

Research and research education in music – disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach?

Tiri Bergesen Schei, Magne Espeland, Brynjulf Stige

ABSTRACT

Research and research education in music—disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach?

The main purpose of this article is to contribute to a discussion about the future of research and research education in music. The multiple existing traditions of music research constitute a rich resource. Increasingly however, similar topics are researched from different angles, often with watertight bulkheads between such various music disciplines as, e.g. music education, musicology, music therapy and performance studies. Music is a common denominator in these disciplines and interdisciplinarity could inform the various ways that music today is practiced, communicated and researched. Examples from interdisciplinary music studies will be highlighted in the article, particularly with regard to the advantages and challenges of interdisciplinary approaches to research education in music. Basic issues are discussed and characteristics of some research fields are illuminated, with the purpose of addressing trends in research education within music.

Key words: Research domains in music, interdisciplinary music studies, research education.

Introduction

Music is part of our everyday life and it is integrated as an activity in our schools, health care institutions, and various arts institutions. Music, then, is a multifaceted domain linked to a range of practices that constitute a complex multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field, with disciplines and subfields such as musicology, ethnomusicology, popular music studies, music psychology, music sociology, music education, music therapy, performance studies and so on. In all of these disciplines scholars

talk about music, but how and when do they talk about the same “thing”? To what extent unifying factors can be found in this complex field is vital to discuss, as is the metaphor of “unifying” itself. Perhaps the various music disciplines can join forces when it comes to issues such as research education.

The fact that there are a range of more or less different music disciplines can be discussed in the context of what is generally described as processes of modernization. There are many perspectives on this, but an argument developed by Crook, Pakulski, and Waters (1992) is relevant to highlight here. These authors take particular interest in the “postmodern” phase of modernization (other authors use terms such as “late modern”). According to Crook, Pakulski and Waters, this phase is characterized by processes similar to those of the phase of modernity, but the processes are intensified to a degree that make them change character altogether. Processes of differentiation represent an illuminative example: Any process of differentiation necessarily involves a complementary process of integration at some level. If not, differentiation would eventually lead to a completely fragmented world. Crook, Pakulski and Waters then argue that in the postmodern phase, these tendencies are accentuated. Differentiation turns into hyper-differentiation but under given circumstances there is potential for the paradoxical result of *dedifferentiation*.

The various specialized disciplines of music studies could serve as an example illustrating this argument. These disciplines have gradually been differentiated into sub-disciplines and specialized research fronts, such as the ones we listed above and many more (a specialized discipline such as music therapy, for instance, is differentiated in subfields such as neurological music therapy, community music therapy, and so on). Fragmentation of knowledge and research interests could be described as a preliminary result; disciplines and research areas tend to have their own education programs, scientific journals, conferences, and communities. Eventually, however, new conglomerates may develop, going beyond traditional domains. Scholars from the research fronts of several disciplines and sub-disciplines discover that they share interests and develop interdisciplinary or even trans-disciplinary activities. Lately, for instance, the emerging interest in society for relationships between music, health, and wellbeing have initiated collaborative relationships between a range of music disciplines (MacDonald, Kreutz, & Mitchell 2012) but also between music disciplines and other disciplines such as health psychology and community psychology (Stige & Aarø 2012).

In this article we will use examples from music education, musicology and music therapy to uncover some collaborative challenges and possibilities within interdisciplinary music studies. These disciplines illuminate a broader theme for all of the disciplines that have music as the common denominator: What content “music” will

have as a research field in a multicultural, rapidly changing society will partly depend on how the researchers manage to do research on music practices as they unfold in various cultural arenas and how they manage to bring forth multiple perspectives in the discussion of these practices. An assumption is that the research topics reflect current trends, but conceptualization needs to promote mutual understandings to be trustworthy. By virtue of representing a major instrument for evaluation and production of new knowledge, research and research education naturally have consequences for music practice on all levels.

The central questions in the article will be: What interdisciplinary aspects and implications characterize current issues and approaches within various music disciplines? What are the advantages and challenges of interdisciplinary approaches to research education in music?

