Research note

Artist or researcher? Tradition or innovation? Challenges for performing musician and arts education in Europe

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This research note presents an overview of *Discourses of Academization and the music Profession in Higher Music Education* (DAPHME). DAPHME is a three-year research project, commencing in January 2016 and ending in December 2018. The project is funded by The Swedish foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (*Riksbankens Jubileumsfond*). Eva Georgii-Hemming (Örebro University) is the project leader and team members are Karin Johansson (Lund University), Elin Angelo (Norwegian University of Science and Technology), Øivind Varkøy (Norwegian Academy of Music), Christian Rolle (University of Cologne), and Stefan Gies (University of Music, Dresden and CEO of AEC—Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen, Brussels).

Introduction

Music institutions in Europe are under pressure. Until some years ago the main concern for higher music education was to educate musicians and composers. This education was based on conceptions of craftsmanship and artistic skill. Processes of academization are now challenging this expert culture. To fulfil the new academic tasks music institutions must stimulate research activities within the context of artistic practice. Scientific, artistic and practical knowledge are therefore confronted with one another.

Music institutions are also under pressure because of changes in musical life in society. Large numbers of orchestras, in Europe as well as in the U.S., have merged with one another, scaled back, or been eliminated entirely. Orchestras and musicians must find new arenas with partly new audiences to keep their jobs. Within higher

music education, this fact produces tensions between becoming a musician and having to be an 'entrepreneur'.

Once artists have entered today's higher music education, a complex web of questions begins to be woven: How do arts practices fit with 'academic' research? What is their relevance for society vs. the autonomy of art? Taken together, this leads to strong debates marked by conflicting views concerning what kind of expertise and role in society the music profession holds. Thus, DAPHME will provide insights about the role of higher education alongside notions of the classical music profession in society.

'Higher Music Education' includes institutions dealing with the music profession in any or all of its forms: artistic practice, learning and teaching, and research. In Europe these include departments or schools at universities as well as independent academies or music conservatories. Performing arts and music education as well as artistic research can be found within all of these types of institutions. In most European countries conservatoires and academies have an emphasis on training students for the performing music profession. Music teacher education often takes place at universities. For reasons of clarity and readability we use the terms 'academy' and 'higher arts education' in this text to make clear when we specifically talk about institutions outside university.

Purpose and questions

The overall purpose of the project is to investigate how processes of academization affect higher music education (in this case, performing musician programmes) across Europe. In order to do this we will explore contrasting perspectives on performing musicians' expertise and societal mandate. The study focuses on discourses in higher music education, based on written documents and interviews with leaders and teachers in Sweden, Norway, and Germany. The specific objectives are to:

- I. Identify and analyse what constitutes notions of competence, knowledge, and research activities and how these are negotiated and renegotiated.
- II. Identify and analyse which views of the music profession that are negotiated and renegotiated.
- III. Compare contradictions, similarities, and differences at institutional, national, and international levels.

Through doing this, we can make visible the most important national parallels and contrasts needed to explain the impact of academization of performing musician programmes and the music profession.

Research overview

In this overview our main focus is on performing musicians and arts education. To do justice to the issues in this specific educational context we will include non-empirical literature (e.g. working papers and network reports) about academization, and artistic research. Crucial questions arise from this literature, concerning various forms of knowledge and their functions for professional musicians. Below we have therefore briefly outlined previous studies on higher music education, professionalism, and professional knowledge. The section then concludes with some remarks on the labour market, which are relevant for issues of musicians' expertise and mandate in society.

Academization and artistic research

For some years now, and especially since the Bologna Declaration of 1999, a key issue in European higher arts education has been to become academic (Tønsberg, 2013). This is somewhat ironic, since institutions of higher arts education have typically been designated academies. Academies, as distinct from universities, refer here to specialist institutions, whether they teach visual or fine arts, film, drama, or music, and whether or not they are indeed titled 'Academy' (Nelson, 2013).

