

Challenges to music education research. Reflections from a Swedish perspective

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on selected themes in my keynote at the 20th conference of The Nordic Network of Music Education Research (NNMPF) held at The Royal College of Music in Stockholm, 23 April 2014. Starting from the development of music education as an academic area in Sweden this article discusses challenges to music education research (henceforth referred to as MER) viewed through Swedish glasses. The complexity of MER, still a rather young but by now a well-established multi-disciplinary research area and academic subject/profile, respectively, calls for reconsideration of topics of interest. The maturity of MER also calls for careful navigation in a landscape with changing conditions for music learning and teaching. Challenges, strengths and dilemmas common to MER and to educational science in general are discussed as well as challenges concerning learning and teaching in music, topics that may remain little or differently explored in other academic domains.

Keywords: Music education, knowledge formation, learning, teaching, educational sciences

A Swedish background: development towards Music education research

Recognition of the need for academic, critical reflection in music teacher education and higher music performance education gave rise to the initial development of MER. In Sweden the first steps in this direction were taken after the Higher education reform, 1977, a consequence of which was that almost all post upper secondary school education, for example teacher education and artistic higher education, was brought together under the collective concept “högskola” representing college as well as university (Högskoleverket, 2006). Conservatories and schools of music became part of a national area with established requirements on critical reflection based on research and proven experience, a challenge but also an invitation to participate in development of higher education. To meet these requirements, different initial pathways were outlined in the 1980:s, the first steps taken by the three Swedish schools of music hosting programmes for both music teacher education and music performance: academic programmes in music education were established and partly linked to music therapy (The Royal College of Music in Stockholm, oral information by Ralf Sandberg 2013), optional courses in musicology with an artistic profile and pedagogy were offered (Academy of Music, Gothenburg university, oral information by Bengt Olsson 2013), cross-disciplinary seminars on addressing research relevant to music education and artistic performance were organized (Malmö Academy of Music, Lund university, oral information by Sverker Svensson 2013). During the following decades graduate, postgraduate (all of the six schools of music in Sweden) and PhD programmes (five schools of music) in the area of Music education were established; in most of these music education is an academic subject but in the School of Music, Örebro, it is a profile of Musicology.

During the initial phases of music education as an academic subject in Sweden different ways of navigating in the area of academy were used in order to enhance critical reflection in the area of interest to MER, on the one hand externally, towards disciplines partly overlapping this area, especially pedagogy and musicology but also towards a variety of further disciplines, and on the other hand internally, towards a dimension representing especially learning and teaching related to music. In order to establish a solid ground for MER, as regards questions of ontology, epistemology and methodology/method, well-reputed researchers from neighbour disciplines were in different ways linked to the development of academic programs in Music education.

Although this brief description of complex orientation, which aims to reflect the development of MER, relates to the situation in Sweden, it is also relevant on a more general level, as regards Nordic countries. This may be exemplified by Frede V. Nielsen's

(1997) model of MER, the complexity of which has increased over the years he continued to work on it. The model that also includes an illustration of relations between MER and other disciplines has been referred to in research studies from all Nordic countries. Accordingly, exchange of knowledge with representatives of established neighbour disciplines was of great importance to MER during the phases of establishing it as an academic subject/area, not least because of the overlaps in research areas and approaches relevant for exploring these.

However, being a small, new academic subject, exchange within the area of music as well as in the subject-specific research area of music education was of interest. Expertise in music education practice, music teacher education and artistic practice has been important for maintaining connections between these areas and MER. During the phases of development this implied in-house exchange of valuable experience, sometimes a delicate challenge because it implicitly also brought to the fore questions of status and legitimation in schools of music. By tradition in higher music education, artistic programs have been assigned higher status than music teacher education but now the development of academic programs, especially PhD-programs in music education, opened up for reconsidering the status of these and new programs a couple of years ahead. However, the consequences of the academisation of higher music education also brought about a need for developing artistic programs in all cycles and, hence, an interest in the development of artistic PhD programs. This implied similar conditions for developing courses and programs in order to form bases for both MER and artistic research in music. Besides subject-specific developmental work, shared courses and discussion fora addressing all interested teachers in schools of music contributed a fruitful climate for in-house exchange of experiences.

