

Music teaching as a profession

On professionalism and securing the quality of music teaching in Norwegian municipal schools of music and performing arts

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to reflect on whether and how music teaching can be understood as a profession, by looking into general traits of professions and seeing how they relate to music teaching. The discussion is centred on music teachers in the Norwegian municipal school of music and performing arts (MSMPA). For that reason, this article includes a section on the conditions of music teaching in Norway, as well as a discussion of music teachers' professional identity. That is especially relevant considering how MSMPAs are transforming from traditional music schools into local resource centres for arts and culture. A key question is how quality is secured in music teaching in MSMPAs in Norway. Theories of professions provide the theoretical framework for the discussion. Organisational and performative traits of music teaching as a profession could be seen as mechanisms for securing its quality. The article also looks into different forms of knowledge and knowledge bases, and how we can understand them in relation to professions and music teaching. Music teaching draws on several fields of knowledge, much of which is tacit knowledge and embodied expertise, referring to the long tradition of the master/apprentice scheme. The relevance of discussing music teaching as a profession will be debated, and seen in relation to the ongoing public debate in Norway involving teachers' working conditions.

Keywords: music education, profession, school of music and performing arts, identity, quality

Introduction

In this article, I ask if and how we can understand music teaching as a profession, and discuss the traits pointing towards that understanding. My focus is on music teachers in the Norwegian municipal school of music and performing arts (MSMPA). In Norway, the law obliges all municipalities to run a MSMPA, or to cooperate with other municipalities to fulfil this requirement. However, the law does not say anything about the content or curriculum of the schools; it states only that there should be collaboration between MSMPAs, the school system, and the local cultural life. How is it then possible to secure the quality of music teaching in MSMPAs? Which other mechanisms are at work? In a rapidly changing society where measurable knowledge is valued more and more, it is crucial for music teachers to be able to govern, articulate, and secure quality in music education. Also, the increasing collaboration between MSMPAs and schools and local communities could lead to existing resources being stretched, followed by a risk that quality may decrease. However, The Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts states on their website that the MSMPA should be characterised by its high quality and rich diversity, and that it should nurture both talent and social inclusion.

Theories of professions is the theoretical framework of the discussion in this article. Members of a profession control their own work, perform their job as they see fit, and they themselves are responsible for its quality (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 2001). Hence, if music teachers are recognised as members of a profession, it means they would have the power to control their work. That power would lead to securing quality in teaching, and to increasing teachers' influence in public debates and in defining the role and content of music teaching. To reflect upon understanding music teaching as a profession and look for traits pointing towards that understanding will therefore be of importance for music teachers in MSMPAs or equivalent schools, student music teachers, teacher educators, and for institutions like MSMPAs, music academies, and conservatoires. The discussion will also be a contribution to the public debate regarding the role of music, arts, and music teaching in today's society. In addition, this article is relevant for the professionalisation of, and recruitment of teachers to, MSMPAs. This is of importance for the students in MSMPAs, as "high-quality learning depends on highly qualified teachers and teaching" (Burnard, 2013: 2–3).

In this article, I will look into general traits of professions, and see how they relate to music teaching. My focus includes both organisational and performative traits, as well as questions related to knowledge. First, I introduce the term profession. Then I discuss music teaching in MSMPAs and the professional identity of teachers working in them, in order to give an understanding of the Norwegian context. After that, I

use the theory of professions to discuss organisational traits, performative traits, and jurisdiction, and how these relate to music teachers in MSMPAs. At the end of the article, I focus on questions related to professional knowledge in music teaching, including a discussion of tacit knowledge and expertise. There have been various publications on music education and professionalism from the Nordic countries in recent years, but many of them with a focus on music teacher education, as for example the anthologies *Educating Music Teachers in the New Millennium* (Danielsen & Johansen 2012b) and *Professional Knowledge in Music Teacher Education* (Georgii-Hemming, Burnard & Holgersen 2013). This article contributes to the field of music education research by reflecting upon professionalism and how the quality of music teaching in MSMPAs can be secured.