Reflections on research in contemporary music education

What kind of research field is music education today? This is not a simple question and the answers are not unanimous. What in the Nordic countries is called *pedagogy* or music *pedagogics* is in English speaking countries usually coined *music education* (Nielsen 2006). Here is the first pitfall: Different terms are used in different academic contexts. To what degree do these differences in terminology reflect conceptual differences? How do we speak about and do research on performance, self-expression, music in the classroom, or music and society from the perspective of music education without having a common conception of the field? Being aware that research is a systematic search for new knowledge and new ways of conceptualizing, this should be a crucial question for researchers. Conducting research include a search for precise, but not necessarily stable, concepts. Adequate tools and methods to analyze research questions are important, but since language is ambiguous, meaning will be a central factor in the interpretation. However, research, in much the same way as music and education, is creative and emergent, and embedded in different cultures. It is with this given limitation that we can search for preciseness and adequacy (Bruner 1996).

What establishes then a research project as belonging to a certain field of knowledge? Frede V. Nielsen (1994) links this to an exploration of the phenomenon of music:

The crucial problem area for music pedagogics ... is the mediation between music and man and its conditions... Evidently, this problem area involves the question of what kind of phenomenon music is and can be, and it raises the

question whether this phenomenon can be grasped and understood adequately *only* as a relationship between music and us (Nielsen 2006: 164).

Harald Jørgensen, having mapped the status quo of music education in the Nordic countries (Jørgensen, 2004), suggests how the field can be delimited. He proposes that music education is the science of situations of musical upbringing and music education (Jørgensen 1995: 13) and discusses narrow as well as wide definitions of the field. He refers to Robert Sidnell, who argued that music education research will investigate what we have done with music, what we are doing with music and what may be possible for us to do with music (Alexander 1987). But – to what extent are we then dealing with music education or a broader interdisciplinary field of music studies?

In his article “Scandinavian research on music education – its scope of ideas and present status”, Bengt Olsson illuminates how knowledge formation is linked to research on music education. He follows up Jørgensen’s survey of Scandinavian doctoral projects and discusses the turn from researching ...”structural conditions of the teachers’ work to the study of teachers’ knowledge and teachers’ identity” (Olsson 2005: 19). Acknowledging that the field of music education has its background from musicology, general education and psychology, Olsson (2008) raises questions concerning the kinds of theories applied in music education research. He states that “key issues within a research discipline have a paradigmatic function for the focus on and theoretical considerations of formulating a research problem... A paradigm consists of a pattern of values that people share” (Olsson 2008: 12). Patterns of values are often hidden, as knowledge that “sits in the walls”. Paradigms stage our habits, rules, styles of writing, ideals and conventions and make us act, speak and perform in ways that are in accordance with what we find correct, attractive and permissible.

Within music education, research on the dominant opinions on performers’ communication with their audiences may disclose taken for granted beliefs. What values are shared and not shared when the focus is on music performance? One context for studying such a question could be school performances arranged by the “Cultural Rucksack” for Norwegian schools. The “Cultural Rucksack” is a national program for art and culture provided by professional artists¹. The intention from the Norwegian government is to offer experiences of professional art to all children, thus allowing them to be acquainted with various artistic expressions. Performance research of this kind, for example how the meetings between performing artists and their audiences are unfolded and articulated, can be designated as research in music education (Kvile 2011, Markussen 2011, Tveit 2011)². The results shed light on performances in the school context, and particularly on the unarticulated feelings, opinions and attitudes of the audiences³. This could be viewed as a typical research task within music education,

but it could also be framed as research in performance studies, music sociology or even ethnomusicology⁴.

Øivind Varkøy claims that “Music education centres on the philosophy, theory, and study of individuals, music, society, and teaching and learning, and not least the relationship between these elements.” (Varkøy 2009: 33). He writes that music education researchers draw upon sub-disciplines of education and pedagogy, *and* “on music as both an academic subject and an art form” (2009: 34). If we approach research on music education from the perspective of psychology, sociology, anthropology, or philosophy, the theoretical support from such perspectives will naturally influence the research questions. With such a wide horizon in the field of music education, the researcher herself must somehow delimit the field. From a researcher’s perspective a limitation can be to work with exploring and conceptualizing musical practices as they unfold, and open-mindedly reflect on what questions might be important in such an exploration.