For many of these academies the requests were particularly confusing. They had previously been occupied with pedagogical efforts to ensure that learning and teaching would become less 'academic' than it used to be. At universities the concept 'academic' suggests quality. At art academies the term had become a signifier of a lack of artistic quality. Now they were required to academize in order to get accreditation for their artistic programmes.

The change required was to engage in artistic research and to 'listen to' the universities. Many of these universities had no prior experience of teaching practice-based arts, yet they stressed they could evaluate the academization of academies. Indeed, universities gladly assessed whether art academies had reached an acceptable academic level (Lesage, 2013). This is one reason the Bologna Declaration and its various national and regional implementations has met with a great variety of resistance (Münch, 2011).

'The Academy Turn' (Manifesta 8, 2010) is a multifaceted project, including many potential outcomes and tensions in the current academic growth of artistic research. At the heart of the idea is the interplay between theory and practice. This idea is not new. During the sixteenth century, painters, sculptors, and architects received a theoretical education in addition to a practical training for the first time in history.

Existing literature on the processes of academization of art has primarily focused this era and these art forms (Jonker, 2010).

Today many successful pop and rock musicians have a degree (Parr, 2014). Studies have focused whether popular music has become too uniform, technical, and virtuosi as a result (Tønsberg, 2013). Previous research also clarifies how professional hip-hop musicians have to "navigate between being commercial and artistic" (Söderman, 2013: 369).

Historically, arts practices have been separated from 'academic' research. The academization of art education is now marked by the strong expectation of research paths. Artistic research and terms like 'Art Practice as Research' have been introduced in many parts of the world. What artistic research might be has been discussed since the 1990s (Jewesbury, 2009; Hellström, 2010). A broad and common aim is to articulate artistic inquiry to address issues, achieve insights, and to develop new knowledge. In order to contribute to other fields, artistic research is supposed to combine artistic and traditional research elements.

Artistic research becoming more academically-oriented is sometimes described as a 'controversial trend' (Elkins, 2009). For some, higher music education teachers, procedural focus and textual supplements are anathema to artistic practice (Wilson & van Ruiten, 2014). By moving art into a university system, it is said that its praxis becomes instrumentalized (cf. Jewesbury, 2009). At the same time, 'artistic research' is increasingly being accepted as the main way of enquiry in art (Wilson & van Ruiten, 2014). To establish research is also important to improve the status of music academies (Gies, 2011; Hebert, 2013; Johansson, 2013). Altogether, this poses particular challenges to fundamental ideas about artistic competence, knowledge, research, theory, practice, and methodologies (cf. Nerland & Jensen, 2014).

The literature on artistic research is dominated by discussions as to what constitutes this field of research (cp. Vetenskapsrådet, 2013), and the way in which case studies are presented. Questions around why and how research should be conducted within the institutional framework of art academies are still at the centre of attention within higher education networks (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Biggs & Karlsson, 2011; Bresler, 2007; Macleod & Holdridge, 2006), not at least in Europe (EPARM, 2014). No meta-studies, empirical research, on artistic research or its influences, are available however.

Higher music education and the music profession

(Music) education is increasingly becoming challenged. Research studies show teachers as being continually in the grip of educational change and rapid reform (Biesta, 2014;

Borko, 2004; Osborn, McNess & Broadfoot, 2000; Ozga, 2009). In the current political debate, education tends to be justified in relation to usefulness, employability, and technological rationality (Nerland, 2008). When 'useful' knowledge is being prioritized, aesthetic knowledge risks becoming marginalized (Liedman, 2011; Ravitch, 2010).

The increased pressure on pedagogical practice has led to a rapidly growing number of studies. (Music) education researchers have examined the power relation between internal and external control, as well as questions of what constitutes teachers' professional knowledge (Angelo & Georgii-Hemming, 2014; Conway, 2008; Georgii-Hemming, 2013; Graabræk Nielsen, 2011; Grimen, 2008; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2010; Kunter, Baumert & Blum, 2011; Lehmann-Wermser, 2013; Lindblad & Goodson, 2011; Pembrook & Craig, 2002).

