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Music for Well-Being: A Focus on Hospital

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Abstract

The *Hush Foundation* was established in 2000 and grew from an initiative of physician, Catherine Crock AM, in response to her work with children undergoing painful medical procedures at The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, Australia. Working alongside anaesthetists in the development of new pain relief systems for these young patients, she sought to reduce the stress and anxiety felt by patients, families and staff – through music. This presentation positions the interaction of musicians, composers, commissioners of musical works, and influences of life's experiences within a larger setting of the fourth industrial revolution.

The *Hush Foundation* undertook additional research to transform the environment of the operating theatre and recovery rooms through the commissioning of especially composed music from some of Australia's foremost musicians and composers and recorded by professional ensembles. The resulting Hush Collection has focused on a classical music offering with Australia's most well-known and loved composers, conductors and orchestras donating their time and talent to produce a growing number of albums of music.

The approach taken for this presentation is a case study of an evolving activity. Experiences of those involved in the *Hush Foundation* and the making of the Hush Collection albums have been documented. Relevant elements of the fourth industrial revolution are incorporated in the study.

The Hush Collection has grown to 19 volumes of music, sold to the public and shared with palliative care, nursing homes and general surgery in hospitals in Australia and overseas. The National Composers in Residence project (volume 18) engaged with young patients at children's hospitals around Australia. The composed songs were inspired by the adolescent patients with chronic illness and mental health challenges who the composers worked with during hospital residencies. The outcome of this Project, *Collective Wisdom* features new and original works composed by six established and six emerging composers in Australia. The Project has resulted in a composer's brief with suggestions that compositions should be in major keys, optimistic, and consistency in tempo and dynamic choices. The Foundation has spread across all the specialist children's hospitals in Australia, with live performances taking place in suitable hospital spaces.

The involvement of musicians in the *Hush Foundation* illustrates their strengths, through their musical practices, to contribute significantly to the community - especially in therapy, healing and well-being. The Foundation operates in partnership with multi-disciplinary groups and musicians work with different aspects of engagement supporting non-musical attributes as outcomes.