

Music didactics as a multifaceted field of cultural didactic studies

Petter Dyndahl & Live Weider Ellefsen

ABSTRACT

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The aim of this article is to explore how perspectives from different cultural theories can inform music education research, more particularly didactic aspects of teaching and learning music, and predominantly in relation to the institutional framing of common schooling. In order to rethink music didactics as 'cultural didactic studies', the notion of 'didactic identity' is put forward and discussed, the term being coined on the basis of Lars-Owe Dahlgren's central didactic identity question. The authors employ identity as a metaphorical concept: analogous to human subjects' constructions of identity, the didactic identities of school subjects are also created and negotiated by means of, and in relation to, culture, meaning and power. According to this conception of didactic identity, the school subject music will inevitably be embedded in discursive negotiations concerned with diverse comprehensions of musical meaning, much in the same manner as any musical and musico-pedagogical custom. The article attempts to epitomize the concept of 'cultural didactic studies' by distinguishing and deconstructing a certain array of music education binaries, showing how arbitrary articulations in a temporary network of relations constituting the didactic identity of music as a school subject come forth as essential, natural and unavoidable categories and connections. Moreover, the aim is to demonstrate how complex, contingent and culturally contextual the didactic identity of the subject of music can be, and, thereby, further to expound and legitimize the versatile concept of didactic identity itself. Finally, an outline of some crucial arguments and premises of cultural didactic studies is suggested along with a few perspectives on how this might be of importance to music teachers and teacher education.

Keywords: music education, didactics, post-structural theory, cultural studies, identity

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to explore how perspectives from cultural studies and post-structural theory can inform music education research, more particularly didactic aspects¹ of teaching and learning music, and predominantly in relation to the institutional framing

of common schooling. In using the term ‘Cultural Studies’ we have in mind a specific research centre and, with the passage of time, also a certain tradition, especially within an Anglo-American scholarly community, including Australia and New Zealand. The formation of the *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* at the Birmingham University in 1964 represented a key moment for the foundation of ‘Cultural Studies’ as a more or less distinctive research field. Moreover, it is important to underline that cultural studies is largely eclectic in its methodology, and that it draws on a variety of theories, including Marxism, structuralism, post-structuralism, feminism and performance theory. In addition to the researchers and writers from a specific field of cultural studies to whom we will refer throughout the article, our approach in general is to a large extent also inspired by French post-structuralist perspectives grounded in Foucauldian discourse theory and Derridean deconstruction.

In order to rethink music didactics as ‘cultural didactic studies’ – which is an overall aspiration – we have organized our approach to the task as follows: in the next section we will attempt to consolidate our reasoning by presenting some of the key concepts of the philosophical and theoretical framework within which we operate. Thereafter we put forward and discuss our notion of ‘didactic identity’, as we coin this term on the basis of Dahlgren’s (1989) central didactic identity question. After this comes a section where we attempt to further develop and justify the concept of didactic identity by trying to epitomize what we consider to be cultural didactic studies. Finally, we round off with an outline of some crucial arguments and premises of cultural didactic studies, as we see it, along with a few perspectives on how this might be of importance to music teachers and teacher education.

In our effort to elaborate the notions of didactic identity and cultural didactic studies, several interpretations of the term identity have been employed. Thus, the multifaceted questions of identity must be dealt with at the outset. This is therefore the topic of the next section.

Questions of identity

The concept ‘identity’ is exceedingly questionable. Stuart Hall (1996) claims that, during recent decades, a discursive eruption pertaining to ‘identity’ and ‘identification’ has occurred, in which a massive critique of these concepts has ensued in parallel with an increasing interest in identity issues within research, politics and the media. As a discursive item, the notion of identity has taken on so many meanings that it could be accused of denoting almost anything, being thereby rendered unsuitable for scholarly use. However, we will, in this article, try to demonstrate that it is precisely the ambiguity and intrinsic inconsistency of identity that makes it an appropriate concept in the effort to

rethink music didactics as cultural didactics. Identity might be comprehended as a concept which is: “[...] operating ‘under erasure’ in the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all” (ibid: 2).² Subsequently, it represents a paradoxical notion, both dependant of and articulated as a critique of normative designation. A major suspension of the oppositions and antagonisms of the concept identity might, therefore, neither be practical nor possible, but, on the contrary, it would obstruct the opportunity to discuss certain of the ‘key questions’ of cultural didactics, as we understand these. In order to approach these issues, we will investigate how the notion of identity and its paradoxes work out and what they might, at the same time, be capable of setting off.

In traditional Western philosophy, as well as in everyday speech, the identity of a phenomenon is supposed to represent something that is relatively stable, differentiated and coherent; by which the subject appears to be distinctive and unique. Similarly, it may seem as if the comprehension and presentation of oneself and the world around one through coherent narratives are significant strategies of human interpretation. We are likely to describe our qualities, values and intentions, our relations to others, as well as our decisions and reactions in terms which make sense in respect of organizing a certain agreement, logic and entirety, to what might otherwise seem incoherent and contradictory. As a result, there exist many practices – meditative, psychological, literary, musical, medical and pedagogical – with the aim of helping us to find, experience, re-establish or reflect upon ourselves as coherent, comprehensible and manageable bodies and souls. But instead of trying to understand this urge to create synthesis as part of our human ‘nature’, we might, along with Michel Foucault (2000a), view this as a type of *hermeneutics of the self* – or an ethical, self-interpretating and self-constituting practice making people able to perform reasonably within various discourses. Working out a coherent identity could be seen as a situated practice of the self, or as the foundation and maintenance of bonds between potential values, ontologies, social categories, subject positions, culturally created patterns of action and forms of agency in a relational network. From a Foucauldian perspective we might regard identities as relations of power-knowledge: initiating, articulating or capturing an identity also means that we are empowering ourselves in the sense that it opens access to certain forms of agency, to how to act as a subject, recognized as reasonable and responsible by oneself as well as by others. In other words, practices of the self work as subjectivizing practices in the same way as other technologies of power: The subject submits to control, simultaneously achieving subjective existence and agency through power-knowledge relations.