The themes of research and exploration within music education are naturally often related to teaching and learning, e.g. curricula studies (Johansen 2003), aesthetic learning processes (Bresler & Thompson 2002, Espeland 2007, Green 2002, Sefton-Green, Thomson, Jones, & Bresler 2011), knowledge in music performance (Osa 2005) or knowledge connected to production, reception and meaning-making. Music education deals with two dimensions, that of *ars* and that of *scientia*, as Nielsen puts it (Nielsen 1994: 106ff). Also, music – in all of its various forms – is an integrated part of the practices of everyday life (DeNora 2000), which is also a dimension to consider within the field of music education (Stige 1995).

Researching music teaching and learning in schools has been rendered as the cornerstone and a core issue in the field, implying the student, the teacher and the content, the well-known triangle of the concept *teaching* (Nielsen 1997: 158). Even if national regulations define the curricula differently, the disciplines of composing, performing and listening, are still the main components. This has not always been the case. As a school subject music is bound to be a major point of reference for music education research, but not the only one. Whether the teachers implement the curricula in their teaching or not (Johansen 2004), the curriculum will influence the pedagogy and the students’ possibilities for musical expression in class, as the students are challenged.

This brief review brings us to following questions: Who defines the research field and with what power? Who classifies the content of the field? What consequences does it have that someone claims to define a research field? Why is it necessary to delimit a special field?

These questions should be of concern for those who relate to music education in their work and for PhD-candidates within different music areas. Every choice of

research tools and perspectives has consequences for the researcher. The position from where we view the field will influence how we see and what research questions we ask (Schei 2010). It will also influence our research profile, how we view our own identities and possibilities, whether we are affiliated with the discipline of music education, musicology, music performance or ethnomusicology.

Music education in relation to other music research areas

We think the mainstream discourse about how we do research in music education needs to be challenged. Teaching and learning is no longer restricted to schools and dedicated learning environments. We believe that we can examine the same topic together, but from different angles and disciplines. Ruud suggests that this may be a new turn in music education research:

“a new turn in music education, a turn towards music as a subject which may teach us more about this reality, its cultural complexities, its ways of negotiating identities, creating boundaries between groups, forming hegemonies and counter-forces, re-installing discipline rather than liberate identities, forging and giving expression to emotions, in short, how discourses of the very concept of ‘being human’ is given shape through music” (Ruud 2000).

Tia DeNora (2000) discusses in her book how music is used, practiced, performed and interpreted. She claims that music has the power to do certain kinds of work on, with and for people in their everyday lives. She brings forth examples of how music helps, changes things and how music can make things happen. Music is seen as cultural practice and a pragmatic artifact that contributes to the music consumer’s identity work. She writes about musical power, its mechanisms and effects, and how music “involves a kind of identification, a recognition and embodied level of the various shapes and textures of ‘happening’, of ...the body in music (in Barthes’s terminology, the ‘grain of voice’ (1977)) and of the ways in which music handles itself.” (2000: 161). DeNora points to aspects of music that might be of common interest to all who deal with research in music: “music is a medium that shows us ways of happening” (2000: 158). Her recommendation is to study these matters through ethnographic approaches.

Within music education these “happenings” are of great interest and highly relevant for questions about teaching and learning. In the Nordic countries we have examples of such issues, e.g. identity formation *through* music listening, performing, choir participation or composing (Balsnes 2009, Karlsen 2007, Regelski 2006, Ruud

1997, Schei 2007, Schei & Krüger 2008), or cultural formation and upbringing to music examined through philosophical reflections (Varkøy 1997, 2009).

Descriptions of music's function and meaning as an artifact are of great interest across the disciplines of music education, musicology, ethnomusicology and music therapy. Several recent music studies, researching for example teenagers and their use of the MP3 player as a portable musical tool in and outside the classroom (Skånland 2007, 2009, Sæle 2007) or rhythmic music teaching as a pragmatic means to teach playful learning in the classroom (Christophersen 2009) or musicians using hip hop as a strategy for transmitting traditions (Söderman 2007) show how the themes can be interdisciplinary. One investigation into hip hop was done by Tom Solomon, in the field of ethnomusicology. He explored "how people can use mediated music in constructing new imaginaries and identities and more specifically how people can use mediated music as a vehicle for the imagining of place" (Solomon 2005). When Johan Söderman, from the field of music education, explores hip hop, he brings forth different aspects related to learning, like creative strategies, identity, aesthetic upbringing and tradition-bearing general education. Solomon's and Söderman's research show the possibilities of studying the same issue from different angles. Some characteristics make them belong to different fields, but should it be beneficial to cross the borders and learn from each other?