What is a profession?

The term profession refers to a group of people sharing a vocation with specific attributes and traits. Distinguishing between professions and other vocations is disputed, and relevant scholars do not agree on one definition, nor if we actually need one (Fauske, 2008). Despite such disagreements, scholars seem to agree that professions are vocations which offer services that society needs, and that solve problems based on theoretical knowledge acquired from specialist education (Molander & Terum, 2008). In this article, I argue that music teachers hold a specialised competency and that they are experts in their field. But are they members of a profession? Because distinguishing between professions and other vocations is disputed, there is also disagreement concerning which vocations can be described as professions. A key question has been whose interests the profession protects, its own or those of the public (Fauske, 2008).

In Norway, the percentage of the population achieving higher degrees has increased in recent years, and more vocations are seeking the status of professions (Molander & Terum, 2008). We can distinguish between classical professions such as lawyers, doctors and priests, and new professions, for example teachers, nurses, and social workers. Amitai Etzioni denoted the new professions 'semi-professions', because they were, as he saw it, halfway towards the status of professions (Fauske, 2008). Scholars have been discussing whether and how it would be possible for those new professions to achieve professional status (Fauske, 2008; Slagstad, 2008). William J. Goode claimed this achievement to be about a group's establishment of an independent scientific base, its integration as a vocational group, the avoidance of bureaucratic

control, and its success in building relationships of trust (Fauske, 2008). The study of professional processes has been criticised, however, for being historically specific and culturally conditioned, as well as being based on ideological perceptions rather than scientific analyses (Fauske, 2008). This is to be kept in mind while looking into music teaching as a profession.

Music teaching in the Norwegian municipal school of music and performing arts

Music teachers in Norway work in MSMPAs, compulsory schools, music programmes in upper secondary schools, churches, and within community music settings. The Norwegian Education Act states (since 1997) that all municipalities are obliged to run a MSMPA or to cooperate with other municipalities in fulfilling that requirement. Hence, the MSMPA is a large and important vocational arena for music teachers. It is also a significant amenity for children wanting to participate in cultural activities. For these reasons, I will in this article focus on music teachers working in MSMPAs, and also discuss the MSMPA as a professional vocational arena.

In Norway, there have been municipal music schools that offer traditional instrumental teaching since the 1950s. However, in the 1980s these schools started offering a wide range of cultural activities, although their scope varies considerably today (NOU 2013:4, 2013). The Norwegian Education Act introduced the notion of MSMPAs as ‘local resource centres’, organised in association with the school system and local cultural life (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998). MSMPAs should therefore play an active part in the development of local communities. This thinking can also be found in the strategy plan for the MSMPA (Ministry of Education and Research, 2007).

However, does the fact that municipalities are obliged to run a MSMPA make the MSMPA institution more professional? Parliamentary report no. 40 from 1992–93 (KUF, 1992–93) states that the establishment of municipal music schools enabled municipalities to hire professional musicians and music teachers, which secured access to professional music expertise in local communities. This gave the institution importance beyond the regular lessons offered, the report states, because music teachers often worked in compulsory schools and in local bands, choirs, and orchestras outside the music school (KUF, 1992–93). Despite this, admission to teach music in MSMPAs is not regulated by law, which technically means that anyone could be employed as a music teacher. Still, there is an apparent agreement among MSMPA head-teachers concerning the qualifications of teachers, where a conservatory or music academy

education is regarded as a requirement (Danielsen & Johansen, 2012a), which contributes to securing quality and making the MSMPA a professional vocational arena. Also, the new curriculum for the MSMPA (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2014), which is not mandatory because it is not enshrined in law, introduces the implementation of competency requirements for teachers and head-teachers in MSMPAs. It also emphasises the importance of high quality in everything the MSMPA has to offer. This indicates a development towards more professionalism within the MSMPA as an institution.