The number of similar studies in the context of performing musician programmes and professions is small (Bennett, 2007; Burt-Perkins & Triantafyllaki, 2013; Creech, Papageorgi & Duffy, 2008; Johansson, 2013; Triantafyllaki, 2010) and none of the existing studies make explicit use of Professional theories. Calls for further work are often voiced (Jorquera Jaramillo, 2008; Polifonia research working group, 2010; Triantafyllaki, 2005). The lack of studies, however, does not imply a lack of pressure on higher arts education and the music profession. Changes in society, embodied as images of professional ideals in reform agendas, do challenge the field of performing arts. Academization and 'employability' are prime examples of this (Maeße, 2010; Sarson, 2013).

Until ten years ago, employability was a 'sleeping issue' for music academies. The embedding of employability skills in curriculum was a long way off. Then practitioners, politicians and partly researchers started to discuss how to make music students employable. Optimistic voices say, "something exciting is happening" (Higher Education Academy, 2004). Pessimistic voices question how artistic freedom goes together with an adaptation to the labour market (Hochschule für Künste, 2014). Nevertheless, all agree that it is a complex question, not at least in relation to a diverse and unstable music labour market.

The music profession and the labour market

The music profession no longer offers many chances for full-time long-term work. Instead many musicians are freelance artists called in for specific project-based activities. Institutions like symphony orchestras are not exempt from this change. Musicians produce their performances more and more themselves, and there is a growth of small enterprises in Europe (Gaunt & Westerlund, 2013).

When the markets for culture and music-making change, the situation for musicians change (Bennett, 2007; Johansson, 2012). This is not a new phenomenon. The rise of the bourgeoisie during the late 18th century created a market for expensive 'classical' concerts performed by specialists. Music performers became subject to processes of professionalization. As a consequence, 'classical' and 'popular' music were gradually separated. These changes led to new musical arenas, new music professions, and a widened job market (Reese Willén, 2014). These processes formed the basis for the emergence of an autonomous artistic field with institutions such as symphony orchestras (Edström, 2008; Goehr, 1992).

Traditionally, the task of higher music education was to teach musicians to become experts in fairly delimited areas, with technical skills, instrument-specific knowledge, and the ability to carry on musical traditions (Johansson, 2012). Artistic expertise alone appears, however, not to be enough for today's classical music profession (Hultberg, 2010). Musicians "…require the skills to run a small business, the confidence to create new opportunities, pedagogical and communication skills for use in educational, ensemble and community settings, industry knowledge, and strong professional networks" (Bennett, 2007: 185).

Higher music education faces the task of educating musicians who, on the one hand, can carry on traditions and, on the other, are entrepreneurs with the skill to adapt to/transform their professional role. The list of new basic skills is constantly expanding. What these new basic skills and competences might, and should be, is a matter of negotiations (Johansson 2012).

Project design

Theoretical framework

The main theoretical framework is professional studies and discourse theory.

Professions are developed around their own specialized body of knowledge. They have a specific knowledge base, which is renewed, developed, and authorized within professional programs. An extensive education leads to an officially approved degree or title and a profession also has control over who is accepted into or expelled from the profession (Georgii-Hemming, 2013; Molander & Terum, 2008).

When professional thinking meets the idea of the autonomy of art, certain dilemmas arise (Mangset, 2004). Central aspects within professional thinking are of a regulating character. The profession is authorised to perform a specific mandate, relevant

for society. 'The autonomy of art' is, in contrast, a prerequisite for arts potential for societal critique. Sometimes it is said that the value of music is to be found in the musical experience itself. Tensions between professional education as being 'good for something' and music's intrinsic values are not unproblematic. In DAPHME these contradictions will be theoretically considered as a foundation for high-quality critical discussions. For this reason, philosophical thinking will be used to complement reflections within professional studies (Kant, 1987; Varkøy, 2014). This is one cause why DAPHME has the potential to contribute to theory development within the field of professional studies.