However, coherent narratives may not be the self-evident results of the identity efforts made by subjects. On the contrary, one could argue that one of the most distinctive features of Western postmodern daily life is that subjects neither have to understand themselves nor their surroundings as coherent, but are able to handle multiple or even conflicting ways of being situated in the world, depending on the practice or practices in which they participate. A comprehension like this: “[...] involves the subject in shifting, fragmented

and multiple identities,” Chris Barker says, and further declares that: “Persons are composed not of one but of several, sometimes contradictory, identities” (Barker 2003: 224). According to this interpretation ‘identity’ denotes unstable, incoherent, contingent and negotiable discursive connections – provisional articulations performed in practice rather than ultimate, closing truths concerning the self. Accordingly, we are constituted as subjects by fracture, disagreement and inconsequence just as often as by coherence. Still, it might seem intuitively incongruous to regard subjects as utterly incoherent. Encouraged by Foucault, one might argue, therefore, that subjectivizing by means of different technologies of power will reinforce a certain coherency – fully consistent incoherence would appear as unintelligible. In the following famous quotation Foucault explains a conception of power with regard to this issue:

This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word ‘subject’: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power that subjugates and makes subject to (Foucault 2000b: 331).

In this context, becoming a subject is closely connected to the construction of an identity, normatively comprehended as the ‘truth’ of oneself. Furthermore, this entails us being forced into defined, mutually excluding categories with regard to sex/gender or sexuality, to mention two of vital significance. The postmodern, ‘decentred’ self will, in other words, continuously encounter discursive demands for coherence; to act in understandable and reasonable ways, according to the categories and positions available in the field of discourse.

The concept identity emerges as if it were an apparently self-contradictory relation: ‘Identity’ denotes the subjectivizing, discursively constructed ‘truth about ourselves’, at the same time relating to multiple and mobile connections which we do not necessarily interpret as either causally determined by power relations in the field or as motivated by the subject’s struggle for holistic synthesis and coherence. This means that we might imagine the notion of identity as both in singular and plural: in the singular as a temporary, situated stabilization of meaning, in the plural as a potential repertory of connection and self-comprehension. This also means that identity might be simultaneously understood as self-identity, social identity and cultural identity (Barker 2003), e.g. as the subject’s uninterrupted descriptions, definitions and experiences of itself as an individual, as well as the subject’s identification with available social positions, roles and patterns of behaviour within a field of power regulations and structures. This means that one may grasp identity both as enclosed and open, and as coherent and incoherent, respectively.

In line with this, we might argue that the matters of identity are becoming highly relevant to the dynamic relations between human subjects and discursive practices. We are on the one hand attempting to comprehend how subjects perform and transform themselves and their

relations to others within a complex and contingent set of connections and technologies of power. On the other hand, we are trying to investigate the subjects' negotiations within, as well as with immediate reference to, this power-regulated discursive field, emphasizing how subjects are constituted discursively, simultaneously also constituting discourses themselves. This is an important stance: articulations of identity will always constitute discourse as well as subjectivity. When 'taking on an identity' we simultaneously identify, confirm and possibly contest certain categories. The identity of the category is constructed by establishing a provisional truth or ontology, from which it might turn out to be viable to articulate adequate and functional relations between ourselves and discourse. Thus, the subjects' negotiation of identity should not be regarded as separated from the formation and negotiation of the identity of discursive categories and phenomena, for instance like educational matters. We will develop this line of thought in the next section.

Didactic identity

Swedish didactician Lars-Owe Dahlgren launched four central didactic questions in 1989. To the rather traditional classifications, such as the didactic question of legitimization which aims to justify school subjects and teaching disciplines, the didactic question of selection governing what educational content and activities are to be chosen, and the didactic question of communication that is concerned with methods of teaching and learning, he added the central didactic question of *identity*. The function of the latter was to ask and answer the question of what distinguishes a certain field or subject of knowledge, skills and practices in a specific educational situation at a certain moment in time.

Approaches trying to define or characterize a school subject tend to establish its identity by discussing didactic categories in terms of curricular justifications, intentions and aims, educational contents and activities, as well as actor premises and frame factors. The main point made by Dahlgren, however, was, rather than to offer a stable and unambiguous definition, to highlight the unstable and changeable aspects of the subject of interest.³ In this, Dahlgren made use of an almost post-structuralistic understanding of identity, emphasizing both how the contents and other didactic properties of, in our case *music*, education changes, and how changes may be negotiated, blocked or reversed. In addition, the subjectivized, discursively established background or 'truth' against which change can occur is roughly indicated. Accordingly, such an understanding of identity might implicitly acknowledge how didactic change always represents an articulation of power-knowledge, conveying new connections and trying to maintain alternative identity constructions of educational subjects.

Dahlgren's terminology has been characterized as constructively paradoxical (cf. Dyndahl 2002, 2004). In using the notion of a central didactic identity question to

demonstrate that idioms, phenomena and relations we tend to perceive as ‘natural’ and take for granted might also be part of dynamic processes of power, development and change, he deconstructs the habitual conceptions of identity denoting a rather firm and permanent core. As we interpret and further exploit Dahlgren’s idea of the didactic identity question, we acknowledge what we from now on call the ‘didactic identity’ – or identities – of the particular subject in a similar paradoxical way. That is, we regard the identity of the school subject music as ‘decentred’; as an enforced, strategic and temporary stabilization of meaning, relating to a field of shifting discourses and subject positions.

In our approach, we employ identity as a metaphorical concept: analogous to human subjects’ constructions of identity, the didactic identities of school subjects are also created and negotiated by means of, and in relation to, culture, meaning and power. Music educational practices could be said to negotiate didactic identity in much in the same way as do individuals, achieving subjective existence and agency through discursive subjugation, at the same time identifying, reiterating, challenging or even subverting the discursive categories responsible for its suppression. We realize, of course, that some objections might be raised against the application of the term identity to characterize properties of a school subject, since the idiom normally refers – both in cultural studies and post-structural philosophy and psychology – to individual human beings and their identities, and not to the identity of objects or disciplines. An alternative strategy could be to attempt to develop Philip V. Bohlman’s (2001) conception ‘multiple ontologies of music’ into a parallel comprehension of a manifold ontology of music education and didactics. However, we have chosen to stick with the dynamic and multifaceted aspects of ‘identity’ because the concept lends itself to a specific connection to didactic theory, and because at this point it seems to provide prolific prospects in order to study both the state of change within a school subject, and a situation of opposites and tensions between different relational positions and layers of meaning and power within, as well as across, the subject in question. Furthermore, as emphasized in the previous section, the formation and negotiation of the identity of discursive categories and phenomena like educational matters should not be regarded as separated from individual subjects’ negotiations of identity. Power only exists as relationships put into action and exercised by some on others. Foucault argues that there is no transcendental or metaphysical ‘entity of power’ organizing the world beyond human beings’ actions upon other people’s actions (Foucault 2000b). Consequently, articulations of identity, didactic or otherwise, are always intertwined with each other, negotiating the temporary stabilization of meaning on several levels at the same time.