The professional identity of music teachers

As mentioned above, the Norwegian Education Act states that MSMPAs have to be organised in association with the school system and local cultural life (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998). Such cooperation creates possibilities for music teachers in MSMPAs to work full-time and better hours, because of the many arenas and tasks connected to their jobs. The status now is that many of the teachers work part-time, late hours, and for multiple employers (National Centre for Art and Culture in Education & Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2010; Nicolaisen & Bråthen, 2012). However, to work in such diverse positions also implies the need for broader competence. Hence, there is an expectation that teachers should display a broad set of skills and expertise, as evidenced in the new curriculum for the MSMPA (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2014) as well as in the previous curriculum (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts 2003). The older curriculum stated that music teachers had to be able to partake in a continuous learning process, participate as performing artists, instruct groups in compulsory schools and in the community, arrange and compose music, as well as participate professionally in interdisciplinary activities and in collaboration with teachers in schools and kindergartens (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2003). In the new curriculum, the MSMPA teachers' many roles as professional practitioner are described as teacher, performing artist, leader of small and large ensembles, organiser, project leader, coordinator, inspirer, cultural carrier, evaluator, and colleague (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2014).

My assumption is therefore that music teachers in MSMPAs meet the expectations of performing multiple tasks more frequently than before, including tasks that are at the margins of their expertise. This is likely to shape their professional identity. One

tension is between broad and specialised competencies, exemplified by one of the informants (a music teacher in a MSMPA) in a Fafo report (Nicolaisen & Bråthen, 2012: 74, my translation): “A very strong specialisation will negatively affect an employee’s opportunity to work full time, but it is positive for the quality of the job we are doing”. The collaboration with schools and local communities has also been about offering courses to more students. This aim has meant that existing recourses have been stretched, which puts pressure on the quality of the teaching that is offered, and limits the teachers’ possibilities to follow up on students. This again influences the teachers’ professional identity.

Tensions, or professional dilemmas, are also discussed in Angelo and Kalsnes’ (2014) anthology *Kunstner eller lærer?* (Artist or Teacher?), in which Angelo (2014) in the introductory chapter refers to professional dilemmas on four levels: the individual; the collective; the institutional; and the political. Discussions within or across these levels often are about expertise and mandate (Angelo, 2014). Angelo (2014) emphasises the importance of art teachers to obtain a strong competence in argumentation in order to participate in these discussions. Kristina Holmberg (2010) finds, in her study of 27 music teachers in the Swedish municipal school of music and art, another dilemma, namely the struggle between tradition and popular culture, where the teachers and the school of music and arts represent tradition, and the students represent popular culture. Holmberg (2010: 218) sees this struggle in relation to late modernity and the struggle for cultural liberation, which lead to more freedom for both teachers and students, “as the norms of the tradition have lost most of its power”. One consequence of this can be seen in the teachers’ increasing openness to new ideas, Holmberg (2010: 218) suggests, and in a “higher wish to manage a pleasant teaching for their students”.

We can distinguish between the collective identity of a profession and individual professional identity (Heggen, 2008). Collective identity is about the members of a profession sharing a common understanding, both through internal (the members) and external (outside the profession) definitions (Heggen, 2008). Individual professional identity is about self-identity in combination with the practice of a professional role. Music teaching as a profession in fact straddles two professions, or is both: teacher, and artist/musician (also discussed by Angelo and Kalsnes (2014)). This could potentially weaken the collective identity of the profession, because some music teachers will have a strong identity as an artist or musician, whilst others will feel closer to the profession of teaching. Combining those roles can be challenging (Angelo & Kalsnes, 2014; Bouij, 1998; Nielsen & Westby, 2012). At the same time, artistic competency at a high level in combination with teaching competency generates a unique and specialised knowledge inaccessible to those without relevant training. And that is,

according to Freidson (2001: 17), one of the fundamental ideas in professionalism, “[t]he belief that certain work is so specialized as to be inaccessible to those lacking the required training and experience [...]”.