The main methodological approach adopted will be discourse analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (van Dijk, 2014; Fairclough, 1992, 2010; Machin & Mayr, 2012) is combined with linguistically informed French discourse analysis (Foucault, 1974), especially enunciative pragmatics (Angermüller, 2014; Williams, 1999). The combination is an effective way of grasping and making visible the tensions that indicate negotiations and renegotiations of higher music education. Traditionally, concepts like employability and (artistic) research have not played an important role in music profession. Therefore it is likely that conflicts arise when these are taken over the discourse on and within music academies.

Discourses are also a form of social interaction (van Dijk, 2014). Changes and discursive events in society help to shape the institutions concerned and interactions between actors. This relationship can be understood in terms of a mix of discourses (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Over time, different discursive practices within and across institutions are also restructured. This is why official documents and interviews with leaders and teachers are the basis for our analyses. Such a method will explain tensions and, by means of interdiscursive analysis (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), make 'interdiscursive opaqueness' more transparent. In this way, our project will demonstrate how multiple, competing discourses are shaped by the politics of education reforms.

Methodology

In order to explain discourses of academization and the music profession in higher music education, the project will adopt a comparative perspective (Broadfoot et al, 2000; May, 2013). Conducting the analyses against the background of different higher education policies as well as sociocultural settings (traditions, value systems and institutions) will reveal contradictions, similarities and differences on the institutional, national, and international level.

The range of countries selected in comparative research inevitably affects the quality and comparability of the data. The choice of Sweden, Norway, and Germany is, however, deliberate and will yield fruitful insights. Unlike other countries in Europe (e.g. Italy, France, Poland), institutions with performance education within them have academic status. They are not 'just' conservatories.

Data generation

Empirical data will consist of official documents (syllabi, official presentations, self evaluations) and interviews with leaders and teachers within four institutions in each country.

We are primarily interested in exploring the tensions between different viewpoints within higher education institutions. Therefore we will be focusing on those responsible for implementing educational policies on a daily basis, rather than interrogating students' experiences. Sampling decisions have been based on a completed pilot study, which included a frame analysis of the different national contexts and conditions.

The topics that will be addressed in the interviews concern the main issues of (1) notions of competence, knowledge, artistic research, and views on their functions in education and in their working lives; (2) the mandate, function, and relevance of the music profession today. The interview questions will be open-ended. However, instead of asking the leaders and teachers to relate their general philosophy about e.g. the concept of artistic research or the music profession, we will give and ask for specific examples.

These interviews will be transcribed in their original languages. All empirical data will be transcribed and analysed in the data analysis platform (QDA) to facilitate sharing between investigators. Through this, all researchers will have access to all data as well as on-going analytical coding and comparisons. Discourse analysis will be conducted in three steps, followed by a comparative analysis on the international level.

The first step of discourse analysis will focus on lexical choice. Word connotations, over-lexicalisation, lexical absence, structural oppositions, and coherence will be analysed (Fairclough, 2010; Machin & Mayr, 2012). The second step of data analysis focuses on larger units of language expression (Angermüller 2014; Foucault, 1974; Maeße, 2010; Williams, 1999). 'Formal traces' will be analysed, showing how the texts communicate contexts. We will focus the formal traces: Deictic references (Who is talking), Polyphony (With which perspectives does the official documents and interview texts operate), Intra-textual and intertextual references, and Nominalizations (how do the official documents and interview texts incorporate different discourses).

We assume that discourses of academization and the music profession in higher music education, including questions of the music professions' role and mandate in society, are influenced by higher education policies as well as the Bologna and aesthetic discourses. The shifting of core concepts such as for instance employability, (artistic) research and autonomy of art are to be analysed.

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