According to this conception of didactic identity, the school subject music will inevitably be embedded in discursive negotiations concerned with diverse comprehensions of musical meaning, much in the same manner as any musical and musico-pedagogical custom. Thus, educational practices might be regarded both as constitutive for and constituted by criss-crossing currents of what Frede V. Nielsen entitles basic subjects, according to his model of the multi-dimensional aesthetic, scientific and cultural foundations of music didactics

(1994: 110). Most music educators will realize, however, that music education does not require *one* defined structure or contents that will work most favourably in any context and situation.⁴ One need only take a brief look around at different institutions and educational regimes and cultures to observe that what seem to be ‘obvious’, ‘logical’ or ‘natural’ ways of designing music education programmes vary a great deal. The mutual relations between basic subject and teaching subject might be regarded as unstable, ambiguous and even incongruent in the light of the term didactic identity.

The two notions of school subject and basic subject, in this case, they are not by any means essential categories, but rather subject to internal as well as external discursive negotiations. Given these circumstances, the assumption must be that music education always takes place in a specific culture in time and space, where music didactic phenomena and practices inevitably also construct an educational culture. In so doing they may well contribute to the constitution of their own sociocultural foundations by means of artistic, scientific and sociocultural basic subjects, disciplines and practices, which in every part are also inscribed in discursive regimes of significance and power.

Consequently, an important presupposition must be that neither music education nor subject matter didactics can be considered independently from the cultural production of meaning, construction of identity or negotiation of power. The subject of music and its didactics ought to be regarded as cultural practices,⁵ which should be studied in a broader context than just pure school matters isolated from the external sociocultural environment. In this respect it seems necessary, then, to relate to concepts of formal and informal learning, as well as to formal and informal learning situations (Folkestad 2006), simultaneously viewing music in school, in everyday life, as well as in children’s culture and youth culture, not as antagonisms, but rather as an educational continuum. The customary dichotomy formal/informal might in this connection address an uninterrupted comprehension of human subjects’ identity, interpreted as ‘the self-in-context’. On the other hand, the school subject music always forms part of the total ‘life-world’ of music pupils and students, and culturally informed didactic studies ought to take account of this fact. If not, one might claim that a music didactics which omits informed knowledge about the pupils and students’ negotiations of themselves as identities and subjectivities, seems fairly insufficient to deal with today’s educational challenges.

As a way of facing these challenges in music education, a fresh focus on the discursive repertoires of subject positions could epitomize an issue of substantial importance. By asking which subject positions music education offers to whom, as well as what kind of competence and agency these positions may possibly afford, we are investigating both individual and groups of subjects’ identity projects within the school subject music as well as the didactic identity of the school subject music itself. Thus, instead of asking: What is ‘music’? or, more precisely: What is ‘music education’? one might rather, given the above perspectives, ask: How is music constructed as a subject? and, by also including the human subjects of education: How does the school subject music work as a field of education where pupils and students negotiate, renegotiate and identify with narratives of

themselves as male/female, straight/queer, white/black, native/foreign, local/cosmopolitan, young/grown-up practitioners and participants in musical activities and communities (for instance as everyday listeners, music audiences, fans, karaoke singers, bedroom producers, musicians etc.) – and for that matter experience a sense of belonging and connection to high/low social class and/or culture as well?

Research questions such as these inevitably reveal some hierarchical power relations, not least concerning the binary opposition central/marginal, and in this way also bring into play certain socio-political issues and quandaries. Even so, we will still advocate that, at another level, the notion of didactic identity provides music education research with more analytic than normative attitudes, more descriptive than prescriptive approaches, or, to use the neologism coined by Nielsen (2005), it represents a turning point, from didactics towards *didactology*. As an analytic approach, it may also lead researchers who want to study music didactics in its cultural modes to significant empirical approaches and features. Consequently, didactic identity enhances a firm analytic grasp of the cultural dimensions of music education. At the same time, it represents a reflexive interpretation of subject matter didactic conditions and presuppositions, and might, as such, also exhibit the relation power-knowledge, with which Foucault displays, among other aspects, how power is closely attached to the ways in which discourses work to develop, negotiate and modify categories, positions, subjects etc.

In order to encapsulate the main points made in this section, we would emphasize the three levels of the concept didactic identity that we make use of in the article:

- Subject matter didactic aspects of identity, or, the didactic identities of teaching and learning music.
- Cultural aspects of subjectivity and identity, or, the human subjects' performance and negotiation of identity within and across the school subject music.
- Didactological aspects of identity, or, the meta-reflections of music and cultural didactics as a research discipline and methodological field.

We are determined to approach these kinds of questions by attempting to distinguish and deconstruct a certain array of music education binaries, showing how arbitrary articulations in a temporary network of relations constituting the didactic identity of music as a school subject come forth as essential, natural and unavoidable categories and connections. Moreover, we want to demonstrate how complex, contingent and culturally contextual the didactic identity of the subject of music can be, and, thereby, we may further expound and legitimize the versatile concept of didactic identity itself. But, in addition, our intention is to embody what we regard as cultural didactic studies, when operationalizing the multifaceted perspectives and levels of didactic identity in order to recognize dichotomies we may take for granted, while they, instead, through deconstruction would appear as discursive. This also implies seeing the binary oppositions as expressions of decentred didactic identities.

Dichotomized discourses

As Jacques Derrida (1967) points out, there is an ongoing, Western tradition for understanding reality in dualistic, contradictory pairs, as exemplified by the above opposition between basic subject and teaching subject, with its reminiscences of binaries of essential significance to Marxism and structuralism, like basis/superstructure, essence/appearance or depth/surface. These opposites come across as logical and valid ways in which to conceive of the world. The perspective offered by deconstruction, however, helps to undermine our perception of such opposing structures as proof of commonly accepted truths, or – akin to essentialism – as representations of some undergirding stable structure. Instead they are based on socially constructed value hierarchies. One end of the dichotomy appears truer or carries more authentic qualities than the other, which is then interpreted culturally as inferior to the first. This may seem somewhat more palpable if we look upon a few binaries of relevance to the world of music and music education, like content/form, art/entertainment, serious/popular, Western/the Other, pure/hybrid, original/imitation, authentic/fabricated, professional/amateur, and so on. Instead of accepting a hierarchical either/or logic, which systematically favours one attribute over the other, Derrida offers the possibility that what appears like binary oppositions should be regarded as arbitrary relations between components in a sociocultural system. Therefore, phenomena that are displayed as fixed binary pairs may be linked in discursive formations for the very reason that they draw meaning from each other in that which puts them apart. According to Derrida, the approach to a dichotomous dilemma should, in other words, take place in the light of a logic which recognizes both/and. It then follows that the play between these differences brings about continuous changes and deferrals of oppositions, both inside and outside the dominant discourse on – in our case – music and music education (cf. Dyndahl 2008).