Organisational and performative traits in music teaching

A profession is a type of vocation that is characterised by its performative and organisational traits. Organisational aspects include a profession’s monopoly, autonomy, jurisdiction, institutionalisation and formal organisation, whilst performative aspects relate to practice: formalised knowledge combined with the use of discretion (Molander & Terum, 2008). Professional services are normatively regulated. Freidson (2001) defends the professions’ value base, where the professions themselves control their own work and are responsible for the quality. “In the most elementary sense, professionalism is a set of institutions which permit the members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work” (Freidson, 2001: 17). Therefore, professionalism represents a third logic unlike consumerism and bureaucracy (Fauske, 2008; Freidson, 2001). Very few vocations, if any, fully control their own work, but those that come close are called professions (Freidson, 2001).

When it comes to organisational and performative traits in music teaching, Danielsen and Johansen (2012a) identify traits that indicate that music teaching is indeed a profession. They claim to find monopolistic traits because particular work assignments are reserved for those holding a certain type of education. At the same time, they emphasise that monopolistic traits in music teaching are more indirect because music teachers are not organised in strong unions. The union organising most of the music teachers in MSMPAs in Norway is the *Musikernes fellesorganisasjon* (Norwegian Musicians’ Union) (MFO). The MFO is a *vocational union*, meaning a union of interest where the affiliation is established through voluntary membership (Svensson, 2008). This is opposed to a *professional union* where membership is exclusively secured through employment or ownership, which works relatively independently and in relation to clients and customers, and with strong collegial control and claims of professionalism (Svensson, 2008). In a vocation’s process of becoming a profession, the establishment of a vocational union plays an important role (Svensson, 2008). Music teachers are not organised in strong professional unions; indeed, not all music teachers are union members. Despite this, Danielsen and Johansen (2012a: 34) claim that the music teachers’ unions “still enable music teachers to act like a united group

with a common self-understanding; and to some extent these organizations function as a collective agency working to legitimize its professional claims”.

Freidson (2001: 12) claims that professionalism exists when “the organized occupation creates the circumstances under which its members are free of control by those who employ them”. But if the strength of unions organising music teachers can be questioned, does that mean music teachers are tightly controlled by their leaders? If they are, that will point towards music teaching *not* being a profession. However, there are traits of music teachers not being tightly controlled. Waagen (2011) emphasises the freedom and autonomy of music teachers in MSMPAs.

Traditionally, the MSMPA music teacher has a lot of freedom to define goals, content and methods in her practice. The space of practice, which the national curriculum gives, is regarded as a given among teachers (Waagen, 2011: 262, my translation).

Also Danielsen and Johansen (2012a) emphasise autonomy in music teaching.

Among music teachers, autonomy is clearly exemplified in the system of private pedagogues which has dominated formal music teaching and learning from long before the birth of the Western school system (Danielsen & Johansen, 2012a: 34).

Those teachers are, together with music teachers in MSMPAs, compulsory schools, and higher music education, “designated by high loyalty to the profession and to music studies” (Danielsen & Johansen, 2012a: 34). You can also find examples of music teachers in compulsory schools not being tightly controlled by their leaders in an article by Pembrook and Craig (2002). They refer to studies showing that general schoolteachers achieve satisfaction in their job as a result of support from their head-teachers, whereas “music educators take particular pleasure in student success, student valuing of music, and parental support” (Pembrook & Craig, 2002: 797). This means that aspects other than support from their head-teachers are important for music teachers’ job satisfaction.

There are also performative traits in the profession of music teaching. Danielsen and Johansen (2012a) emphasise that music teachers offer services to clients who seek help from qualified specialists. These services are change-oriented because teachers are helping students in their development, and in order to do so, they have to make use of discretion. That is because teaching music is about handling the specific characteristics of individual cases, based on judgments and interpretations (Danielsen

& Johansen, 2012a). There is no standardisation, the student takes risks when they receive music education and music teachers undertake responsibility. In professional work, you have to apply general knowledge to single cases, and in order to do so you make use of discretion (Grimen & Molander, 2008). The claim of professional status presupposes both a standardisable and transferable knowledge, and an indeterminacy in the application of this knowledge (Grimen & Molander, 2008).