Reflections on contemporary musicology

Modern musicology has come a long way since its beginning in the late 19th century, a way which can be described as a travel from a focus on what Guido Adler (1885/1981) called the "tonal art", the music itself and its constitution so to speak, to new musicology surfacing in the 1980-ies, with a focus on contexts and what the music tells us about "gender, cultural identity or ideology" (Cook & Everist 1999). Such a journey is by no means special to musicology but the fact that it has taken place might appear to be of vital importance when we discuss the relationship of musicology to other music disciplines. Adler's strong focus on the tonal art itself might seem to be absolute, in the sense that it allowed no interference from what he called "natural song ...from the throat freely and without reflection, and from "imagination" and "primitive- aesthetic norms," but even Adler had to *mention* what could interfere with true conceptions of form and sound described and based on tones measured:

...according to its pitch – at first this is done by ear, then with instruments that measure pitch – ; at that moment when one takes account of the organic

relationships between several tones and tonal phrases bound into a unified whole, and the imagination organises their product in such a way that they may be assumed to be based on primitive-aesthetic norms, only then can one speak of a musical knowledge as well as an art of working with tonal material (Adler 1885/1981).

Even Ruud, referring to Ansdell (1997) and others, sums up recent trends in the development of musicology as a movement towards viewing music as a process rather than a structure, as something intimately tied to human affect and meaning, as something determined by culture and context, as something performed, improvised and live as well as notated and recorded, and as something personal, embodied and deeply human (Ruud 2000).

Even if musicology in different continents probably is too diverse to be described as one stream (mainstream), the relevance for and relationship to music education, music therapy and music performance seem obvious. Why then, does musicology, as the oldest of the music disciplines internationally, in many contexts seem rather reluctant to interact with the other disciplines such as education? Rose Subotnik claims that the explanation might be found in musicology's emphasis on analytical listening for musical structure:

Discounting metaphorical and affective responses based on cultural association, personal experience, and imaginative play is at best secondary, not only in musical perception, but also in the theoretical accounts we make of such perception, this method allows virtually no recognition of non-structural varieties of meaning or emotion in the act of listening. Since these are, of course, precisely the varieties favoured by the overwhelming majority of people, structural listening by itself turns out to be socially divisive, not only in what it demands but also in what it excludes or suppresses (Subotnik 1996: 170).

Could it be that the other disciplines seen through musicological lenses might seem to have lost sight of the "tonal art" itself, or could it be that Schenkerian music analysis (Schenker 1906) and similar approaches is so deeply embedded in the heart of musicology that the contextual characteristics of the other disciplines threaten its very continued existence in academia and in education on many levels? In other words; does musicology today live in a double bind between its focus on the inner core of music and its effects and meanings?

One response might be to search for a renewal in the study of the essence of Adler's "tonal art". Bjørn Kruse and Lasse Thoresen, two Norwegian composers, have contributed to such a renewal in their thinking about music. Kruse (1995) describes the conception of music as basically being constructed according to two principles, composition and dramaturgy, the latter referring to *the effects* of the former, and to the basic understanding of music as the relationship of "something" and "something else". In his Aural Sonology project Lasse Thoresen (2007) introduces a more sophisticated approach to the analysis of "tonal art" where he describes music as conceivable in terms of time fields (the temporal segmentation of the music discourse), layers (the synchronous segmentation of the musical discourse), dynamic form (time directions and energetic shape), thematic form (recurrence, variation and contrast), and form-building transformations (looser and firmer gestalts, transformations between them). Both of these scholars seem to be introducing exciting and inviting conceptions and touching points between musicology and other musical disciplines, even if their work is not primarily within what we tend to designate as meaning oriented "new musicology". Rather, their work touches on what Adler called musical knowledge connected to the art of working with tonal material.

