utilised in the same way, and they need to have these kind of exercises, like the name game, to keep their concentration going.”

One of the BMus students had a slightly different understanding of the circle activity:

ET: “It's really great and I guess that's really important for, like, for example people who are blind because if they didn't have a game where you say everyone's name, they wouldn't necessarily know who's there that day...It's good for everybody, not just – but it's kind of developing awareness of who's there.”

Next is the main work of the day, a directed rehearsal using a combination of aural tuition and improvisation. SoP leaders take small groups and demonstrate melodies and riffs, making sure participants learn them. They will direct repetitions until satisfied. Meanwhile, other subgroups are working on their parts:

ET: “We were just trying to learn one of the riffs...we were just kind of making like a bass team, kind of trying to remember it. I think I'd got the tune by then so I was just repeating it and he got it too, eventually, on the guitar.”

Then leaders take turns starting off the whole ensemble, or sometimes conducting. According Sally Clay, “At the moment we're using rhythm to try and develop lots of different skills. And I think rhythm is a fundamental aspect of music.”

Some of the rhythms participants are asked to learn are complex, and this is part of a deliberate strategy to stretch Spotlight participants, including those with learning difficulties. One BMus student described how she had underestimated a percussionist with Down syndrome when SoP's artistic director was able to teach her a highly complex rhythmic pattern:



“I spent ages trying to teach her something and then I thought she just wasn’t very able in some way, and then at the end of the group Gordon came to teach her and she learned it quite quickly.”

The final part of the workshop has been described by one participant as “our mad time.” Much less directed by the Sounds of Progress leaders than earlier, this is a time for improvisation without a performance goal in mind. Participants can experiment, communicate, and be more relaxed or excited as they wish. Sometimes musical ideas are generated that can be used in subsequent directed work. It is a time when concentration levels do not need to be as high, but study of videoed workshop sessions indicates that participants are fully engaged with the musical group during this part of the workshop.

### *Acoustic Instrumentation*

The Spotlight Project uses acoustic instruments, with no computer-assisted or electronic devices. This is in contrast to several music-training organizations for people with disabilities that have made innovative use of technology to enable wider access to music making. Roger Knox has outlined ten oft-used defeatist reasons for not using technology, all of which serve to disable musicians with impairments (Knox, 2001). But SoP has a different agenda in emphasizing acoustic instruments for this particular project:

SC: “I suspect that developing people’s skills acoustically will mean their fine motor skills are developed, they are learning a craft which they can take [home] with them. They’re not dependent on the technology to use, to play their instruments...And also it means that it might be easier in performance situations ...to get logistically into the venue and get the gear out. Maybe it’s because the environment, it’s a classical environment in a sense and given a bit more of a continual line.”

The Spotlight project rationale for emphasizing acoustic instruments includes positive choices that help enable the Spotlight participants to gain access to public performance opportunities. This choice reflects both the particular impairments and abilities of the participants, and the particular institutional environment involved. Ultimately, the technological differences between Spotlight in the conservatoire and the adapted music movement are insignificant when compared with their similar aims of enabling people with disabilities to participate actively in music-making.

### The Conservatoire Space and *Sounds of Progress*

Spotlight’s first phase was held in a very large, long room in another venue. The move into RSAMD premises for Phase Two has had a number of benefits:

SC: “Due to us moving to the RSAMD, there’s a lot more positive climate, if that’s possible...For example, the space that we’ve got in that room is ideal for us to have. For us to interact on a more intimate level, it’s more of an intimate space than the one we had before...It’s a really good size. It’s good for me as a blind [person], sort of when I’m

leading...it means it's a bit safer...I can interact with people more easily than if I'm running about in this massive room. Acoustically it's much better. The fact it's got two pianos in it really makes a difference."

Location within the Academy building also creates opportunities for informal and serendipitous interactions with the large community of musicians in the building.

The place of an integrated performance ensemble within the curriculum of a conservatoire BMus degree program deserves notice. The initial plan for the RSAMD's involvement in Spotlight was to involve composition students and students in the RSAMD's BA (Scottish Music) program. Organizational difficulties meant that this did not occur. Instead, Spotlight was offered as a placement to students in Community Music modules.<sup>4</sup> This may be regarded as a stepping-stone to the goal of including an integrated performance ensemble in undergraduate performance modules.

Integrated performing projects at UK higher education institutions have been described as are extra-curricular (e.g., Hellier-Tinoco, 2005), or as part of a more liberal-arts approach (Kuppers, 2000), but having an integrated and inclusive ensemble enter the degree curriculum for a BMus would be significant. Current websites of UK conservatoires show Disability Equality Statements<sup>5</sup> and describe arrangements for Learning Agreements but do not highlight any integrated courses or ensembles at undergraduate level. For younger musicians, the Royal College of Music's Junior Department has a three-year pilot program to enable visually impaired musicians to reach the level required for entry to mainstream music degrees.<sup>6</sup>

The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) for Music and Inclusivity, involving six institutions in northeast England, plus the Open University, defines inclusivity as involving "students of diverse backgrounds," a much wider range of musical genres than Western art music, and offers "opportunities for creative and enabling work (with, for example, children with special needs, and the elderly and mentally infirm)" including vibro-acoustic sound therapy.<sup>7</sup> These aspects of inclusivity highlight agendas of class, race, and music therapy; they are quite different than the Spotlight goal of long-term training for musicians with disabilities. RSAMD's new partnership with Sounds of Progress therefore complements other UK programs to widen access to higher education in music.