Dichotomies of music education may originate from historical, sociocultural and educational systems and relations of power. Moreover, they may well be further developed in music education institutions and practices, to the extent that they basically identify the subject of music of today in certain contexts and situations. If we take as our point of departure two opposite ways of thinking when it comes to allocating meaning to the notion of culture, this binary may also be regarded as an expression of decentred didactic identities of profound significance to the music education of the past as well as of recent and contemporary times:

On the one hand, one might refer to a perspective on *culture as extraordinary*, or as the nineteenth-century British author and pedagogue Matthew Arnold famously described culture as: “the best which has been thought and said in the world” (1882: 4), much in the same way as it was described and appraised by Adorno and Horkheimer (1991) in the last century, but then from a radical point of view that contested the cultural conservatism represented by Arnold and others. On the other hand, literary critic and culture analyst – and also co-founder of the *CCCS* at Birmingham University – Raymond Williams, in 1958 coined the phrase *culture is ordinary*, an idea to which we will return later on.

The sort of position associated with Arnold will inevitably align itself with a perspective on culture which is supportive of Art with capital A, associated, of course, with high culture. Historically, one might say that the assumption of the aesthetics of modernity as well as the construction of bourgeois subjectivity originate from Kant's philosophy (1790/1990). The Kantian definition of aesthetic experiences as contemplative, disinterested and functionless has helped to crystallize a perception of the work of art as an autonomous object that apparently transcends the subjective, the social and the contextual.

Parallel to the notion of aesthetic encounters as 'immediate' in a transcendental sense, a discourse concerned with active, sensible experiences, which is supposed to enhance the experience by means of knowledge and refined sensitivity, was constituted. This discourse established itself at the same time as the institutionalizing of music, in terms of orchestras, concert halls, critics and academies of music education throughout Europe during the nineteenth century, and a situation came about where the aesthetic experience was apprehended as a matter that was mastered by professionals and those initiated, while, for others, the paradox that aesthetic immediacy had to be learned established itself as common truth. Culture theorist and historian John Storey argues actively against this understanding when he claims that aesthetic:

Objects do not have a value which is inside waiting to be discovered: evaluation is what happens when an object is consumed. Aesthetic approaches make a fetish of value: what derives from practices of human perception is magically transmuted to become a fixed property of an object. Against this, I would insist that the value of something is produced in its use (the coming together of subject and object); it is not in the thing itself. The trouble with aesthetic approaches is that they drain the world of both the activity and the agency which goes into the making of evaluations; they inevitably reduce culture to a property of objects. Inevitably, 'textual fetishism' produces two things: an imaginary museum of objects to be preserved, and a pedagogy which insists that people have to be trained to recognize the intrinsic values of selected objects, which invariably leads to a division being drawn between the minority who can and the majority who cannot. In this way, aesthetic value can be used as a mechanism to exclude (Storey 2003: 105).⁶

A typical educational approach – in scholarly literature on music education, in music pedagogical text books, and of course in traditional musicology and its narrations of Western Art music as well – is to interpret the didactic identity of music as an 'aesthetic subject', where 'music itself' and its 'essential core values' are separated from other – more commonplace and mundane – functions. Also Nordic curricula⁷ and literature on music didactics and pedagogy gives substantial room to employ different *Bildung* theories⁸ and thereby justifications for music education on the basis of a dichotomy between seeing the subject as if it were devoted to fulfil music's intrinsic, aesthetic purpose, or as a means to achieve something quite different, i.e. external purposes.⁹ In line with this dualistic perception, we will point to a particular history of reception of the term 'aesthetic'.

Simon Frith (1996a) is concerned with how culture sociology after Bourdieu (1979) interprets aesthetic listening as a social process belonging to high culture, while the value and significance of popular music are only explained in terms of social functions and the listener's call for entertainment, as we might recall from critical theory as well. In fact, in earlier cultural studies on youth culture and subcultures, for instance Hebdige's comprehensive study on punk rock and the significance of style (1979), there is also a tendency to look upon these phenomena within a framework that concentrates primarily on social functions. Compare this to how the involvement of popular music within the school subject music has often occurred in the guise of social studies, critical studies or media studies.¹⁰ In this way, sociological *doxa* might contribute to uphold the distinction between high and low culture, by assuming that popular music audiences and fans do not occupy themselves with the continuous aesthetic evaluation that serious music invites, and toward which musicology has developed a nuanced language to cope with. Frith, however, regards this polarization as pure and simple nonsense, and claims that: "all cultural life involves the constant activity of judging and differentiating" (1996a: 251). When listening to pop music, we use our aesthetic ability to make conscious or unconscious evaluations of what this music has to offer, whether it is good or bad, but also to estimate and decide which sociocultural functions it serves when experiencing its emotional effects on us, or – put another way – which meanings are constructed by the relation music-human being in context.

A crucial aspect of Frith's important book *Performing Rites – Evaluating Popular Music* (1996a) is precisely the deconstruction of the dichotomy between aesthetic, serious music and functional popular music. Frith makes the case that the aesthetic and the functional are inextricable from each other in the way we respond to and make sense of popular art, exactly as in the reception of art music.¹¹ He wants to establish a legitimate understanding of what we might call 'aesthetic functionality' in scholarly approaches to *all* music, in order – among other things – to reduce the gap between different socio-musical discourses, contexts and situations. In addition, Frith emphasizes how the aesthetic experience in his sense of the word only makes sense: "by *taking on* both a subjective and a collective identity" (1996b: 109). Rather than considering music as a passive mediating sign and articulation of some previously existing identities of subjects and social groups, he is preoccupied with the idea that identity is actually prepared, produced and recognized *within* and *due to* musical practice, aesthetic assessment and evaluation:

What I want to suggest, in other words, is not that social groups agree on values which are then expressed in their cultural activities (the assumption of the homology models) but that they only get to know themselves as groups (as particular organization of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference) through cultural activity, through aesthetic judgement. Making music isn't a way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them (Frith 1996b: 111).