Jurisdiction

Another organisational trait of professions is jurisdiction, which means that a profession has legal authority to perform a task (Fauske, 2008). For Abbott (1988), the central aspect of professions is the connection between the vocation and a particular task, which he denotes as jurisdiction.

It is the history of jurisdictional disputes that is the real, the determining history of the professions. Jurisdictional claims furnish the impetus and the pattern to organizational developments. Thus an effective historical sociology of professions must begin with case studies of jurisdictions and jurisdiction disputes (Abbott, 1988: 2).

Abbott (1988) is system-oriented, and he emphasises that the relations between professions, the historical perspective, and the systems of professions in different countries have to be studied comparatively (Fauske, 2008). Competition over professional status is important. Abbott (1988: 2) states that “control of knowledge and its application means dominating outsiders who attack that control”. Jurisdictional claims can be made in several possible arenas, *within* the legal system or by professions putting pressure *on* the legal system via public opinion (Abbott, 1988). The workplace is another arena where professional claims can blur the lines between legally and publicly established jurisdictions (Abbott, 1988). Here we can find differences between the Anglo-American and the Continental tradition.

In America it is ultimately through public opinion that professions establish the power that enables them to achieve legal protection. By contrast, on the Continent the state itself has traditionally been the professions’ public [...] (Abbott, 1988: 60).

In Norway, jurisdiction often takes place *within* the legal system, where the state delegates authority to the professions. The jurisdiction institutionalised by the state gives vocational groups more-or-less exclusive rights to maintain certain tasks on behalf of the public (Molander & Terum, 2008).

The claim for justification is also about the right to control one's own work, to perform the work as the profession wishes (Abbott, 1988).

A jurisdictional claim made before the public is generally a claim for the legitimate control of a particular kind of work. This control means first and foremost a right to perform the work as professionals see fit (Abbott, 1988: 60).

In Norway, one could argue that music teachers in MSMPAs are given the right to administer children's musical training, because the law does not say anything about the content of teaching, which means that the state leaves that responsibility to music teachers and head-teachers of MSMPAs. It presupposes that people working in MSMPAs are professionals, and it gives them freedom when practicing their profession. And according to Danielsen and Johansen (2012a), teachers with a conservatory or music academy education are apparently preferred in recruitment.

If assuming music teachers are given a right to administer children's musical training, then the next question would be: why are they given this right? One reason could be what Freidson (2001: 17) emphasises as one of the most general ideas underlying professionalism, which is "the belief that certain work is so specialized as to be inaccessible to those lacking the required training and experience". The combination of high artistic credentials and pedagogical training give music teachers a specialised and unique competency that laymen have not mastered, and which is inaccessible without relevant training.

Artistic competency is also crucial in legitimising music teaching as a profession at the level of interaction. In other words, the trust that a profession is collectively awarded through its public acknowledged status is confirmed in the practitioners' interaction with their clients (Eriksen & Molander, 2008). The clients, understood as the students, do not hold this artistic competency, and are therefore dependent on the music teacher. This relates to the professional complex, which refers to a knowledge-related asymmetry where knowledge administered by the professions is relevant for solving given practical public tasks, but is not mastered by laymen (Molander & Terum, 2008). Professions will then function as mediators and interpreters, which leads to a relationship of power where the professions control knowledge in society.

If we remain with the assumption that music teachers are given the right to administer children's musical training, another question would be: when and how are they given this right? Is it granted to them after graduation or when getting a job, is it a right they can claim, or is the right granted to them in the process of becoming a profession? The right is not formally granted to them after graduation, nor when getting a job. They do not claim the right, because the work is so specialised that laymen cannot do it, and they need music teachers to do the job. Instead, it could be a part of the *professionalising process*, when music teachers have built up enough trust to be given this right.