As regards the subject-specific area of interest to MER international societies/associations, conferences and journals especially addressing music education and MER, respectively, contribute qualities that could not have been replaced by neighbour disciplines. During the entire phases of developing and establishing MER in Nordic countries, the NNMPF has been of special importance as a platform for shedding light on issues from a Nordic view. Established in 1992 in a meeting with representatives of Nordic institutions in Oslo, its annual conferences, yearbooks and courses provide meeting places and knowledge exchange in very constructive ways. Of special value is the crucial concern to support PhD students and their work on theses in progress.

Music education research today – a multidisciplinary area of knowledge rather than a discipline

In Nordic countries MER is to a large extent situated in schools of music that constitute university departments or independent colleges/academies. Initially, Denmark formed an exception in that academic studies in music education as well as MER are included in the Department of education at Aarhus University (earlier: linked to the teacher education programme at The Danish Pedagogic University that is now part of Aarhus University). However, over time, different ways of organising MER in university departments, that are not specifically addressing only music education, have developed in further Nordic universities.

Already, the variety in organisation of MER underlines its character of being an area of knowledge rather than an academic discipline with a clear identity or delimitation, an understanding that is also represented in the program of the Swedish National research school in Music education for music teachers (2009–2011), in which all Swedish schools of music offering PhD studies participated. Here, the area of interest to MER is described as learning/development and teaching in contexts in which music is included, as well as conditions for and influences on this (Hultberg, 2007). An important consequence of this description is that MER addresses much more than contexts of teaching and questions directly related to these; it concerns formal, informal and non-formal settings on all levels and ages in physical as well as in virtual contexts. This understanding of the area of interest to MER is consistent with the area relevant to educational sciences, as described by The Swedish Research Council, namely that it concerns learning, knowledge formation, education and teaching as well as social, economic and political conditions on individual and collective levels (VR n.d.). Such a comprehensive outline of the research area calls for a variety of approaches, which, in turn, confirms the importance of taking into account knowledge/experience from other disciplines.

Today, MER does indeed represent a broad variety of approaches leaning on traditions in humanities and social sciences and the problem areas focussed on display a variety at least as broad. In both respects, this is reflected by the latest NNMPF yearbooks. The yearbook 14 (2013) for example starts out with two articles addressing philosophical issues followed by nine articles reporting results from practice-based studies and two articles addressing methodological issues.

The concept “aesthetic experience” is addressed in the first philosophical article that problematizes different ways of assigning implicit meaning to this concept. The authors bring to the fore problems that arise when cultural and geographical distances need to be bridged and when researchers launch new ideas of understanding

of “aesthetics” and “aesthetic experience” without clearly presenting their ways of relating to earlier philosophers’ contributions (Fossum & Varkøy, 2013: 19).

The second philosophical article addresses consequences of the situation that researchers representing a variety of neighbour disciplines explore topics relevant to MER. Emphasising that this calls for interdisciplinary collaboration, the authors also discuss advantages and disadvantages of organising discipline-specific and interdisciplinary research education in music, respectively (Bergesen Schei, Espeland & Stige, 2013).

The following articles reporting practice-based studies display a great variety of topics, approaches and methods. Conditions for learning and teaching, respectively on different levels in different music traditions are addressed in contexts representing formal/informal settings (historical as well as contemporary) and combinations of these. Some articles problematize influences on music education and teacher education. In most articles, pedagogical and social aspects of results are discussed. Few studies include data in terms of sounded music and report results about music-specific learning.

The two articles addressing research methods concern aspects of general relevance to research rather than specifically to MER; on a general level both of them address questions of researchers’ bias. Nicholas Ssempijja (2013) discusses researchers’ agency and objectivity in ethnographic studies, exemplifying this from an insider’s and an outsider’s perspective, respectively. Kirsten Fink Jensen, who pleads for a phenomenological method, recommends a wide outline of the research topic and openness as regards the research question. She maintains that space left for researchers’ astonishment facilitates for them to reveal unexpected aspects (2013: 261).

The variety displayed in one single volume of the NNMPF yearbook exemplifies the character of MER as a multidisciplinary area rather than an academic subject. This may be regarded a strength, if the lack of a clear disciplinary delimitation of MER means that freedom in research initiated by researchers is maintained and if researchers pursue their studies in theoretically-methodologically well-grounded ways without bias. However, this also implies challenges in terms of dilemmas to be concerned about and possibilities to recognise and take into account.