The subject, then, is not regarded as a self-constitutive 'doer behind the deed'. Instead, the process of identity negotiation must be comprehended as if: "the 'doer' is variably

constructed in and through the deed,” as explicated by Judith Butler (2007: 195). This understanding should be appreciated as analogous to Foucault’s notion of the technologies of the self, or the means of power by which ‘the self relates to itself’, and is, simultaneously, constituted as a discursive subject: “[...] technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (Foucault 2000a: 225). For Foucault, these practices are grasped as culturally created, ethical patterns of action and activity, at once offered to and forced on us, and always dependent on other technologies of power as well. Frith’s point of view seems to correspond to this understanding: musical practices form particular aesthetic processes of negotiation of the self, through which we challenge and transform available subject positions and categories, constituting our identities and subjectivities, and, at the same time, we are subjectivized into acting, ethical, comprehensible individuals within normative discourse.

In other words, the aesthetic experience is discursively constructed in the sense that we create bonds between music, ourselves and the sociocultural context. That is, music is not an autonomous and external object, producing meaning in itself. In the encounter with music, we experience our subjectivity and cultural identity in its aesthetic aspects. This might seem both complex and contradictory, but, as Frith sees it, the aesthetic dimension situates us in the world, at the same time – and in the same way – as it disconnects us from the world. The paradox is that the musical, i.e. aesthetic *and* functional, experience helps to construct us socially, while we simultaneously experience the meanings as inherent in music, as musical intrinsic qualities, or as the essence of music.¹² For Frith, moreover, this works in a similar way, regardless of whether it is popular, classical, or whatever music genre. This is a very interesting stance, as we understand it, not least because cultural studies have often been accused of reducing: “text to context, poetry to propaganda, works of art to lumps of text churned out by a ubiquitous ideology machine” (Felski 2005: 28). Frith, on the contrary, attempts to alter the notion of aesthetics, without having to draw on references to Kant’s critique of judgement and modernity’s autonomous aesthetic objects. Aesthetic experience always involves the implementation and negotiation of subjective as well as collective identities, or ‘ways of being in the world’: “[...] music, the experience of music for composer/performer and listener alike, gives us a way of being in the world, a way of making sense of it” (Frith 1996b: 114). Aesthetic processes, then, would never be ‘pure’ in the Kantian sense, or, put another way: what seems ‘pure aesthetic’ must necessarily include subjective and collective ‘interests’, i.e. values, ontologies and identities.

In a corresponding perspective, and using the notion of technologies of the self more specifically, sociologist and culture researcher Tia DeNora (2000) likewise applies the term aesthetic to the processes and relations between subjectivity and music, in addition to the musical qualities that people experience as meaningful. For DeNora, human beings are active social agents who, by means of music, form and regulate their

human agency, understood as: “[...] feeling, perception, cognition and consciousness, identity, energy, perceived situation and scene, embodied conduct and comportment” (ibid: 20). In everyday musical life, she considers that: “Music is one of the resources to which actors turn when they engage in the aesthetic reflexive practice of configuring self and/or others as emotional and aesthetic agents, across a variety of scenes” (ibid: 158f). DeNora’s comprehensive series of ethnographic studies closely investigate this ‘variety of scenes’ in which we utilize music as a resource in our projects of self-regulation as well as in the bodily, emotional and biographical work those projects involve. Of special interest to our purpose are how these studies might help to deconstruct the dichotomy aesthetic/functional by, in practice, carrying it out as corresponding to what Frith proposes as ‘aesthetic functionality’. The active musical agents of DeNora’s constitute their agency, as well as get their agency constituted, precisely in aesthetic, reflexive practices: “As this music happens, so do I” (ibid: 158).¹³

DeNora’s ethnographic studies also lead us to music in everyday life as a foundation for the school subject music, which Nielsen has suggested as one possible basic subject in his model referred to in the previous section. As mentioned above, Raymond Williams (1958) stressed the ‘ordinariness’ of culture and the active, creative capacity of people to construct meaningful practices in daily life. The focus on everyday music becomes an alternative to music regarded as detached aesthetic experiences. However, it is important that the practices of music in everyday life are not meant to represent just another musical practice, but rather are a way to comprehend musical practice as such; an attitude towards music that is distinguished from the traditional aesthetics of musical works as studied by specialists and professionals, such as ourselves.

By also combining these insights with Christopher Small’s (1998) term ‘musicking’ and a proposal that music, instead of being merely a transcendental, aesthetic object, should be viewed as a variety of acts – including making music, performing music, listening to music, dancing to music, as well as everyday usage of popular music and media culture. In that case one might begin to appreciate musical craft as more than traditional skills, and rather understand it as the full spectrum of producing, practicing, perceiving and debating all aspects of music.¹⁴ This would include how music might serve as an arena for the construction, performance and negotiation of cultural identity and power, relating to social class; to ethnicity, race and nation; to local/global identities and the significance of place, space and time; to age and generation; as well as to gender and sexuality, to specify some of the nodal points of cultural studies. It follows that one could very well speak about an expansion of the basic subjects for the teaching subject music, and a thorough altering of the didactic identity of the school subject, as well.

The weighty arguments proposed by cultural researchers like Simon Frith and Tia DeNora suggest that we deconstruct the dichotomy between aesthetic autonomy and functional contextuality as a fixed binary pair. However, by distinguishing between reconstruction and deconstruction, Derrida always believed that the latter is not simply a project of rebuilding but goes further to a changing and displacing of the notions in

question. Deconstruction, then, involves an analysis of all the hidden assumptions which are implicit in the historical, philosophical or ethical use of the concept concerned. It entails being aware of those components which have contributed to the evolution of the ever-changing significance of the subject. Consequently, we are advised both to recognize and bid farewell to Kantian aesthetics and in its place try to see all music – and musicking – as functional in the widest sense of the word.

It is worth noting that this stance by no means implies a reduction of musical significance. On the contrary, one might claim that music achieves another level of impact for the formation of subjectivity in context. By recognizing subjectivity and identity projects as signifying practices – or acts of performance – rather than reflections and expressions of human inner nature, music also becomes more than a way of defining either sociocultural interdependence or difference. Instead, music constitutes a multi-faceted aesthetic-functional field for the construction of cultural meaning and identity. Clearly, music education and the school subject music form part of this field, according to our conception of didactic identity, as has already been mentioned several times in the preceding section. This stance will inform our discussion in the next section as well.