Modern musicology is not necessarily "new" musicology in the sense that its focus has changed from the focus on musical structures to their contexts and meanings. Musicians today perform in schools and in public spaces like railway stations, on markets and airports. Researching such musical practices, it is not obvious what should be the most appropriate music discipline and research base. Should it be performance studies, music education, musicology, music psychology or perhaps choreography? Or rather; should our introductory focus be on what can be studied by observing such a practice and how can we co-operate when studying it?

Music education and music therapy have sometimes been criticised for being too strongly influenced by psychology. Musicology has for a long time been having a similar relationship to aesthetics, most likely because both of these disciplines have been and are basically artwork oriented. But recent trends in aesthetics, coming from the visual arts, deviates from work based paths and describe what the French curator Nicholas Bourriaud calls "relational aesthetics". According to Bourriaud (2002: 11) "artistic activity is a game, whose forms, patterns and functions develop and evolve according to periods and social contexts; it is not an immutable essence." Bourriaud describes relational aesthetics as characterized by a number of aspects, which are quite a radical departure from traditional work-based aesthetics. Art, he writes, lies in human interaction and its social context rather than in a free and symbolic domain, artistic meaning is developed "collectively". Artistic form only exists when it contains human interaction and rather than a one-to one relationship between the individual

and the piece of art, art is situations where the audience create a community (2002). What would this conception of aesthetics mean for the relationship between different music disciplines? It seems to provide yet another rationale for musicology to seek the company of other music disciplines.

Music therapy as illustration of music as an interdisciplinary field

The field of music therapy is a relatively young music discipline and it might be described ambivalently. Seen from the perspective of more established disciplines and professions, the emergence of music therapy can be understood as a product of processes of differentiation and specialization. It can, for instance, be understood as a new specialized health discipline and profession as well as a new specialized music discipline. At the same time, music therapy represents integration and dedifferentiation; the two fields of music and health that the Enlightenment and later processes of modernization have differentiated are reintegrated in music therapy. The emergence of new subfields in the discipline, such as community music therapy (the practice and study of health benefits of communal musicking) is especially interesting in this respect. It could be described as a result of hyper-differentiation, that is, it could be described as a specialized field within the specialized field of music therapy. At the same time, this development may be understood as a new dedifferentiated field, where fragments from several fields and disciplines are reintegrated in new ways (Stige & Aarø 2012).

Music therapy could be called an “inter-discipline,” then. It is genuinely interdisciplinary, even trans-disciplinary in some respects (see Klein) (2010). In a previous meta-theoretical work, music therapy was defined as the study and learning of relationships between music and health (Stige 2002: 198). This definition suggests that music therapy researchers need to go beyond studying the therapeutics of established professional practices in order to learn more about how people use and relate to music in different contexts, for a variety of purposes and with a range of consequences. Therefore music therapy could also be described as “health musicology” (2002: 192).

In the Norwegian academic context, music therapy is generally accepted as part of a broad conception of music studies, which is exemplified by music therapy’s position within Grieg Research School in Interdisciplinary Music Studies⁵ (see below). While definitions and the relationships between music therapy and other music disciplines vary from country to country, the proposed relationships between various fields of

music study can be seen in relation to an international tendency with more openness to the relationships between music, culture, and society. This is sometimes framed as a position against “pure musical autonomy” (Clayton, Herbert, & Middleton 2012), but should not be interpreted as rendering performance studies or musicology’s interest in aesthetic qualities irrelevant. Instead, new “branches” of music studies such as music therapy can contribute with knowledge about how aesthetic experiences are linked to human practices (Stige 1998).

We would argue that music therapy’s capacity to contribute to interdisciplinary music studies is best realized if the hybrid nature of the discipline is acknowledged and cultivated. In other words: music therapy’s contribution to our understanding of music is related to its contribution to our understanding of human wellbeing. By cultivating music therapy’s hybridity, not by minimizing it, interdisciplinary connections within music studies can be established. Similarly, we could for instance argue that music education contributes to our understanding of music as artistic and everyday phenomenon in its investigations of how people learn to music and learn through music.