Knowledge in professions

The curriculum for the MSMPA (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2014) emphasises that it is important that music teachers should be able to describe and justify their practice so that various forms of knowledge can be expressed, and through this make a claim of professionalism. Knowledge discussions are significant when studying professions, and there is reasonable agreement among scholars that an important trait of professions is that they administer scientific knowledge (Grimen, 2008; Molander & Terum, 2008). Aristotle described three approaches to knowledge; *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*, where *episteme* is demonstrative knowledge about something everlasting and unchangeable, and is denoted as theoretical-scientific knowledge (Grimen, 2008; Gustavsson, 2000). *Techne* and *phronesis* could be understood as different forms of practical knowledge (Gustavsson, 2000). However, does this mean that professions have to administer theoretical-scientific knowledge; *episteme*, or could we understand scientific knowledge in other ways? And do music teachers administer scientific knowledge?

Slagstad (2008) claims that in Norway, the scope of scientific knowledge as initially demarcated by natural science has expanded since the 18th century. He argues that this could explain why new social science professions such as social economists and social workers have not gained acknowledgment as easily as agronomists, dentists, and engineers (Slagstad, 2008). He criticises the lack of discussions related to the professions' *knowledge distinctiveness* and multiple forms of scientific knowledge. Slagstad (2008) also argues that lifting the vocational education of teachers, social workers, and nurses into a scientific professional system of university colleges should be understood as a legitimising strategy. On the other hand, Nerland (2004) claims that during the last decades, there has been a willingness to acknowledge different

forms of knowledge, although practical knowledge is still subordinate to scientific knowledge in the educational field.

It is common to talk about different forms of knowledge, but is there actually a clear distinction between them? Grimen (2008) and Gustavsson (2000) argue against this position, stating that theoretical and practical knowledge should not be understood as a dualism, but as forming a continuum (Grimen, 2008). Grimen (2008) emphasises the multiple ways the relationship between theory and practice in professional practice can be understood. The integration between theory and practice is important, but no theory could be entirely traded into practice, and a lot of practice cannot be theoretically reasoned (Grimen, 2008). Eva Georgii-Hemming (2013b: 33) claims that “it is impossible to teach music without a judicious mix of the three forms of knowledge: *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*”, where music education (and music) are *techne* by virtue of their craft and artistry, *episteme* in systematising ideas and bringing about reflection, and *phronesis* in their interpersonal character.

Grimen (2008) discusses how unified, or diverse, the professions’ knowledge bases are. He puts forward a proposition that knowledge bases are heterogeneous, consisting of elements from different fields of knowledge. They are also fragmented; the elements do not combine in a logical sense, rather they are integrated as practical syntheses. In other words, they do not combine theoretically, but through practice (Grimen, 2008). The profession of music teaching draws on both social and human science (Danielsen & Johansen, 2012a). In social science, different research traditions are in conflict and there are no meta-theories that combine them (Grimen, 2008). In music teaching, musicology and education are central, and they are both heterogeneous knowledge bases of fragmented constituents. Kvernbekk (2001) claims that due to recent expansion of the field of education, an increasing differentiation of the discipline can be observed, leading to fragmentation and the creation of independent subgroups. Music teaching has a practical aim, and it is practice that combines the different knowledge bases into the field of music education. Practice and knowledge are in a mutual relationship with each other, where the teaching is shaped by the knowledge at the same time as it produces knowledge and offers possibilities for learning (Nerland, 2004). Georgii-Hemming (2013a: 209) argues that the knowledge base for the music subject “contains artistic, scientific, practical and bodily dimensions, which music teachers (or teachers-to-be) need to relate to intellectually, pedagogically and practically”.

However, is there a difference between a pure vocational education and a professional education within the field of education? Dale (2001) argues that there is, claiming that a pure vocational education prepares the teacher to simply perform a service under the management of others, while a professional education equips people to participate in argumentative dialogues, critically analysing the fundamental issues of a profession.