Music education research as an area of educational sciences

As referred to earlier, the multifaceted variety that characterises MER does in some respect also represent educational sciences in general. Viewing MER as a part of these brings to the fore several interesting challenges, some of which are exemplified in this section. The areas and topics referred to here are also addressed as being of special concern to educational sciences in the recent national Swedish research overview commissioned by the Educational department (Vetenskapsrådet n.d.).

Challenging strengths and dilemmas

The question of bias, for instance, concerns all researchers but it may cause special problems to researchers who have implicit agendas related to a selected research topic or the overall area of research. This may be the case in educational sciences in general and it is often so in MER; most researchers, including myself, are engaged in music practice and many of us have been or are professionally engaged in music performance and/or music teaching. Many of us share (partly?) an implicit agenda, a wish to contribute to a body of research-based knowledge by means of which better conditions can be achieved for people's personal development through music and people's access to music education to support this.

It could certainly be regarded a strength that skilled practitioners devoted to research investigate topics about which they are well informed, which is also underlined, for instance, by Kvale (1997) and Aspers (2011). Relevant pre-understanding may facilitate for researchers to achieve results that reveal an unspoken dimension of knowledge and understanding represented in the context they investigate. This is often crucial to learning and teaching in general, maybe even more so in situations including music due to its unspoken character and its emotional dimension. However, researchers' engagement in a topic could direct their attention towards aspects they have already reflected upon rather than towards other ones and, hence, make it difficult for them to reveal results related to aspects beyond their earlier reflections. Prerequisites of this kind call for carefulness as regards the problem area to be explored as well as the research questions. By means of leaving space for exploration of more than they have accounted for when preparing a study, researchers may facilitate revealing unexpected aspects of data and bringing important results to the fore (cf. reference above to Fink Jensen, 2013).

Even if researchers in music education, or in other domains of science, succeed in coping with their own biases in terms of reflecting analytically on these and taking

into account their pre-understanding as an implicit part of their theoretical point of departure, it remains a challenge to design studies in ways that allow trustworthy results that cannot be questioned, and to report findings in ways that make the quality and the relevance of a study come clearly to the fore. Readers may find it closer at hand to trust findings deriving from investigations conducted by researchers who do not – at least not seemingly – have any personal interest in conclusions drawn from the results, rather than from researchers who presumably may have such an interest.

Consequently, method development is of great concern in educational sciences including MER, which is also requested in the recent national Swedish research overview Vetenskapsrådet (n.d.). On the one hand, there is a need for developing approaches by means of which basic and applied research may be combined in fruitful ways, which presumes a combination of different expertise in research. On the other hand, there is a need for method development regarding practice-based studies in order to enhance school development based on research findings. This may challenge researchers to develop approaches in which participating practitioners are actively involved in collaborative analyses in different ways in order to reveal an unspoken dimension of their expertise.

Different ways of collaboration have also been advocated and taken on by researchers in music education in different ways (cf. reference above to Bergesen Schei et al., 2013), in studies involving researchers representing different parts of the area of interest to MER. Combination of different kinds of expertise related to a delimited topic implies that different kinds of biases may be at stake, as well. Taking this into account, collaboration between colleagues representing partly diverging pre-understandings of a topic may balance their implicit bias, mutually. Thus, by shedding light on a selected topic from different viewpoints, the results may be strengthened (Hultberg, 2013) and, in addition, the combination of competences may contribute new knowledge that would have been difficult to achieve otherwise. It needs to be emphasised, though, that besides the development of collaborative approaches and mixed methods, quality and relevance in individual research is not being questioned. In this article this is exemplified by some of the studies referred to.

Changing conditions for learning and teaching challenging MER

Conditions for learning and teaching are of great concern to MER as well as to educational sciences in general and consequently, it is a challenge to explore changes in these. Here, this is exemplified by two areas addressed in the recent national Swedish research overview Vetenskapsrådet (n.d.): new technologies and reforms of educational systems.

New technologies are referred to as an area of great concern to a wide variety of educational disciplines because of the rapid technological development. The likewise rapidly increasing access to new devices and new ways of using these in daily life has profoundly influenced conditions for educational institutions and systems. According to the general expectation on research, to contribute to societal development, this intrigues subject-specific as well as multidisciplinary research.