A recent book illustrates a contemporary tendency for interdisciplinarity within music studies: “Music, Health, and Wellbeing” (MacDonald et al. 2012). Perspectives from music education, music therapy, musicology, music psychology, neuroscience, and other fields are discussed in relation to each other in this book. There are considerable overlaps, yet – we would argue – distinct differences between the contributions in this book specifically and between the music disciplines more generally. Similarly, Klein and Parncutt (2010) argue that there is a universality of art and music across cultures and that there is a continuous (re)constructions of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity going on that is perhaps especially clear within music studies.

Whose music?

When related disciplines start collaborating and challenging each other, identity issues become prominent. How do we relate to the fact that our disciplines have overlapping interests and characteristics? Hardly by disciplining through definitions, categorizations or attempts to establish rigid boundaries. While such delineations might be valuable to reflect upon and discuss, we think it is important to acknowledge that the various fields of music and the arts are constantly evolving within multiple social practices and contexts, hence clinging to “borders” between the fields may obscure and prevent understanding.

Music is embedded in everybody's lives. It has numerous functions in human society, not least as a contributor to general contentment. Music is used to organize everyday life, through jingles signaling the 12 o'clock radio news or one's favorite TV-program, or hymns structuring the masses in church. National anthems underscore celebrations or mourning, organ music is mandatory in many weddings, children play music wall games in the streets, hip hoppers rap while waiting for the tube, church bells ring on Sundays, old people hum songs from their childhood, school children present songs for their parents, music teachers teach children how to play together, teenagers compete in song contests, rock bands, and hopeful guitar players at the municipal culture school long for a stage and admiring crowds – music is part of our lives and we have never been without it.

Most musical experiences are stored as, or strongly connected with, tacit knowledge about meaning and belonging, self-realization, self-staging, processing of emotions, identity work, proud experiences of mastery (or haunting memories of failure), personal development and adaption to society. Musical identity work can be achieved through accommodation of or opposition to dominant norms of taste, genre and performance, but we cannot conceive of music or musicians who do not somehow relate to tradition and cultural norms. As performers, listeners, composers, teachers or researchers searching for ways to articulate musical concerns, we share a world where music is an auditive phenomenon accessible for everybody. And the impact of music in human existence, music can and should be researched from numerous angles.

Research education in interdisciplinary music studies

Most music disciplines – such as for instance music education – have always drawn upon other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology and anthropology, which means that each field has interdisciplinary thinking as a point of departure. Rather than establishing boundaries through definitions, we argue that there is a need for nurturing reflexivity through discussion and reflection between the various disciplines of music. Music education, music therapy, musicology, ethnomusicology, music performance and composition are fields with different profiles and orientations, but nevertheless they share some important problem issues and methodological challenges. It should be a concern to challenge the tendencies of fragmentation of music research where academic and artistic research is developed within different spheres. It should be possible to establish several platforms for dialogues and reflection across disciplines. We believe that when researchers and research apprentices from various music fields meet and share their *specific* research projects, differences become a potential for enrichment and higher quality.

Grieg Research School in Interdisciplinary Music Studies (GRS) is an example of how an interdisciplinary music research school could be organized. GRS is established as a regional collaboration between universities and university colleges in Western Norway, an interdisciplinary initiative focusing on the disciplines of music education, musicology, music therapy, and performance. The main goal is to offer research education courses that can, a) gather candidates in different music disciplines, b) enable the candidates to be active in regional, national and international networks, c) nurture specialized disciplinary as well interdisciplinary perspectives and reflections on music studies, d) challenge the current tendencies of fragmentation of music research, and e) promote research on a high international level, so that candidates are qualified with the highest competency within research practices, higher education, management, and broader community contexts.

The three main academic components of the program are: Interdisciplinary Music Studies, Philosophy of Science, and Specialization. One of the principles guiding the seminars and workshops of GRS is that various problem areas within music studies can be explored collaboratively through use of various disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses. Each course in Interdisciplinary Music Studies will cover one main topic, with perspectives from each discipline. Topics related to theory and method can be designed and prioritized according to the candidates' needs. There can also be used lecturers from other relevant disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, philosophy and neurology. A purpose with the seminars is to encourage interdisciplinary reflection and dialogue by arranging lectures from all disciplines on the same topic during the same day. This is a basis for the PhD-candidates when they present their projects.