Cultural didactic studies (and beyond)

To recapitulate the main arguments advanced in this article, we would make in all six assertions, which may also help to distinguish what might serve as the key arguments and premises of cultural didactic studies. To facilitate the survey, we divide these assertions into two sets of three. The first set states certain distinctive features regarding the cultural dimension of music education:

- Music education practices take place always-already in culture.
- Music didactic phenomena and practices inevitably also construct culture.
- In so doing they contribute to the constitution of their own sociocultural foundations.

Traditionally, the identity of a school subject was given by its more or less fixed and stable ‘properties’, ‘character’ or ‘essence’. The ‘natural’ contents and activities of the subject were thus given by its self-evident ‘core’. A post-structuralist perspective on didactic identity, however, must underline its shifting and decentred character, detached from any essential point. It then follows that music education is both affected by and reliant on the culture(s) in which it takes place. This refers, obviously, to the current discourses of education, evidenced by the curriculum and the organization of education in certain subjects with particular didactic identities. But, in addition, both pupils and teachers are

living in and by the discourses and subject positions of culture, accordingly bringing cultural experiences, attitudes and values to school. The blurred frontiers between formal and informal learning, between music education inside and outside of institutions, indicate that informal learning and enculturation are present also within institutionalized education. Therefore, one would only acquire a limited degree of comprehension by just asking whether or not music education ought to be multicultural, or if popular music should be part of music education or not, to put forward a couple of examples. According to the multifaceted perspectives provided by cultural studies and its nodal points of identity, meaning and power, contemporary music education is deemed to be multicultural in one way or another, although not related to discourses of ethnicity or nationality only. Music education will necessarily be embedded in multicultural and/or hybrid friction, while also taking into account social class, gender, sexuality and generation as well. Similarly, the question of whether or not to have popular music in school is irrelevant, since: “popular music is already present in school, brought there by the students, and in many cases also by the teachers, as part of their musical experience and knowledge” (Folkestad 2006: 136).

On the other hand, music education also creates specific school cultures. Traditionally, these were recognized as methodological systems like the Kodály approach to music reading, the *Orff Schulwerk* and its pedagogical instruments and repertoire, the Suzuki method of violin instruction, as well as several listening, performance and ensemble methods, pedagogical composition techniques, school approaches to music technology and so forth. Nonetheless, a central focus of this article has been to discuss and explain that the didactic perception of the school subject music in itself has motivated the formation of a discursive space in which ontologies and identities of music education are negotiated and renegotiated. These might be described in terms of music as a subject of performance, a subject of creativity, a subject of aesthetics, a subject of knowledge, a subject of skills, a subject of critical social studies, a subject of media studies or a subject of digital networking, among others (cf. Nielsen 1994, Hanken & Johansen 1998, Dyndahl 2004).

The inconsistency and latent conflicts between the two aspects presented above might be seen as parallel to the dichotomy internal/external. Binary oppositions are tied together, simultaneously defining each other mutually. As a result, there will be exchange between the various external and internal cultural facets of music education, too. An excellent example of how this may work both ways was observed by Bengt Olsson (1993) in his study of the Swedish music teacher education programme *Sämus*, in which – he argued – popular music had only entered the institutions of education in terms of content, while traditional teaching methods and conservatory approaches to mediation still regulated the field of music education as such. At the same time it seems obvious that music didactic phenomena and practices contribute to the constitution of their own foundations, in so far as they maintain and reproduce existing norms, attitudes and values. At a general level, this may concern relations between music, education and social class, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, the local culture, the global media, and so on. More specifically relating to subject positions inhabited by music teachers, an interesting research finding

was made by Lucy Green (2002) with regard to how traditional ideals and standards of formal, institutional teaching and learning seem to a large extent to inform how to act as a music teacher also for popular musicians with an informal background when they engage in teaching. It seems, according to Green, that these musicians possess a well-defined comprehension of what is regarded as appropriate teaching and instruction in fully traditional and formal ways, even if they have not acquired analogous experiences through their own musical learning and upbringing. The construction of subject positions as regards teaching music according to established didactic norms and practices seems so strong, then, that it might marginalize alternative forms of expertise, even though the music to which this practical knowledge is connected has established itself as part of music education.

On the basis of the above arguments and matters, music education may possibly be led in new directions, for instance by formulating research questions like: By what means do music education and the school subject music appear to be coherent? Or, put the other way around: What dichotomies are exposed in music education within certain situations and contexts? Furthermore, one might ask: Which discourses are implemented in, and which are excluded from, the subject of music? Or, seen from a subjective point of view: Which subject positions are at play at this moment in music education? Finally, to grasp processes of change and variation, as these form an important part of the concept didactic identity, one might ask: Where and how do changes emerge in the teaching subject music? And, of methodological significance: How can instability be observed in music education?

The second group of statements are primarily related to music education as a field of sociocultural formation and identity construction:

- No matter what didactic identity it claims for itself or is interpreted as conveying, the educational subject music is unavoidably obliged to constitute an aesthetic-functional field of constructing, performing and negotiating meaning and power, most notably relating to certain nodal points of subjectivity and identity.
- However, different didactic identities are significant with respect to *which* meanings and *whose* power are becoming dominant or marginal respectively.
- Thus, as part of its didactic – and didactologic – reflexivity, music education should be aware of what kind of cultural meaning and power it is dealing with in different situations and contexts.