### *Spotlight in the Context of Disability Arts*

Disability Arts has been defined as "art made by disabled people, which may or may not reflect the experience of disability." In an essay to celebrate Disability Arts during the European Year of Disabled People, Allan Sutherland places this movement in contrast to both music therapy and integrated arts, and discusses the ways in which the Disability Arts movement has helped people with disabilities wanting careers in the arts, has produced work drawing on the experience of disability, and addresses a disabled audience (Sutherland, 2003). The Spotlight workshops fit this definition in some respects, but in having the additional role of providing artistic inclusion skills to RSAMD BMus students regardless of their disability status, it also functions as an integrated arts project. As SoP music development officer Sally Clay put it:

“As far as I’m concerned it’s music. I’m not saying that everyone’s equal because they’re not. Everyone’s got different abilities. There’s people that have no physical, no apparent disability and they can’t play a note. As far as I’m concerned, you’re making music and the more that you can do it, the better.”

Sally Clay has been involved in Disability Arts productions, currently including *Blind Girl and the Crips*, which she describes as “a deliberate ironic statement on life and a range of issues...disability, gender, sexuality.” She regards Disability Arts as a political platform and feels that the work of the Spotlight Project is of a different order: providing training to people with disabilities who otherwise would have no access to music education, and training professional musicians to work in further similar projects.

The Spotlight workshops also may be compared to the Swedish theatre group *Olla*, described by Jens Ineland as having a dual role involving a government social services organisation and achieving critical distinction as a performing arts organization. *Olla* receives funding, and operates within, a social services context in Sweden but its work has both artistic and therapeutic aims: *Olla* seeks to make theatrical performances (notably an acclaimed production of *Carmen*) and to provide therapeutic activities for adults with disabilities. Ineland examines the institutional frameworks that create the dual role of artistic leader and care giver of *Olla*’s organizers. He reports that, like *Sounds of Progress* projects, *Olla*’s production of *Carmen* “represented an emancipatory practice in the way that its members received attention and appreciation for their performance as actors with disabilities and not as disabled actors” (Ineland, 2005).

The aim of the *Sounds of Progress* Spotlight workshops is to produce musicians with a high level of performance skill, but there is also a recognized therapeutic value for all participants, both disabled and non-disabled, including increased confidence and social skills in an integrated musical environment. *Sounds of Progress*’s focus on musical genres, such as improvisation and gamelan, that do not require either a conductor or musical literacy, provides an important site for development of a socially responsible music education environment. The partnership with RSAMD means that this approach, which unfortunately may be described as unusual (cf. Lubet, 2004), can reach undergraduates aspiring to professional careers, provide better facilities for musicians with disabilities, and demonstrate a good model for inclusive working practices in musical performance.

**Peggy Duesenberry, Ph.D.**, is a fiddler and ethnomusicologist with a special interest in Scottish music. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for research for her Ph.D. thesis “Fiddle Tunes on Air: A Study of Gatekeeping and Traditional Music at the BBC in Scotland, 1923 – 1957” (University of California Berkeley, 2000). More recently, her own experience of disability has led to an interest in disability studies. She is currently Lecturer in Research, Scottish Music, at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, Scotland where she supervises research students with topics in ethnomusicology and practice-based research. Contact Info: RSAMD, 100 Renfrew Street, Glasgow G2 3DB, Scotland. Email: [p.duesenberry@rsamd.ac.uk](mailto:p.duesenberry@rsamd.ac.uk) <http://www.rsamd.ac.uk/research/Peggy.htm>

**Raymond MacDonald, Ph.D.**, is Professor of Music Psychology at Glasgow Caledonian University. His Ph.D., from The University of Glasgow, investigated the educational and therapeutic effects of music workshops for individuals with disabilities. He is currently editor of the Journal *Psychology of Music* and an associate editor of *The International Journal of Music Education* and *The Jazz Research Journal*. He has published over 70 research papers and presented over 100 conference presentations. He is co-editor of two books, *Musical Identities* and *Musical Communication*, both published by Oxford University Press. He has also been Artistic Director for *Sounds of Progress*. He currently supervises 10 Ph.D. students investigating such topics as music therapy, music education, and musical identities, and he is the head of the Glasgow Caledonian Music Research Group. As a saxophonist and composer he performs internationally and has recorded many CDs. Contact Info: Department of Psychology, Glasgow Caledonian University, Cowcaddens Road, Glasgow G4 0BA, Scotland. Tel.: +44 (0) 141 331 3971. Email: Raymond.MacDonald@gcal.ac.uk  
<http://www.gcal.ac.uk/sls/Psychology/staff/macdonald/index.html>

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Although I first heard this aphorism, as quoted, in a conference paper (Fulton 2004), a version of it is widely attributed to Woodrow Wilson and the principle has been applied to medical and business schools as well as liberal arts curricula.

<sup>2</sup> See Lubet, A. (2004) for a discussion of the term “SuperCrips” and of leading Western art musicians with disabilities.

<sup>3</sup> Spotlight Phase Two information sheet. Sounds of Progress have received funding for the Spotlight Project from Lloyd TSB and Glasgow City Council.

<sup>4</sup> RSAMD students have had the option of courses described in the syllabus as designed “to enable young musicians to apply their musical skills, knowledge and experience to stimulate cultural growth and expression within a wide range of community groups...[and] pursue career options in performance outreach, music in special education, music therapy and youth and community work.”

<sup>5</sup> Disability Equality Statements, describing institutional arrangements for promoting and monitoring equality of opportunity, are required by UK public institutions as part of the Disability Equality Duty in the 2006 Disability Discrimination Act.

<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.musiciansinfocus.org/programs\\_rcm.htm](http://www.musiciansinfocus.org/programs_rcm.htm)

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.cetl4musicne.ac.uk/>