Given that there is such a difference, would a degree in music education then be classified as vocational or professional in its nature? In programme descriptions for the bachelor's degree in music education at the Norwegian Academy of Music, students are expected to master a set of skills before graduation. This includes the ability to see "music teachers' responsibility for music as a form of art, in a larger music educational, cultural and social perspective" and being able to "discuss the field of music education and its role within the system of education as a whole" (NAM, 2015, my translation). This points towards music teacher education being a professional education and, by extension, music teaching being a profession. Also supporting this stance is the fact that most music teachers will be relatively far from the humanistic and social science research front in their daily work, a trait that is typical for professions (Grimen, 2008).

Tacit knowledge and expertise

Techne and phronesis can both be understood as practical knowledge. A difference though is that in techne, the actions are heterotelic, meaning the purpose of its existence is outside itself, because the purpose is the product and is therefore outside the action. In phronesis, the action is the actual purpose, it is inside and not apart from itself; you act morally and the actions are autotelic (Grimen, 2008; Gustavsson, 2000). A trait of professions is that the practice has a purpose beyond itself, where the satisfaction of this purpose creates the base for a joint knowledge base (Grimen, 2008).

A difference between theoretical and practical knowledge is the *indexicality* of practical knowledge; it can be traced back to where it came from and it cannot be detached from the situations where it is taught and applied (Grimen, 2008). Practical knowledge is important in professions, and one reason for this is that the use of discretion is a significant trait. Discretion is reasoning about what to do in single cases, and an important element is first-hand experience (Grimen & Molander, 2008), which relates to practical knowledge because of its indexicality. In professional practice, formalised knowledge must be combined with the use of discretion in order to be handled adequately (Molander & Terum, 2008). Use of discretion means making decisions about single cases where the rules are not clear, which implies making use of experience and exercising practical wisdom, as in *phronesis*. This applies to music teachers, as they have to make use of discretion when adapting their teaching to every single student, including both educational issues and questions connected to the assessment of musical quality related to music interpretation (Danielsen & Johansen, 2012a).

Practical knowledge and the use of discretion also points towards tacit knowledge, which is central in professions (Grimen, 2008). Nerland (2004) refers to 'knowledge of confidence', wherein the intuitive dimension is central and the knowledge is built up through practical experiences in concrete situations. Nerland (2004) emphasises that this form of knowledge has a 'tacit' character, because it is anchored in experiences built on actions that have not always been subject to conscious reflection. Tacit knowledge is not only central in a profession's knowledge base, it is also central in the literature of expertise. Both these traditions focus on experts, but whereas expertise researchers emphasise experience and practice, the sociology of professions accentuates education and explicit scientific knowledge (Smeby, 2013). In general, expertise scholarship concludes that schools and education have clear limitations in the development of expertise (Smeby, 2013). Despite this, Smeby (2013) suggests that the literature of expertise can contribute to the understanding of professions' knowledge bases, because it is not possible or appropriate to replace all tacit knowledge in professions with explicit knowledge.

One of the overall aims of research on professions has been to combine the cognitive phenomenon 'expertise' with the organisational phenomenon 'jurisdiction', but expertise has traditionally been understood as something acquired by virtue of education (Molander & Smeby, 2013). Molander and Smeby (2013) claim that research into professions has focused too little on how professionals acquire expertise, how they reason and make decisions. This is an important point for the profession of music teaching, where much of the knowledge connected to educational activities, and to the field of music education in particular, would be tacit knowledge and concern expertise. I refer in particular to the long tradition of the master/apprentice scheme, where the master's knowledge base would to a great extent be tacit knowledge and experience-based (Danielsen & Johansen, 2012a). Here, the field of music education can contribute to the research of professions in order to obtain a broader understanding of the term expertise.