New technologies challenge educational sciences because of the mostly unintended changes of conditions for learning and teaching they have caused and continue to cause. Accordingly, researchers need to recognise such unintended changes in order to make it possible to explore consequences of these as regards learning and teaching. Researchers in MER have done so, for instance in studies on primary school students' approaches to creating music with electronic equipment (i.e. Folkestad, 1996) and upper secondary school students' processes of concept development in composition learning, partly by means of applying composition algorithms (Falthin, 2011). Besides the results aimed at Falthin's study also showed the importance of re-listening and re-assessing, made possible by the technology, in the students' processes of concept development (cf. reference to Fink Jensen 2013 about the importance of leaving space for researcher's astonishment).

The approach, to investigate creative processes in making music by means of designing a semi-experimental context with electronic equipment, is a common denominator of the studies referred to; similar designs are employed in other educational sciences as well. In addition, studies on various aspects of learning and teaching may contribute results representing innovative ways of using every-day artefacts available in the context in question, even if this is not being primarily addressed. Thus, the very presence of technological devices in every-day life makes possible development of new ways of interacting with these (cf. affordances, Gibson, 1977). To researchers this implies a challenge to recognise unforeseen interaction and conceptualise it, in line with Fink Jensen's reasoning referred to above: to maintain attention beyond a delimited topic decided for a research study. For instance, in a study of music teachers' strategies, a secondary school student's use of his cell phone revealed an innovative way of using it as a supporting tool for learning how to play a piece for piano. Being uncertain of how to cope with the printed score he had created his own additional representation, pasted this on the keys of the piano at home and taken photographs of it with his cell phone camera, after which he used the pictures in combination with the score when practising at school during the music lesson (Backman Bister, 2014: 123f).

The studies referred to here exemplify how new technological equipment may open up for new pathways in knowledge formation. In the long-term, young generations growing up with the latest technology may develop subcultures representing

new conventionalised ways of interacting, with which they are familiar rather than older generations. Consequences of this have been addressed by Väkevä (2006) who maintains that cultures of learning that develop among young generations will challenge traditionally educated music teachers; being familiar with pop music will not be sufficient. In turn this also implies a challenge to MER, to explore this area and to draw consequences as regards implications to teaching.

Contrarily to new technologies, many of which bring about unintended changes of conditions for learning and teaching, reforms of educational systems as well as interventions in these challenge educational sciences because of the explicit intentions to bring about changes. Here, too, different levels are interrelated, for instance, school subjects, teacher education, organisation of schools, conditions for individual/societal development. Even if this may indicate cross-disciplinary approaches, mono-disciplinary studies remain important, especially when interrelated with results from further studies. This is exemplified by one of the articles reporting research projects in the NNMPF yearbook 14 (Lindgren & Ericsson 2013), addressing consequences of a curriculum reform that aimed to strengthen a scholarly ground of the Swedish generalist teacher education for preschool and primary school. Results from an investigation of discourse on music in a local teacher education showed that it focused on academic reflection on learning and teaching rather than on practical teaching methods. Given the little amount of time assigned to music practice in this program, the authors draw the conclusion that the academisation of it jeopardises the future existence of music education in Swedish preschool and primary school, in which generalist teachers often teach music.

Related to this, it is interesting to consider results from a study in the discipline Education (Jedemark, 2007) about what kind of professional knowledge teacher students are given opportunities to develop in teaching events. According to Jedemark, the professional knowledge made possible for students to achieve depends on what the *individual* (my italics) teacher educators consider to be the mission of the teacher education in question and what they are responsible for (ibid.). Taking into account the diversity caused by possible individual variety in teacher educators' considerations, further studies need to be carried through about consequences of the academisation of teacher education such as replicating studies with different teacher educators in a variety of regions and, to follow up these, studies of teaching in preschools and primary schools performed by teachers graduated from the program in question.

The discussion above makes obvious that a crucial question in educational sciences concerns what kinds of content is being constructed in teaching and learning. In turn, this implies a need for studies that contribute to national overviews of results about conditions for learning and teaching on different levels. In combination with national

databases these would facilitate for researchers to relate to earlier research, which would also bring about better conditions for international comparative research. This concerns MER as well as educational sciences in general, as do the themes addressed earlier in this section. So do further themes, but some of these are in different ways special to MER because of its main content of learning: music. This will be focused on in the following section.