As shown above, the concept of didactic identity opens up music didactics to numerous options. As pointed out by Geir Johansen (2006), the different subject matter didactics of music are constituted through continuous processes, situated in communities of practice operating within cultural institutions. Subject matter didactics represents no settled order, but is nevertheless subject to attempts to impose order – institutionally and materially – by didactic theory. One outcome of the effort to sort out or define once and for all the didactic identity of a subject might be that music didactics apparently seems to embody a

basic, theoretical framework, according to which teaching is carried out, instead of seeing it as conducted and negotiated in practice by teachers and other actors. Throughout this article we have argued that the rethinking of music didactics as cultural didactic studies implies the reflection of the participating actors' cultural preunderstandings and patterns of action, aesthetic experiences and evaluation processes, as well as individual and social identity projects. Didactic, aesthetic and identity negotiating processes might in this way be interpreted as intersected. Culturally orientated music sociologists like Simon Frith and Tia DeNora have been referred to as exponents of a school which regards human identities as constituted in aesthetic practice. Norwegian musicologist, psychologist and music therapist Even Ruud's book on music and identity (1997) may be seen as an equally important contribution to this debate. In his empirical study of music therapy students' reflections on their autobiographical identity projects, Ruud discusses identity by means of a collection of metaphorical 'rooms': the personal, the social, the room of time and place, as well as the 'transpersonal' room. These rooms provide a range of spatial openings for the construction of identity, deliberating identities as provisional individual inferences and potential discursive associations. In his study Ruud emphasizes how music as an aesthetic object appears to create local and individual affective attendance by connecting items and relations to time and place – putting them together as significantly present – to prevent the world from appearing accidental and pointless: "they are loaded with power, values, emotions and moods. They are experienced as real and embodied, not as accidental representations of things in the world or phenomena we encounter" (1997: 57, our translation). In this way, aesthetic experience produces an emotional context which might be repeatedly recalled, put into effect and transformed in the continuous reflexive process identity and subjectivity seem to be – in this case a process of memory-work simultaneously affording meaning to initial experiences. What is important to us (although not the main point of Ruud's study) is how the negotiating memory-work, which is both orchestrated by and composed of music education, not only relates to several *musical* subject positions and forms of agency, but always involves what cultural studies refer to as central social turning points of meaning and power, such as ethnicity, class, generation, gender and sexuality. A relevant study in this connection is Anne H. Lorentzen's (2009) work on musical identity construction in relation to gender agency and gendered subject positions in the production of music. She questions how the personal project studio may have changed music production with regards to gender and sexuality. By help of the notions of de- and reterritorialization she focuses on how the disruption of the traditional power hierarchies of the recording studio are connected to the introduction of new technologies as well as alternative ways of articulating gender and sexuality:

By that I mean that when music production as a social, cultural and technological practice, we might as well say discursive practice, is transferred from its traditional institutional setting and is situated in a totally different setting, for instance a home, and entirely different categories of creating subjects who previously did not have access to

the means of production, such as female musicians and artists for example, this implies a transformative process with the potential to change both the subjects involved, the collaborative relationship between them, the technology (its use, significance and framing), and also the music itself (Lorentzen 2009: 45, our translation).

An interesting feature of Lorentzen's study is how she simultaneously deals with what we in the present context have argued for as the identity of a practice, the identity negotiations of the participating subjects, as well as available discursive positions and power relations. In this she illustrates how different constructions of the identities of practice determine which meanings and whose power are becoming principal or marginal respectively.¹⁵

The dichotomy central/marginal, as well as the opposition between what we take for granted and the Other, also represents an obvious challenge for music education as an academic discipline. The problem of seeing the other – whether it be an individual, culture or aesthetics – as something else, and not just as a second-rate variant of what is dominant, clearly includes an ethical dimension of this research field. Consequently, cultural didactic studies should be interested in exposing what is marginalized in music education and the school subject music. Through deconstruction and discourse analysis of what appear to be self-evident attitudes toward cultural variety and diversity, this didactic approach might reveal what has been overlooked. This, in turn, may prove to be a fruitful way of meeting minorities and other socioculturally defined subgroups, vulnerable forms of music and cultures, as well as informal and unconventional learning arenas and institutions. At the same time, it might also lead to an increased cultural and aesthetic esteem and a readiness for hybrid and pluralistic phenomena and practices about which music education has traditionally harboured certain qualms. Cultural didactic studies might thereby draw attention to the marginal issues, at a time when one of the most distinct tendencies in curriculum development and education seems to be to strengthen some central and underlying notions, for example about national language and culture, canonized Art, or so-called basic competencies and universal skills. By emphasizing the importance of respecting different outlooks and non-conformist ways of life in opposition to intolerance and xenophobia, it implies an added weight on the 'otherness' of the other, and consequently of the other's human rights.

This may also be one of the most significant outcomes of a cultural didactic research approach in relation to hands-on music teaching and teacher education. In line with this, Göran Folkestad discusses how the relationship between the field of praxis, conducted by music teachers, and the field of research, accomplished by music education researchers, should be defined, in that:

[...] the role of the latter is not to 'produce' teaching methods, but to deliver research results to the praxis field – results by means of which the professional teachers may plan, conduct and evaluate their music teaching. An important strand in this relationship between researchers and practitioners, and with the rest of the surrounding society,

is the mutually shared need for a continuous dialogue, and also that research questions induced in the reflections of the praxis field become the object of attraction to research (Folkestad 2006: 136f).

Erling Lars Dale (1999) identifies, from his point of view, pedagogical professionalism as more than plain craftsmanship. By this term he understands that teachers, in addition to obtaining the necessary repertoires of knowledge and skills as well as techniques and methods to impart these, have to develop their analytic and reflexive awareness to meet the professional demands of the teaching occupation. Dale further develops this to a notion of didactic rationality which corresponds to the significance he ascribes to didactic theory within scholarly pedagogy. Moreover, he outlines three levels of practice and competency, where didactic rationality stands for the mutual relations between the internal and complementary facets of these levels in order to build up competence with respect to teaching (the first level of competency), creating education programmes (the second level) as well as the construction and mediation of didactic theory (the third level).

Our standpoint is that the notions of didactic identity and cultural didactic studies put forward in the present article already involve several multifaceted perspectives on the connections and relations between the practical, discursive and theoretical levels of knowledge, experience and participation. Clearly, the article itself primarily operates at a didactological meta-level with respect to music education as a field of praxis. However, our modest ambition has been to contribute to the facilitation and reinforcement of culturally informed didactic competence and the reflexive practice of professional music teachers and music teacher education as well, by proposing a number of notions, perspectives and approaches which might be of relevance to the music education of today and tomorrow. Thus, we hope that the diverse definitions of didactic identity and the several layers of cultural significance we have suggested and examined may contribute to the rethinking of music didactics and to the enhancing of further cultural didactic reflection and research.

Notes

¹ It is important to stress that in our approach to didactics we take a continental European – i.e. German – understanding of the concept *Didaktik*, which has had special significance in Scandinavia as well, as our point of departure for further discussion. Cf. also Nielsen 2007.

² Obviously, Hall is here referring to Derrida's (1967) alienating strategy, by which he puts phenomena 'under erasure', for instance like this: *identity*. Basically, by crossing out the word, one indicates that the concept is no longer considered to be useful in its normatively stabilized form, while at the same time it cannot be replaced by any other more accurate or adequate term of comprehension.