Quality and equality

The central questions in the article were: What interdisciplinary aspects and implications characterize current issues and approaches within various music disciplines? What are the advantages and challenges of interdisciplinary approaches to research education in music?

The first question was discussed through examination of some of the tendencies of development within the fields of music education, musicology, and music therapy. Each of these fields has their own legitimate identity debates. We do not want to simplify or neglect these identity debates, but we do suggest that the rapid changes in contemporary music practices in society advocate considerably flexibility in the

definition of sub-disciplines of music and also that it is helpful to explore identity issues in the context of collaboration and relationships.

In conclusion, we therefore advocate the relevance of the research education approach developed by GRS, where there is considerable focus on interdisciplinary relationships combined with space for specialization relative to project and sub discipline. A flexible and interdisciplinary model of research education raises acute questions related to research quality: In an interdisciplinary context there are challenges of communication and translation; there are no experts available that will master every aspect of the research projects presented and discussed. This situation could lead to vaguer practices of research evaluation and thus represent a quality challenge. Alternatively, the situation could initiate fruitful and more general reflections on the challenges of research evaluation. We will argue that research education in interdisciplinary music studies require a dialogue-based – as opposed to an expert-driven – approach to research evaluation (Stige, Malterud, & Midtgarden 2009).

A dialogue-based approach to the evaluation of quality is related to a broader principle reflecting the challenges and advantages of interdisciplinary research education in music, namely equality. We claim that *equality* is a necessary value and requirement when building a community of practice, such as a research school where different music disciplines are collaborating. With reference to the work of William Ryan, the community psychologists Dalton, Elias, and Wandersman (2007: 60–61) have elaborated on the notion of equality through use of a distinction between *fair play* and *fair share*. In the fair play notion of equality, the basic metaphor is that of a race. There will be winners and losers but this is accepted if rules of fairness in competition can be assured. In the fair share notion of equality, the basic metaphor is that of a family or community where people collaborate and share in order to take care of its members. Supporters of fair share tend to suggest that the idea of fairness in competition often is an illusion. Inequalities tend to be reproduced over generations, so it is hard to imagine that people begin at the same starting line. In order to achieve fair share it might be necessary to compensate for limitations and discrimination of individuals and groups.

Equality understood as fair share implies that not only established research fields and top quality research should be encouraged within the context of interdisciplinary research education in music. A broader development could be nurtured, so that various fields and subcultures of research can grow. This should not be interpreted as “anything goes”. Neither should it be taken to suggest that excellence is not to be strived for. It should, however, be understood as limited faith in the merits of exclusiveness. In our appraisal, inclusiveness is a keyword in interdisciplinary collaboration, if it is combined with efforts that can lead to reflexive change. Top quality is never stable; it

is a moment in a movement. Excellent research necessarily has its roots in research which is less excellent. In our appraisal there are at least three reasons, then, for suggesting that an interdisciplinary research school should be inclusive in its efforts in helping research candidates to grow: First, inclusiveness values equality in a way that contributes to a sense of community amongst candidates. Second, inclusiveness acknowledges excellence as a gradual process of growth and not just a fixed standard. Third, inclusiveness acknowledges the diversity of disciplines concerning criteria, which then again invites reflexivity. It does suggest, in fact, renewed negotiations about criteria for research evaluation. It might even suggest that the whole idea of criteria must be reconsidered. What we need is probably not categorical criteria but sensitizing notions of quality that can stimulate a dialogic and reflexive process of research development and research evaluation.

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Notes

- 1 <http://denkulturelleskolesekken.no/>
- 2 <http://rokkan.uni.no/dks/?lang=en>
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Associate professor, Dr. Art., Tiri Bergesen Schei
Bergen University College
Faculty of Education, Music Department
Landåssvingen 15, N-5096 Bergen, Norway
tbs@hib.no

Professor, PhD, Magne Espeland
Stord/Haugesund University College
Klingenbergvegen 8
5414 Stord
magne.espeland@hsh.no

Professor, PhD, Brynjulf Stige
University of Bergen
The Grieg Academy, GAMUT
Lars Hillesgt. 3, Postboks 7805
5020 Bergen
Brynjulf.Stige@grieg.uib.no