Final remarks

The combination of high artistic credentials and pedagogical training give music teachers in MSMPAs a specialised competency that laymen have not mastered, and which society needs if assuming that the artistic dimension is important to human beings. Music teachers offer services to clients who seek help from specialists, here understood as students wanting to learn music. Music teachers enjoy a certain level

of autonomy, and there are indirect monopolistic traits and good arguments for jurisdiction. The knowledge bases that music teaching build on are typical for professions by being heterogenic, fragmented, and integrated as practical syntheses. At the same time, one could question how scientific these knowledge bases are. On the other hand, expertise and tacit knowledge, as in the tradition of the master/apprentice scheme, is central in music education. Hence, music teaching displays many of the characteristics of a profession, but with somehow weak organisational and monopolistic traits. This is, however, typical for new professions. Considering the traits of professionalism in music teaching that I have discussed in this article, I will argue that music teaching can be understood as a profession, as one of the new professions.

A professionalising process could be put forward in order to increase a vocation's status and legitimacy, or as a strategy for the practitioners to argue for aspects they see as particularly important (Granlund, Mausestagen, & Munthe 2011). To be recognised as a profession implies a greater extent of autonomy, a power that helps practitioners in their process of defining and controlling their own work, securing quality, and granting a stronger influence in public debate. Granlund, Mausestagen, and Munthe (2011) find that there has been an increase in denoting (general) teaching as a profession from the inside (teachers themselves) and from above (politicians). They also locate professionalisation efforts among both the teacher profession itself and policy, whereas there are negotiations regarding the content of teacher professionalism and regarding the power to define. Many of the same issues apply to music teachers. When comparing the new curriculum for the MSMPA (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2014) with the former curriculum (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2003), music teaching is increasingly denoted as a profession. One example is that the new curriculum denotes music teachers as professional practitioners and states that the MSMPA institution is a relatively new professional field (Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts, 2014). At the same time, it emphasises the importance of quality and knowledge in music teaching, which also points towards more professionalism. An increase in the denotation of teaching and music teaching as professions is in itself a reason for discussing their professionalism. Denoting vocations as professions could be part of the professionalising processes, but in order to maintain the scientific elements and the quality that characterise a profession, scholars need to investigate whether those vocations actually have professional traits.

Professionalism can also prevent other mechanisms from controlling your work. According to Holmberg's (2010) study, teachers and students in Swedish municipal schools of music and arts are freer than ever, but that leads to insecurity and a search for new attitudes toward teaching. Holmberg (2010: 221) sees that a future without

control documents could mean that teachers in schools of music and arts are limited in a double sense, “they have lost power over the content and they cannot use their competence. They are in the hands of their students and the market”. That is a threat, but music teaching as a profession can prevent teachers from being controlled by their students and the market, as professionalism is about controlling your own work. A curriculum that is not enshrined in law could still be imported if adopted by the members of a profession.

Today’s public debate in Norway involves teachers’ working conditions, where the teachers argue against being controlled and for the freedom to practise their work as they see fit. They want more flexibility so that they can perform their work in favour of their students. In August 2014 there was a strike among teachers and music teachers, where the core of the dispute was how many hours the teachers should be forced to spend at school. The teachers claimed that more compulsory office hours was a sign of distrust from their employers. Such increased outside control, also called de-professionalization, can currently be found in many professions due to demands for quantitative documentations and external quality control (Georgii-Hemming, 2013a). In an article in the MFO membership magazine *Musikk-Kultur* (Askerød, 2014), a music teacher in a MSMPA says that an increase in compulsory office hours in MSMPAs could lead to a lack of musicians in MSMPAs, which would be a loss to the community of teachers and to the students. The considerations the teachers are fighting for are recognisable as professional traits. Hence, they are fighting for their professionalism.

Being recognised as a profession gives music teachers a stronger voice in public debates, from which they, their students and the MSMPA will all benefit. In the field of music education, it is important that music teachers are listened to in debates concerning the role of aesthetic subjects within the school system and in society as a whole.

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