³ For example, contents and activities might be negotiated and eventually changed due to the introduction of new disciplines and fields of knowledge, such as the introduction and escalating presence of digital technology in music education. Furthermore, they might change if the subject's

centre of gravity repositions, for instance like when music education in general has increasingly concentrated on composition. Finally, the contents of music education might be transformed if the cultural and mediated material and resources of the subject expands for example when popular music, contemporary music and/or multicultural 'world music' claim territory to the neglect of historical material.

⁴ Needless to say, we do not ascribe such simplifications to Nielsen, even if his model upholds certain tendencies to regard the relations between basic subject and teaching subject, as well as between *ars* and *scientia*, as more fixed and constant than might be approved from a post-structuralist point of view.

⁵ Note that several Nordic studies imply that the educational acquisition of musical knowledge, approaches and values takes place in discourses circulating within music education and its institutions, for instance Krüger (2000), Ericsson (2002), Nerland (2003), Lindgren (2006) and Schei (2007).

⁶ When Storey points to: "a pedagogy which insists that people have to be trained to recognize the intrinsic values of selected objects," he also demonstrates that there is no neutral relation between music as an educational subject and its potential basic subjects, whether they are derived from the *ars*- or *scientia*-dimensions of Nielsen's model. It seems obvious that such an understanding of aesthetic and cultural significance must be inclined to embrace music from the Classical Canon, or "The imaginary museum of musical works," as Lydia Goehr (1992) labelled the state of affairs.

⁷ See for instance the current Norwegian curriculum *Kunnskapsløftet* (2006) for primary, secondary and upper secondary education.

⁸ The opposition between considering music as an aim in itself or as a way to accomplish other goals may recall the material and formal *Bildungstheorien* put forward by German didactician Wolfgang Klafki (1983). However – as will be argued in the following – while the human subject is assumed to realize itself in the sense of 'sublime humanity' or as part of the 'universality of mankind', obtained through close encounters with definite qualities of music, according to formative *Bildung* conceptions, the self will rather come across its inevitably earthiness and sociocultural contextuality in line with post-structural theories of subjectivity and identity informed by cultural didactic perspectives on music education.

⁹ Note how different didactic identities of the subject music are described by Nielsen (1994), Hanken & Johansen (1998) and Dyndahl (2004). It must be said, though, that the different authors emphasize various aesthetic systems of value, governing for example sound or performing ideals in a range of styles and genres, rather than focusing a univocal metaphysical appreciation as *the* aesthetic mode of comprehension.

¹⁰ See once again Nielsen (1994), Hanken & Johansen (1998) and Dyndahl (2004).

¹¹ This is not, in our view, fully compatible with Klafki's notion of the 'categorical formation', of which the essential point is a double hermeneutic opening, i.e. an opening of a substantial musical content that simultaneously brings about the categorical opening or formation of the human mind. What creates the formation, then, is the synthesis of the formal and the material dimensions of musical education. However, Klafki does not suggest by which concrete processes this amalgamation takes place, nor does he situate it in a social and cultural context. Both dimensions are subject to further discussion in Frederik Pio's wide-ranging dissertation *Birth of musicality. Scientific man and the*

breakdown of tonality (2005), in which he launches his integrated notion of the *musicality-Bildung*, unfolding at the sociocultural level of what he denotes as ‘musical life’.

¹² David J. Elliott (1995: 193) refers to Frith’s argument that popular music is not only popular because it is expressive of certain value systems but because this music tends to shape the beliefs of its listeners about what popularity means (cf. Frith 1987). In his much-read book *Music Matters. A New Philosophy of Music Education* (1995) Elliott presents a philosophical approach that explains ‘how music educators can fulfil their educational mandate’ by recognizing: “several dimensions of musical works that the [aesthetic concept of music education] overlooks altogether. In short, this praxial philosophy is fundamentally different from and incompatible with music education’s official aesthetic philosophy. As such, it offers music educators a clear alternative to past thinking” (ibid: 14). However, in circumventing the inescapable ambiguous, paradoxical and entangled dimensions of music’s aesthetic, cultural and social functions, which were pointed out by Frith as well as by post-structuralism and deconstruction, Elliott is himself inclined to overlook crucial aspects of the contextuality, contingency and complexity of the didactic identity of music education.

¹³ Another exciting aspect of DeNora’s studies is how she attempts to go beyond a cognitivistic conception of agency, structured as conceptions of musical competence as primary mental and reflexively interpretative skills. Her point of departure being aerobic classes, she investigates how we ‘latch on to’ music as a technology for body building, broadly speaking, as constitutive for motivation, coordination, endurance and energy: “[...] music is an accomplice of body configuration” (2000: 102). The aesthetic *affordances* of music might, therefore, be grasped as active, structuring attributes in and for the body. As aesthetic substance music can make us able to improve the capacity of the body, stretching the range of the body, and, ultimately, working as a ‘prosthetic technology’ – a technology which increases and alters the limits of the body (ibid: 103ff).

¹⁴ As we see it, Small’s notion ‘musicizing’ represents a broader, more multi-dimensional approach than Elliott’s corresponding concept ‘musicing’, which, essentially, aims to define music as various musical activities, including listening, and not as an aesthetic object. Moreover, Small includes everyday, media and even academic discourses. In addition there is his key point, which is that music’s ultimate function is to provide insight into relationships, musical as well as sociocultural.

¹⁵ Nerland (2003) discusses this issue with direct reference to music education, when she investigates didactic structures of meaning and relations of power as they are performed by master teachers of musical instruments. In this the project might be characterized as resting on a somewhat traditional and linear didactic model; a conception of didactics as existing previous to teaching, passing through the teacher, with direct consequences for the learner. However, Nerland’s analysis presents the research field as a complex and dynamic domain, and she undoubtedly makes a legitimate choice when focusing on the teacher as a discursive actor. An interesting extension of the study would, nonetheless, have been to investigate more accurately how subject matter didactic practices might become an integral part of the actors’ general identity projects, and how these in that way may work to stabilize or destabilize the subject’s didactic identity.

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Professor, dr.art. Petter Dyndahl
Hedmark University College
N-2418 Elverum, Norway
Email: petter.dyndahl@hihm.no

Doctoral Student, MA Live Weider Ellefsen
Norwegian Academy of Music /
Hedmark University College
N-2418 Elverum, Norway
Email: live.ellefsen@hihm.no