Challenges specific to research in music education

International exchange of research-based knowledge, as suggested in the former section, is requested in educational sciences in general. However, it may be of special importance to MER due to the multifaceted representations and functions of music and the diversity in approaches to music education. Because of this there is a need for research-based descriptions of different national areas of music education; these are prerequisites for making possible a mutual understanding on an international level. Otherwise, nationally diverging conditions implicitly taken for granted in different countries, respectively, may blur the understanding in international exchange of knowledge. This concerns the entire area of music teaching, compulsory and optional, in preschool, school, higher education and community music/cultural schools as well as other ways of organising learning and teaching during learners' leisure time. The latter is an area of special interest to MER in Nordic countries because of the different comprehensive teacher education programs for community music/cultural schools and shorter, post-graduate curricula in music education, respectively.

Learning content in music education – a wide area of exploration

Given that a crucial question in educational sciences concerns what kinds of content are being constructed in teaching and learning, it is of great importance that MER contributes knowledge about what is being learned in situations that include music and how this is accomplished. Related to this, research-based knowledge about what is being taught and how this is accomplished is as important. Given that the content that is being constructed may depend on conditions on a collective as well as on an individual level (cf. ref. to Jedemark above), the area of interest to MER challenges by means of its wide expanse and its multifaceted character.

Several studies have contributed important knowledge about conditions for learning and teaching, as well as relations between, on the one hand, learning in situations

including music and, on the other hand, different social aspects. In the NNMPF yearbook 14 this may be exemplified by some of the reports of empirical studies. For instance, Knut Tønnsberg describes how the establishment and development of popular music performance programs in Norwegian higher music education caused a long-term increasing number of applications to these programs. In turn, this condition brought about a diminishing status of earlier established classical programs that continued to attract a stable but lower number of applicants, which led to a suggestion to close down some of these programs. Contrarily to this study, which exemplifies influences on conditions for learning in situations including music, the opposite is the case in Lorenz Edberg's study on a musical project organised collaboratively by a secondary school and a community leisure-time centre. Results show that the joint creative musical learning in this cross-border learning environment influenced students' self-confidence in supportive ways and opened up for renegotiating social roles and hierarchies.

Whilst learning representing different contextual aspects related to the learners' interaction with music has been investigated in several empirical studies in MER, knowledge formation in music and teaching related to this has been relatively little explored hitherto. The studies referred to earlier in this article on learning in interaction with new technological devices address topics of this area, though, and so do also a few articles in the NNMPF yearbook 14.

In a thematic narrative study of "a gamelan pedagogue's philosophy of work" (Angelo, 2013, p. 195) Elin Angelo provides insight into approaches to music and musicking in Balinese gamelan ensemble. Her description of teaching/learning as an aural collective activity also shows how the musical learning content is related to musical structure and the sociocultural/religious framing of the music tradition. Likewise, musical structure is central in the learning content in aural teaching of Swedish folk music (von Wachenfeldt, Brändström & Lilja, 2013) but in different ways compared to the former studies referred to according to the music tradition and the historical role of the instrument (violin and guitar, respectively) in this.

As exemplified, results regarding knowledge formation in music contribute knowledge both about the learning content, approaches to teaching and learning and about conditions for doing so. Thus, whilst it remains a challenge to continue exploration of different conditions for and influences on knowledge formation in music, it remains an even bigger challenge to explore further knowledge formation by means of interacting with music and teaching related to this.

Knowledge formation in music – a central and challenging area to MER

Exploration of knowledge formation in music – ways of learning through music about music and about interaction with music, as well as teaching related to this – implies a huge challenge to MER for two main reasons:

Firstly, it concerns what kinds of musical content are being constructed in teaching and learning, i.e. the core of music education; if knowledge formation regarding the musical content at stake remains little explored it needs to be questioned in which ways knowledge about conditions for and influences on this bears relevance.

Secondly, it concerns to a large extent a non-verbalised dimension of knowledge/ know-how and knowledge formation, which makes it problematic to reveal and conceptualise.

Understood as described above, knowledge formation in music implies a focus on the music in question as an interactive object of learning – and often also a corresponding focus on the music tradition represented. Interaction with music may include listening to the music, imagining it and/or performing (practising, interpreting, improvising) it or composing (including improvising and/or imagining) new music. Understood in these terms, most of the aspects referred to may partly overlap each other; additionally, actual and/or inner listening is included in all aspects of interaction. A similar complexity may also characterise the physical, intellectual and/or emotional dimension of attention by means of which a focus on the music is maintained.

As regards interaction by means of listening and imagining, a solid body of research has been established in music psychology and music therapy (i.e. Gabrielsson, 2008; Juslin & Sloboda, 2001). On the one hand, findings from interdisciplinary research are important to MER but, on the other hand, this area also remains a challenge to MER to explore further, especially as regards knowledge formation related to listening to music.

Interaction with music, including a combination of both listening and at least one other way of interacting, represents more complexity not only because of the combination of approaches per se but also because of an implicit dimension of learning represented by artefacts produced during the interaction (performance: including practising, interpretation, improvisation and often imagination; composition: including improvisation and/or imagination). Depending on individuals' familiarity with the music tradition represented by the music they interact with, their learning may be more or less influenced by this; they interact not only with the music but also with the tradition, as understood by the learners (Hultberg, 2009). In parallel, individuals' experiences from traditions of music education may influence their learning and, in many cases, the societal function of the music, as well. This complexity may explain why this area has been relatively little explored; another reason may be found in the

unspoken character of knowledge formation in performance and composition (as referred to above). For both reasons this area is of special concern to MER.

The description above, about interaction including performance and/or composition, represents individual learning; consequently another set of corresponding layers needs to be taken into account for each further individual who is co-interacting with the music in question. Furthermore, the intersubjective interaction between the participating individuals brings into play a social dimension not represented in individual interaction with music only.

Many topics in these areas of music practice are of interest to MER, many of these to neighbour disciplines as well, which may challenge researchers with different areas of expertise to combine their competences in collaborative projects. Exploration of knowledge formation regarding the musical content in question requires observation data including interaction in terms of performing/composing music; in contexts with more than one participant intersubjective interaction, as well. Well-informed pre-understanding of such a complex topic may be a necessary prerequisite for achieving results that are relevant to music practice. As discussed earlier, researchers' backgrounds as musicians and/or music teachers may facilitate for them to recognise relevant aspects that have not been revealed before. However, since their pre-understanding may also direct their attention towards aspects with which they are already familiar, collaboration with colleagues representing a slightly diverging pre-understanding may enhance the quality of the results. It needs to be emphasised that a fruitful collaboration may include researchers as well as – in phases of analysis – music practitioners with relevant expertise in the music in question. On the one hand, this implies a challenge to develop methods of collaboration in different ways adapted to the character of the study and its topic. On the other hand, this implies a challenge to develop collaboration with colleagues representing different competences in the area of music (cf. reference to Bergesen Schei et al., 2013).

Concluding remarks

Even if researchers from neighbour disciplines are interested in exploring interaction with music, including performance and/or composition, this area remains a special challenge to MER because it addresses learning musical content by means of interaction with it, as well as teaching related to this, that is, questions of great importance to music education in particular. As exemplified by the studies referred to earlier, results about knowledge formation in music may also inform about conditions for it. Furthermore,

enhanced research-based knowledge regarding ways of learning musical content in contexts with which we are familiar may contribute a better understanding of corresponding topics in other contexts. A wide diversity of topics is possible depending on what kind of context is being selected for exploration – music-culturally (style/tradition) framed contexts, pedagogically, geographically/nationally, culturally and/or religiously framed contexts, as well as relations between the layers of framings represented in the local context in question (cf. references to Angel, 2013 and Wachenfeldt et al., 2013 in the former section).

However, deeper understanding of inter-relations between different layers requires exploration from different points of departure, as also referred to regarding Lindgren and Ericsson's (2013) conclusion that the academisation of the Swedish generalist teacher education for preschool and primary school jeopardises future music education addressing pupils in these contexts. Learning content that is being constructed by teachers who graduated from this program in different college departments may be revealed in research studies exploring their music teaching and responses to this represented by their pupils' knowledge formation. Likewise, results about musical learning content and knowledge formation in any local context will contribute deeper understanding when related to findings representing conditions that are framing this context.

Yet, if investigation of learning musical content in interaction with the music is not initiated in Music education research, this topic area may to a large extent remain unrevealed. In combination with the areas earlier addressed this implies a collective challenge to MER as a mature and well-established academic subject – or profile in musicology, respectively – but a challenge that is rewarding.

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